

ICOMOS

international council on monuments and sites

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Teresa Patricio
ICOMOS President

Thank you Chairperson,
Honourable Mr Dario Franceschini, Minister of Culture of Italy

Excellencies, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen

On behalf of ICOMOS, I would like to thank the G20 Culture Ministers and in particular the Italian Presidency for inviting us to this important event. It is critical that we find ways to ensure culture and heritage are given a central place in the international agenda and ICOMOS hopes that such Culture Ministerial meetings will become a permanent feature of the G20 going forward.

Climate change is one of the most significant and fastest growing threats to people and their cultural heritage worldwide.

The Joint G20 Energy-Climate Ministerial Communiqué issued last week [23 July] broke new ground for the G20 when it recognised that “the impacts of climate change at 1.5°C are **much lower** than at 2°C.”

As a heritage organization, ICOMOS takes it as a self-evident fact that the sustainable use of heritage is a cornerstone of the activities aimed at mitigating the effects of climate change. The ICOMOS General Assembly voted last year to declare a *climate and ecological emergency*, calling for urgent collective action to safeguard cultural and natural heritage from climate change, including, not only through adaptation responses but also the implementation of a collective precautionary approach that pursues pathways for limiting global warming to 1.5°C over pre-industrial levels.

The new draft “Climate Action Policy for World Heritage” now before the General Assembly of States Parties to the 1972 World Heritage Convention states that the implementation of a precautionary approach that pursues pathways limiting global warming to 1.5°C is **the most effective approach** for the conservation and management of the cultural and natural heritage.

Culture-based strategies can help to enhance the ambition and capacity of communities to act, support climate adaptation and resilience, contribute to mitigation interventions to reduce Green House gas emissions (GHG), and address loss and damage from climate impacts.

The great strength of the draft Ministerial Declaration you are considering today is that it recognises that culture is both at risk from the impacts of climate change but also a part of the solution. It stresses that culture and heritage, including creativity and Indigenous peoples and local communities’ knowledge systems, contribute to a fair transition and to meeting the goals of the Paris Agreement, taking into account different national circumstances.

Your leadership in establishing climate action as a priority theme in your ministries and supporting a focus on climate among the culture and heritage operators in your countries will be crucial.

The absence of cultural heritage from national climate plans is a problem ICOMOS highlighted in its 2019 report, *The Future of Our Pasts; Engaging Cultural Heritage in Climate Action*. This report is a tool to help policy makers to increase both better recognition of the cultural dimensions of climate change and adjusting the aims and methodologies of heritage practice.

ICOMOS encouraged the G20 Culture Working Group to present recommendations aimed at advancing the contribution of culture and heritage in addressing climate change, and to find synergies with the energy, climate and environment colleagues.

Cultural heritage is particularly central for Climate Empowerment. Heritage is a source of knowledge, a carrier of cultural and social values, the sustainable use and reuse of the built heritage reduces our ecological footprint and the environmental costs of demolition and construction.

To conclude - your work here today moves us closer to realising this crucial goal: that when it comes to tackling the climate emergency, culture and heritage are counted in. ICOMOS together with the Climate Heritage Network, of which we are a founding member, stand with you in this work and we salute you for your leadership.

Thank you.