



DECLARATION

As participants of the UNESCO World Heritage Young Professionals Forum 2018, “Protecting Heritage in an Ever-Changing World”, we would like to express our gratitude to the Kingdom of Bahrain, Shaikha Mai Bint Mohammed Al Khalifa, the President of the Bahrain Authority for Culture and Antiquities (BACA), Shaikha Haya Al Khalifa, Chairperson of the 42nd Session of the World Heritage Committee, Ms Audrey Azoulay, Director-General of UNESCO and Ms Mechtild Rössler, Director of the UNESCO World Heritage Centre. We would also like to thank the organising team from Diadrasis and the local and international experts who shared their valuable insights. Our thanks also go out to the people of Bahrain who shared their warm hospitality.

This declaration has been informed by the interaction between young professionals from across the world.

The world is undergoing rapid change and there has never been a better time to actively involve young professionals in the management and protection of World Heritage than today.

Globalisation and rapid change have made the protection of heritage a challenge. However, we, as young professionals, also view this as an opportunity to reflect on diversity as a tool to celebrate our shared heritage.

Education and communication are key parts of heritage protection and can help foster peace. It is important to consider the multiplicity of stories inherent in our heritage, document them in an engaging manner, and communicate them to communities in powerful ways so as to make them come alive in the minds of people across the world. This will also help secure the universal human right to culture.

Since heritage conservation depends on our capacity to manage change, we call upon increased collaboration between institutions addressing climate change and those addressing cultural and natural heritage.

We would like to express our concern about climate change and how the international community responds to this change at a national and global scale. There is a need for sustainable development in which heritage can be a source of economic growth.

We encourage the World Heritage Committee to strengthen their efforts to promote the inscription of natural heritage sites to the World Heritage List due to the lack of their representation. We believe the protection and conservation of our natural heritage will lead to a better understanding of impacts of climate change on culture and nature through heritage interpretation and education.



We are hopeful that State Parties will continue to adopt new technologies to mitigate the effects of climate change and that they will utilise the traditional knowledge of local communities in this regard.

The use of technological tools must be promoted to enhance the potential to share heritage globally and to improve its availability for conservation, documentation, and research. New technologies can help us to promote our shared heritage in more engaging ways. However, technology should not displace or replace heritage.

We recognize that the involvement of the youth and local communities is vital for the sustainability of the Convention and successful long-term conservation of heritage. We encourage the Committee to manage the impact of tourism whilst simultaneously recognizing its benefits.

There is room for increased community engagement and involvement, taking into account the diversity of these communities, at every step of the decision-making process of the World Heritage framework. The World Heritage Centre and the State Parties need to increase awareness of processes for the inscription and conservation of World Heritage Sites.

We must emphasise the human element in the protection of heritage and engagement. Non-governmental organisations and individuals from all the countries in the world should be able to communicate with UNESCO and share their concerns and their ideas for enhancing heritage protection and conservation.

The Young Professionals Forum recognizes that heritage is an ever-expanding and dynamic concept which has shaped the Convention over the years and that we must be prepared to adapt to these changes.

We believe in the need for a more global understanding of heritage and recognise the values of cultures outside the protection of the World Heritage List.

We emphasize the need for inclusive education encompassing traditional knowledge to holistically achieve the objectives of the Convention and keep it relevant worldwide.

We are confident that the Convention will continue to inspire generations to protect and uphold the integrity of cultural heritage, if communities, experts and the youth continue to work together in this ever-changing world.

Thank you.

25 June 2018, Kingdom of Bahrain