

## Call for articles and podcasts for the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the World Heritage Convention

### Context

The World Heritage represents the most exceptional expressions of our humanity and treasures of our planet. Through the *1972 Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage*, countries around the world vow to safeguard the places of outstanding universal value through local, national, regional and international actions.

In 2022, the World Heritage Convention marks its 50th anniversary. The 1,154 natural and cultural heritage sites in over 160 countries are the testament to the universal appreciation and achievement of this groundbreaking legal framework, which was ignited by a joint call between Egypt and Sudan to save monuments under threat by a newly developed dam.

This landmark year comes at a watershed moment for conservation. The effects of climate change have been tangibly felt by sites around the world, while the increasing volume of tourism has put environmental and social pressure on the properties and surrounding communities alike. The COVID-19 pandemic has revealed the vulnerability of the heritage ecosystem in the face of sudden onset crisis, as demonstrated by the closure of 89% of World Heritage sites<sup>1</sup>.

In this context, UNESCO will launch a year-long programme to galvanize profound reflections on the future of heritage titled “**The Next 50: World Heritage as a source of resilience, humanity and innovation.**” Events, campaigns, and initiatives will provide a space of conversation and exploration on the role of the World Heritage as well as non-listed heritage in the face of global challenges. Prominent thinkers and luminaries from diverse fields including science and social and human sciences will be invited to imagine World Heritage at its 100th anniversary.

### Objective

Throughout the anniversary year, UNESCO will launch various mechanisms conducive to new ideas, knowledge and research around inscribed and non-inscribed heritage sites and its ecosystem. As part of this effort, UNESCO partners with The Conversation to commission articles and podcasts in key thematic areas.

The Conversation is a non-profit online media platform specialized in the publication of data-driven articles authored by researchers and experts, with the aim to enrich public debate and ultimately influence policies. With 200 million articles read per month by the public and researchers – 70% and 30% of the readership respectively – it serves as an online meeting place and a knowledge hub for citizens, scientists and policymakers alike. All articles are under Creative Commons license, which enables redistribution of articles via approximately 22,000 sites and allows for democratic access to quality, data-driven information for citizens around the world – a value fully complementary to UNESCO’s commitment to and promotion of Open Access<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> In April 2020, UNESCO has found that 89% of World Heritage sites were partly or fully closed to visitors due to the pandemic. Learn more at <https://whc.unesco.org/en/news/2099>

<sup>2</sup> UNESCO promotes and supports Open Access — the online availability of scholarly information to everyone, free of most licensing and copyright barriers — for the benefit of global knowledge flow, innovation and socio-economic development. Learn more at <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/communication-and-information/access-to-knowledge/open-access-to-scientific-information/>

Converging the Organization's leadership in heritage and The Conversation's reach and media expertise, this partnership provides a global platform for scientists and experts whose work have made a significant contribution to the protection of natural and cultural heritage over the years, while inviting the larger research community to join the global reflection.

Through this inclusive approach, UNESCO aims to **spark inter-disciplinary, cutting-edge, thought-provoking discussions from the global research community and citizens**, ultimately crowdsourcing a vision for the next 50 years of World Heritage and heritage at large.

### Qualifications and criteria

- Only researchers with a current and verifiable affiliation with a research institute may participate in the Call<sup>3</sup>
- The application and articles should be in French or English. The podcast should be in French
- The article/podcast must demonstrate expertise and relevance through novel scientific information (e.g. recently published in peer-reviewed articles or related to ongoing research projects), field research (e.g. World Heritage and heritage sites) and/or relevant examples
- No corporate or review articles are accepted (e.g. conference review)
- The article/podcast must be innovation- and solution-oriented, and highlight inspiring initiatives when possible
- At least one of the key themes must be addressed (see below)
- Diversity must be promoted through researchers' backgrounds and/or regional coverage of the article. UNESCO particularly encourages submissions from Africa and Small Island Developing States<sup>4</sup> and by early career scientists

### Key themes

- Concrete and innovative ways to safeguard heritage in the face of climate change
- Models of sustainable tourism that benefit sites and surrounding communities
- Reconciliation of conservation and urban/rural development
- Contribution as well as threats of new technologies to the protection and promotion of heritage in the next 50 years
- Application of lessons learned during the COVID-19 pandemic to the future conservation efforts
- The role of cultural and natural heritage to meet the increasing environmental and social challenges of our times

### Publication steps

- Application period: 5 November 2021 – 31 March 2022
- A review committee made up of members of UNESCO will assess proposals
- Recommendations made by the review committee will be sent to The Conversation's Editorial

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<sup>3</sup> Per The Conversations regulations

<sup>4</sup> Africa and the Small Island Developing States (SIDS) are UNESCO's Global Priority areas

Board for their final selections based on the qualifications, criteria and themes defined above as well as their Editorial calendar

- The selected researchers will work with journalists, writers and editors at The Conversation to develop the articles/podcasts
- Articles/podcasts will be developed on a rolling basis based on the number of selected applications and the timetable established by The Conversation; authors shall expect an extended drafting and editing process throughout 2022
- Articles/podcasts will be published under the name of the researcher following the mandatory and official approval of the affiliated research institution
- The Conversation France will feature the articles/podcasts on their website, along with diverse UNESCO platforms as appropriate as part of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary campaign and beyond
- Articles/podcasts may be developed into digital content, such as Instagram, Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter stories

### **Submission process**

UNESCO will only consider applications containing all requested elements:

- Proposed title of the article/podcast
- Short summary of the proposed article/podcast (200 words)
- CV
- References
- Valid contact details of the affiliate organization of their research<sup>5</sup>

The complete application package shall be submitted to 31 March 2022 at 23:59 (Paris hour) through an [online form](#).

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<sup>5</sup> The Conversation will contact the research institution to verify the author's affiliation