

The Bonn Declaration on World Heritage

On the occasion of its 39th session in Bonn/Germany

We, the members of the World Heritage Committee,

1. Emphasizing the need in the year of the 70th anniversary to revive the core values and principles forged by UNESCO since 1945,
2. Reaffirming that culture and education for justice, liberty and peace are indispensable to human dignity and the duty of all states,
3. Growingly concerned about the physical damages inflicted or occurred in prominent world heritage and other cultural sites in areas exposed to armed conflict and natural disasters and also alarmed by the looting and illicit trafficking of cultural properties and assets in those areas,
4. Conscious of our responsibility to safeguard World Heritage sites valued for their natural beauty, uniqueness and universality against, overexploitation, natural disasters, civilian unrest and/or armed conflicts,
5. Recalling UNESCO's seven culture conventions designed to complement and reinforce each other to safeguard and nurture human culture and creativity in all its forms,
6. Recalling that intentional attacks against buildings dedicated to religion, education, art, science or charitable purposes and historic monuments may amount to war crimes;
7. Bearing in mind the 2003 UNESCO Declaration concerning Intentional Destruction of Cultural Heritage and UNESCO Executive Board Decision 196EX/29 of 21 April 2015 on UNESCO's role and responsibilities in protecting culture in conflict areas as a humanitarian concern and safety issue;
8. Taking note of:
 - the Declaration of the Organization of the Islamic Cooperation (OIC) Group at UNESCO on Safeguarding of Iraqi, Syrian and Libyan Cultural Heritage supporting the aforementioned Executive Board Decision 196EX/29;
 - the Cairo Declaration by the Ministerial Conference of Middle East and Northern African States of 14 May 2015;
 - the European Parliament Resolution of 30 April 2015 on the destruction of cultural sites perpetrated by ISIL/Daesh (2015/2649(RSP));
 - Resolution 3.MSP 9 of the 3rd Meeting of States Parties to the UNESCO 1970 Convention (18-20 May 2015) following the report on the actions undertaken by the Secretariat to fight against illicit trafficking of cultural property in emergency situations;

9. Keeping in mind all relevant treaties, conventions, legal instruments and declarations, including the ones to strengthen emergency assistance in the field of natural disasters,
10. Recalling United Nations Security Council resolutions: including Resolution 1483 (2003), Resolution 2199 (2015) on threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts,
11. Also recalling United Nations General Assembly resolutions 69/281 on Saving the Cultural Heritage of Iraq adopted on 28 May 2015 and 69/280 on Strengthening Emergency Relief, Rehabilitation and Reconstruction in Response to the Devastating Effects of the Earthquake in Nepal adopted on 15 May 2015, as well as other resolutions strengthening crime prevention and criminal justice responses to protect cultural properties,
12. Deeply shocked by repeated attacks, destructions and violence perpetrated by ISIL/Daesh and other extremist groups, aimed at destroying cultural diversity through deliberate targeting of individuals and communities on the basis of cultural, ethnic or religious background, as well as places of worship, memory and learning,
13. Also alarmed by the increasing number of threats to cultural heritage through illegal excavations, organized looting and trafficking of cultural objects, which seriously undermine irreplaceable cultural treasures, among them UNESCO World Heritage sites in Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Mali, Syria and Yemen,
14. Calling attention to the enduring problems at natural world heritage sites in the Central African Republic, Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Niger, which are likely to continue long after the end of hostilities,
15. Greatly concerned by the enormous damage caused to Nepal's cultural and natural heritage by the earthquake in 2015, and also remembering still continuing effects of the devastation caused by the earthquake in Haiti in 2010;
16. Convinced that UNESCO's culture Conventions provide the proper framework for national measures and international cooperation in protecting culture and heritage against all threats and challenges;

