



World Heritage and the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework

The 1972 World Heritage Convention aspires to protect our planet's priceless cultural and natural heritage. With 193 States Parties, the World Heritage Convention is one of the oldest and most successful multilateral environmental agreements – and the only one to connect nature and culture. These exceptional sites represent the very best of nature and many are world-renowned: the Great Barrier Reef, Yellowstone, Serengeti, Ha Long Bay, Lake Baikal, Socotra Archipelago and Machu Picchu. They also cover huge areas of land, freshwater and sea, equivalent to 8% of the global protected area estate.

World Heritage sites are celebrated for their extraordinary and widely held importance – places which are so valuable that they transcend national boundaries, cultures and generations. These exceptional places shape humanity's collective sense of identity. The World Heritage Convention is one of the eight biodiversity-related Conventions, which together with the Rio Conventions, are ideally positioned to contribute to the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework.

What is the unique contribution of World Heritage?

The World Heritage Convention makes a substantial contribution to global biodiversity conservation, international cooperation, peace and the quality of life on earth. It contributes to all three objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

- ◆ World Heritage sites protect nature's finest treasures and our cultural gems.
- ◆ World Heritage makes an essential contribution to sustainable development and the SDGs.
- ◆ The Convention links nature and culture through the powerful concept of heritage.
- ◆ World Heritage sites enjoy widespread public recognition and instil a sense of pride.
- ◆ The Convention includes an explicit commitment to pass on the world's heritage to future generations. If World Heritage sites are lost, they are gone forever.
- ◆ The Convention engages all levels of Government, including Heads of State.
- ◆ World Heritage sites enjoy the highest level of international protection through the strongest compliance mechanisms.

Protecting the priceless: Conservation of World Heritage sites in the centuries to come is an imperative, and will be a litmus test of our aspiration for 'Living in Harmony with Nature'.

How can we harness the power of World Heritage post 2020?

Galvanize behavioural change: Leverage the influence, engagement and widespread popularity of World Heritage sites to catalyze behavioural and ultimately transformative change. Use World Heritage to increase understanding of the importance of biodiversity as an essential part of our shared heritage.

Crucial sites for sustaining biodiversity: Strengthen the protection and management of World Heritage sites as the world's most important natural sites, places that represent the planet's irreplaceable ecosystems and habitats critical for globally threatened species, as assessed by the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. Both natural and cultural World Heritage sites make a significant contribution to the protection and management of Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs). Recognize the heritage significance of wild relatives of domesticated species. Position World Heritage sites as world-class examples of successful conservation practice and sustainable development.

“No-go” commitment: Recognize that the World Heritage Convention has consistently reaffirmed that extractive activities and dams with large reservoirs are incompatible with natural World Heritage status. Whilst acknowledging that some extractive industries, as well as parts of the financial and insurance sector, have already subscribed to this principle, it is necessary to broaden these “no-go” commitments further across these and other potentially damaging sectors such as energy, infrastructure, industrial agriculture, aquaculture, forestry and fisheries.

Nature-based solutions: Secure the largest intact ecosystems such as World Heritage sites to provide essential regulating services for the planet and benefits for people. World Heritage sites protect healthy resilient ecosystems, buffering natural hazards and have been demonstrated to be particularly efficient at combatting climate change by storing and capturing carbon.

Links between nature and culture: Promote a holistic approach to biodiversity conservation that embraces the indivisible connections between people, culture and nature. Recognise and enhance the role that Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities have in protecting nature as a vital underpinning of sustainable livelihoods. Acknowledge that the World Heritage Convention is a means to protect land, culture, language and identity and integrate traditional knowledge and practises into decision-making.

Promote a peaceful and inclusive society: Foster international cooperation through transnational World Heritage sites. Support continued protection of natural and cultural World Heritage sites in regions of armed conflict and complex emergency situations. Promote equity and social cohesion through inclusive management of World Heritage sites.

Build capacity: Take advantage of World Heritage networks in providing lessons learned and experiences which can support the development of capacities for the implementation of the Global Biodiversity Framework. Recognize the positive impact of developing skills and knowledge for effective conservation and management of sites.

Protect biodiversity across the generations: Honour commitments made by our predecessors to conserve the world’s heritage in perpetuity. Target actions to transmit our common heritage to future generations in an improved condition, actively engaging youth in advocacy, conservation action and protection of World Heritage. Increase and showcase intergenerational equity in World Heritage sites.

Recommendations for the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework

- ◆ **Sustainable Development:** Include SDG 11.4 Strengthen efforts to protect and safeguard the world’s cultural and natural heritage in the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework.
- ◆ **Protected and conserved areas:** By 2030, ensure that 80% of natural and mixed World Heritage sites have a positive conservation outlook and effective management (as measured through the IUCN World Heritage Outlook and the IUCN Green List of Protected and Conserved Areas).
- ◆ **Private / Public sector engagement:** By 2030, all relevant public and private companies, including from the financial and insurance sector, adopt and implement a safeguard policy to respect natural World Heritage sites and avoid detrimental impact to their values.
- ◆ **Links between nature and culture:** By 2030, the mutual benefits of conserving natural and cultural diversity and their interdependencies are appropriately recognized, documented and integrated into the management of World Heritage sites.
- ◆ **Intrinsic value of nature:** By 2030, biodiversity is acknowledged as an essential part of our identity and heritage through the contribution of the World Heritage Convention in the implementation of the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework.
- ◆ **National Biodiversity Strategic Action Plans:** Ensure that post 2020, NBSAPs integrate measurable World Heritage specific content reflecting the global targets.