



ICOMOS Focal Point for the UN Sustainable Development Goals, Agenda for 2017-18

The ICOMOS Focal Point for the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), a role fulfilled successfully by Mr. Andrew Potts of US/ICOMOS during the 2014-16 cycle, was transferred to Dr. Ege Yildirim of ICOMOS Turkey, as per her appointment in the ICOMOS Annual General Assembly in Istanbul, October 2016. Dr. Yildirim will continue to coordinate ICOMOS activities of sustainable development in relation to the agenda of the UN SDGs during the next two-year cycle.

Agenda 2030, SDGs, the New Urban Agenda and other UN Agendas related to Sustainability

In September 2015, the UN adopted the milestone document titled “Transforming Our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”, with [17 Sustainable Development Goals](#) (#GlobalGoals) for the period of 2015-30. Among the SDGs, **Goal 11 (the ‘Urban Goal’)** to “make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable”, is where ICOMOS has been focusing advocacy efforts during the past few years. The thematic scope of the 17 SDGs is elaborated in 169 ‘sub-goals’ or ‘targets’, ICOMOS’s involvement with the SDGs materializing through **Target 11.4 (the ‘Heritage Target’)** to “protect and safeguard the world’s cultural and natural heritage”, complemented by numerous other targets that have overlaps and inherent connections with Target 11.4. Goal 11 has been the direct remit of the UN Human Settlements Programme (**UN-Habitat**), which convened its third summit on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III) in Quito, Ecuador (October 17-20, 2016) and adopted the [New Urban Agenda](#) (NUA), a framework laying out how cities should be planned and managed to best promote sustainable urbanization. Key sections of the NUA on culture and cultural heritage can be listed as Sections 10, 38, 45, 60, 97, 124 and 125. The post-2015 Sustainable Development Agenda is also supported by the fundamental work streams on ‘Disaster Management’, through the [Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction](#) 2015-30, and on ‘Climate Change’, through the **UN Framework Convention on Climate Change** (UNFCCC) and the Conference of Parties to it that adopted the [Paris Agreement](#).

‘Heritage as Driver of Sustainability’: Mission and Activities for 2017-18

Until now, work on the SDGs focused on achieving representation of heritage in the major policy papers of Agenda 2030. Now that these policy papers are adopted at the highest, global level, and their goals and targets await being fulfilled, focus has shifted to ‘implementation’. Therefore, the mission that ICOMOS has given its Focal Point for the SDGs in the new term is to “**steer a coordinated process of advocacy to advance the implementation of UN Agenda 2030- SDGs and Habitat NUA from the perspective of cultural and natural heritage**, within the framework of the ICOMOS mandate and inputs from strategic partners”. Activities toward accomplishing this mission include liaising with stakeholders at national, regional and local level, and across governance sectors (public, private, civil society, experts/academia), in particular for:

- 1: Localizing implementation**, by providing guidance and direction to stakeholders to adopt tools of implementation,
- 2: Monitoring implementation**, with a focus on Indicator 11.4.1 defined by the UN (expenditure and share of budgets allocated to heritage) to achieve consistent and comprehensive data collection,
- 3: General advocacy**, for mainstreaming culture and heritage within sustainable development, by increasing visibility and outreach across the UN system and the public sphere.

A key target will be the **first review of SDG11 by the UN High-Level Political Forum in July 2018 in New York City**, for which stakeholders like ICOMOS will have a chance to submit their global reports on implementation of Agenda 2030. ICOMOS will work with key partners in this process, notably the International Union for Conservation of Nature ([IUCN](#)), the sister Advisory Body to UNESCO on natural sites, the United Cities and Local Governments ([UCLG](#))- Committee on Culture, which has been coordinating the Agenda 21 for Culture, and [UNESCO](#), the official UN agency with the ‘heritage’ mandate. Other key partners include the World Urban Campaign, the General Assembly of Partners to UN-Habitat, the International Society of City and Regional Planners (ISOCARP) and the European Commission. Internally, ICOMOS will seek to mobilize its **28 International Scientific Committees** (overseen by the Scientific Council, which has identified their 2018 Scientific Program theme as ‘Sustainability’) and **110+ National Committees**, which are gateways to reach stakeholders in their respective countries.

We are excited to build on the recognition of the role that culture and heritage play in Agenda 2030, as driver and enabler of social cohesion and inclusion, equity and inclusive economic development, livability and resilience of urban areas. We look forward to collaborating with a wide range of partners.

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See also: <http://www.icomos.org/en/component/tags/tag/47-sustainable-development>