17. Condemn the barbaric assaults, violence and crimes committed in recent times by the so called Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) also known as Daesh against the cultural heritage of Iraq, including the World Heritage site at Hatra, which recalls mindless destructions in Bamiyan, Timbuktu and elsewhere;
18. Deplore the exposure of and use of cultural heritage sites in military operations by the parties to various conflicts, including as shelter to protect combatants, to keep hostage local indigenous communities and by indiscriminate use of weapons and explosives, which resulted in widespread destruction of Aleppo, Crac de Chevaliers, Bosra and other significant sites;
19. Express deep concern about the World Heritage site of Palmyra, which also has been exposed to threat of destruction because of armed conflict;

20. Express utmost concern about the continuing hostilities in Yemen, which inflict damage to cultural sites and properties especially in the ancient city of Marib, the World Heritage Site of the Old City of Sana'a and the city of Aden;
21. Denounce the destruction and looting of cultural objects used as a tactic of war and as a source to fund terrorism;
22. Call upon all parties to armed conflicts to refrain from military use or targeting of cultural and natural heritage sites and monuments that constitute flagrant violation of international law and to comply with their obligations under international treaties such as the 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict and its 1999 Protocol as well as relevant rules of customary international law, to refrain from any act of aggression against heritage sites;
23. Recommend that the Security Council analyzes the possibility of introducing a specific dimension of heritage protection in the mandates of peacekeeping missions where appropriate; delivering for instance complementary training modules focusing on the protection of cultural property both tangible and intangible, during and in the aftermath of armed conflicts; raising awareness of culture as a critical resource for the stability, social cohesion and reconstruction of societies affected by war;
24. Regret that Nepal's cultural and natural heritage which is inseparable part of world heritage suffered severe damage and losses during recent earthquakes and invite all States Parties to vigorously continue implementing Resolution 69/280 on Strengthening Emergency Relief, Rehabilitation and Reconstruction in Response to the Devastating Effects of the Earthquake in Nepal adopted on 15 May 2015;
25. Remind States Parties to the World Heritage Convention of their obligation to safeguard cultural and natural heritage of Outstanding Universal Value at the national and international level and the growing need to raise sufficient funds to help UNESCO fulfill its mandate, and towards that end appeal them to fulfill their obligations in preserving natural and cultural heritage by responding more quickly and substantially to emergency situations, taking into consideration the requirements of bilateral or multilateral programs and forms of cooperation as well as the recently established UNESCO Heritage Emergency Fund;
26. Encourage States that have not yet ratified the World Heritage Convention and other cultural international legal instruments to do so;
27. Call upon States Parties to evaluate their implementation of pertinent legally binding and other instruments and to strengthen their national legislation and practice for the protection of cultural and natural heritage, also by introducing more effective measures to combat illicit trafficking and illegal trade of cultural properties;
28. Call upon States Parties and other interested parties, to strengthen their intergovernmental and law-enforcement cooperation on the protection and preservation of cultural heritage, as well as to reinforce active participation of all interested third parties - especially those active in the fields of art and culture - in measures to combat all forms and aspects of trafficking in cultural properties;
29. Welcome UNESCO's #Unite4Heritage campaign for countering the propaganda of hatred and addressing professional communities and individuals, in particular the

young people, as well as the launching by the Director-General of UNESCO of a Global Coalition for the protection of culture aimed at rallying the international community and actors from the cultural, humanitarian, security and other relevant sectors around an agreed agenda for action for the protection of culture and the promotion of cultural pluralism;

30. Request UNESCO to enhance its international leadership in the operationalization and coordination of a comprehensive response to the protection of heritage in the event of armed conflict or natural disaster in agreement with the International Inter-Agency Humanitarian Coordination System;
31. Invite all States Parties to UNESCO Culture Conventions to join forces and share their expertise under the leadership of UNESCO, and to coordinate their bilateral and international emergency relief projects for achieving the maximum possible benefit;
32. Commit ourselves to promote the objectives of this declaration in order to strengthen the international protection of cultural and natural heritage and to actively contribute to the Global Coalition launched by the Director-General of UNESCO, recognizing that building peace tomorrow requires defending our common heritage of diversity and tolerance today.