

Fuzhou Declaration

We, the members of the World Heritage Committee, gathered online on the occasion of its Extended 44th Session held in Fuzhou, China, declare the following:

Recalling that the *Convention Concerning the Protection of World Cultural and Natural Heritage* has commanded global consensus and universal ratification over the past five decades, triggered unremitting efforts worldwide for the protection of the cultural and natural heritage, and promoted a harmonized relationship of humankind with nature, striving to preserve heritage including its cultural and biological diversity;

Fully appreciating the progress made in the protection of cultural and natural heritage, that has fostered international understanding and dialogue of civilizations through mutual respect of cultural identities and appreciation of the diverse cultural expressions contributing to global peace and sustainable development;

Reiterating the need for increased global cooperation on the different dimensions of sustainable development including environment, economy, and promotion of just, peaceful and inclusive societies in the perspective of shared future, integrated with the protection of cultural and natural heritage in order to attain the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*;

Being fully aware of the challenges and shared responsibilities for humankind as the custodian of the Outstanding Universal Value of World Heritage sites, which are glorious and meritorious assets of nature and humanity, and provide vital ecosystem services and embodying various forms of human values and creativity;

Expressing growing concerns about the impact of the devastating COVID-19 pandemic, which has demonstrated the importance of local communities and their shared future, integrally linked to the conservation of World Heritage sites, while highlighting a growing lack of human and financial resources needed to secure an effective protection of sites and support to local communities and their livelihoods;

Bearing in mind and witnessing that climate change has been leading to an increased frequency of extreme weather events, natural disasters and other negative impacts and which adds to other long-term challenges affecting cultural and natural heritage protection, such as demographic growth, rapid urbanization and inadequately planned urban development;

Recognizing the existing vulnerabilities of the heritage sector compounded by the prolonged pandemic and unprecedented current challenges of over-exploitation of natural and cultural resources, as well as the impacts of armed conflicts on the conservation of World Heritage sites;

Emphasizes the need to reaffirm and advocate UNESCO's core values, objectives and mission on the occasion of its 75th anniversary, with particular emphasis on the *World Heritage Convention* and its role for ecological conservation, and the construction of cohesive societies at the eve of its 50th anniversary, as well as the *2011 Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape* with a view to integrating heritage protection with sustainable development in historic cities and settlements;

Calls for the full engagement of governments, international organizations, civil society organizations, private sector and other key stakeholders to protect the World Heritage sites and protect them against threats to cultural and natural heritage sites in particular when exposed to armed conflicts, natural calamities or illicit trafficking of cultural and natural heritage assets;

Reaffirms the Declarations adopted at previous sessions of the World Heritage Committee such as those from Budapest (2002), Bonn (2015), Istanbul (2016) and Baku (2019), which reiterated the principles of the 1972 Convention and called for the protection of heritage from any impacts with a view to protect the Outstanding Universal Value of the World Heritage sites, including their integrity and authenticity;

Appreciates the importance of the *Strategic Action Plan for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention 2012-2022* with its six goals and 17 priorities and the achievements by the World Heritage Committee and the States Parties in the implementation of the Convention through openness and inclusiveness, constant dialogue and interaction, professional exchanges, knowledge/information sharing and partnership networking;

Commends the important role of UNESCO in its response to COVID-19 and the action taken by States Parties to mitigate the serious impact of pandemic on social, economic and cultural activities worldwide, especially in view of the new challenges to the conservation of cultural and natural heritage properties worldwide, such as the closure of World Heritage sites, the significant loss in number of tourists, delayed maintenance and restoration activities in some instances, and the safety and health of heritage site managers;

Welcomes the recent report published in May 2021 by UNESCO on “World Heritage in the face of COVID-19”, with a view to laying the groundwork for a roadmap to recovery that will help enhance the future resilience of cultural and natural heritage, **and notes** the positive trends having emerged in the midst of the pandemic crisis, in particular the wide use of digital technology allowing people and sites to remain connected;

Also welcomes the objectives and principles laid out in the *UN Framework Convention on Climate Change*, the *2015 Paris Agreement* and the *Convention on Biological Diversity*;

Highlights the recognition that the loss of biodiversity and the degradation of ecosystems poses a major risk to human survival and development and the protection of the World Heritage sites and stresses the importance of the 15th Conference of the Parties to the *Convention on Biological Diversity* to be held in Kunming (China);

Expresses gratitude to the Government of the People’s Republic of China for its contribution to host the extended 44th session of the World Heritage Committee;

Requests to further enhance the synergies between cultural and biodiversity-related Conventions bringing about a holistic approach to heritage conservation for both natural heritage and cultural heritage sites; and **calls upon** States Parties to reinforce international solidarity with a view of preserving cultural and natural heritage through fostering a new relationship of human beings with nature;

Calls for closer international cooperation to undertake appropriate research and planning to facilitate a balance between conservation and sustainable development, while addressing existing challenges and

exploring new opportunities for World Heritage in the framework of universal multilateralism with common values shared by all humankind;

Urges wider participation of academics, civil society and communities to significantly strengthen links between heritage conservation and social and economic development activities, with an aim to protect World Heritage sites for the benefits of all in line with the 2015 World Heritage Sustainable Development Policy;

Calls for increasing support be provided to countries in need, in particular in Africa and Small Island Developing States (SIDS), in order to establish a balanced, credible and geographical equally representative World Heritage List, which can also benefit awareness-raising, capacity-building and preservation activities of cultural and natural heritage;

Underlines the potential of digital technologies to improve effective heritage management and capacity-building programs and **appeals** to the international community to scale up support to developing countries, giving emphasis to Priority Africa and SIDS, in order to harness these new technologies and optimize innovative solutions;

Invites all States Parties to scale up World Heritage education and knowledge-sharing for the youth through formal and non-formal education in order to reinforce awareness of the need and value, knowledge and skills of World Heritage protection and foster a generation of “Patrimonitos”;

Also invites States Parties to participate and engage in the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the World Heritage Convention as an occasion for reflection and analysis on its history and looking towards its future, to promote the conservation of World Heritage, with the aim to maintain an open, inclusive, adaptive, sustainable, resilient, clean and beautiful world for future generations.