

World Heritage Young Professionals Forum | 2023
Forum des Jeunes Professionnels sur le Patrimoine Mondial | 2023
منتدى التراث العالمي للمهنيين الشباب | 2023

Call of Application

WORLD HERITAGE YOUNG PROFESSIONALS FORUM

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, 3-12 September 2023

Looking Ahead: The Next 50 Years of Protecting Natural and Cultural Heritage

As an integral part of the extended 45th session of the World Heritage Committee, and in the framework of the UNESCO World Heritage Education Programme, the Ministry of Culture in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia through the National Committee for Education, Culture and Science and the Saudi Heritage Commission will be hosting the World Heritage Young Professionals Forum 2023 under the theme of “**Looking Ahead: The Next 50 Years of Protecting Natural and Cultural Heritage**” from 3 to 12 September 2023 in Riyadh and the Al-Ahsa Oasis. The Forum will be developed and implemented with the support of the NGO Diadrasis. The Forum is an opportunity to understand and assess the achievements of the past 5 decades of the World Heritage Convention; to highlight the crucial role of youth in the heritage ecosystem; and to pave the way for the next generation of heritage professionals, giving voice to their unique approaches to heritage management. The Forum will harness the potential of capacity building and prepare the young professionals in creating a sustainable future for our cultural and natural heritage. At the end of the Forum, the outcomes produced by the participants will be presented to the extended 45th session of the World Heritage Committee in the form of a Youth Declaration.

Background

The World Heritage Young Professionals Fora are among the flagship activities of the World Heritage Education Programme, designed to foster intercultural learning and exchange by bringing together young people, educators, and heritage experts from different parts of the world to discover new roles for themselves in heritage conservation. They allow the young professionals to gain local insights on heritage management from the experience of the host country and through site visits to World Heritage properties, and also provide an opportunity for them to meet with the members of the World Heritage Committee and its Advisory Bodies and discuss the 1972 Convention and its implementation in greater depth. For further information on the previous World Heritage Young Professionals Fora, please visit: <https://whc.unesco.org/en/youth-forum/>

Theme of the Forum:

Over the past five decades, the World Heritage Convention has protected and promoted humanity's treasures and transformed the way we value and safeguard heritage. As we celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Convention, it also an occasion for us to look to the future and at the issues that we must tackle together, such as climate change, sustainable tourism, and the digital transformation surrounding heritage, among others. Hence, the theme of the World Heritage Young Professionals Forum 2023 is set as "**Looking Ahead: The Next 50 Years of Protecting Natural and Cultural Heritage**". The overall aim of the Forum is to deepen the knowledge and skills of young professionals in protecting, preserving, and promoting natural and cultural heritage for the next 50 years, and beyond. Accompanied by local and international experts, and through a variety of presentations, roundtables, discussions and site visits, the young professionals will collectively explore the significant challenges encountered in managing heritage ecosystems today and will discuss best practices and shared solutions for their future protection.

With an approach rooted in community engagement and public participation and enhanced further by the context and insights provided by the visit to the Al-Ahsa Oasis, the Forum will address the following sub-themes.

- a. **World Heritage & Climate Change:** Climate change is among the greatest threats facing cultural and natural heritage today. One in three natural sites and one in six cultural heritage sites are currently threatened by climate change. In recent years we have seen cultural and natural heritage sites, including many World Heritage sites, threatened by wildfires, floods, storms and mass-bleaching events. At the same time, World Heritage properties also harbour options for society to mitigate and adapt to climate change through the ecosystem benefits, such as water and climate regulation, that they provide and the carbon that is stored in World Heritage Forest sites. Cultural heritage, on the other hand, can convey traditional knowledge that builds resilience for change to come and leads us to a more sustainable future. Through this sub-theme, the participants will discuss the impacts of climate change on the Outstanding Universal Value of World Heritage and explore ways to mitigate and manage

these risks, through the use of sustainable traditional materials, construction techniques and other traditional knowledge inherent to heritage communities.

- b. **World Heritage and Sustainable Tourism:** With over 1,000 properties inscribed in 167 countries, World Heritage sites have become some of the most popular tourist destinations in the world. While tourism can bring important economic and social benefits to the heritage communities, it is essential to manage it effectively to avoid negative impacts on the sites and their Outstanding Universal Value. To tackle this challenge, the participants will leverage the existing tools developed by UNESCO and explore the opportunities to promote sustainable tourism at World Heritage sites. Their goal will be to discuss ways to empower local communities to better manage their resources and have a say in how their heritage is presented to visitors, while finding solutions to enhance the visitor experience through an exchange between tourists and the heritage communities that harnesses culture and creativity.
- c. **Diversity & Representation of World Heritage:** Over the 50 years since the World Heritage Convention was adopted, great strides have been made in preserving sites around the world, although there still exists a lack of balance in the type of properties and the geographical areas of the world represented on the World Heritage List. As the next generation takes up the baton of heritage preservation, the importance of equitable representation can be addressed through education in the value of heritage, understanding the true narratives of local and indigenous communities, and protecting their rights and cultural histories. Furthermore, the holistic approach to heritage today extends to include elements that may be cultural, natural, or mixed; tangible or intangible; old or new; and it is essential for the young professionals to draw from the complementarity of these elements in order to manage them sustainably.

- d. **The Digital Dimension of World Heritage:** In the heart of the digital era, the digital aspects of heritage are growing enormously as well, ranging from virtual visits and online exhibitions to inventory catalogues of heritage objects and 3D models of archaeological sites, making it truly accessible in every corner of the world. Through this sub-theme, the young professionals will explore the fundamental role of an inclusive digital environment in promoting and sharing heritage values and in enhancing the protection of our natural and cultural heritage. They will work together to identify ways in which they can support the digital empowerment of their own communities.

Provisional Programme

With the view to supplement the theoretical knowledge gained by the participants during the Forum with practical hands-on experiences at World Heritage properties, the Forum will be held partly in Riyadh, the host city of the extended 45th session of the World Heritage Committee, and partly at the World Heritage site, *Al-Ahsa Oasis, an Evolving Cultural Landscape*. In addition, the participants will also have the opportunity to visit the World Heritage site, the *At-Turaif District in ad-Dir'iyah*, during the Forum.

An initial outline of the Forum's programme is available below. Updates on the programme as well as the final programme will be uploaded on the Forum webpage, in due course.

- 2 September 2023: Arrival Day
- 3 September 2023: Opening of the Forum and Introductions
- 4 - 8 September 2023: Thematic discussions and site visit to the Al-Ahsa Oasis
- 9 September 2023: Youth Model and Committee Meeting Simulation
- 10 September 2023: Drafting of the Youth Declaration
- 11 September 2023: Presentation of the Forum outcomes to the Extended 45th session of the World Heritage Committee
- 12 September 2023: Interaction with the participants of the Site Managers' Forum and the closing of the Forum

Application Form

Please note that the application form must be completed only in **English**. Applications submitted in other languages will not be considered. In addition to education and background information, candidates are also required to submit their CV and a copy of their passport size photo. Incomplete applications will not be considered.

Application and Selection Procedure

30 participants will be selected for the World Heritage Young Professionals Forum 2023 through the process of an open call.

Eligible Applicants

Participants of the World Heritage Young Professionals Forum 2023 are expected to be:

- Aged between 23 and 32 years.
- Experienced in one of these fields: World Heritage, conservation, archaeology, architecture, conservation, urban planning & regeneration, restoration, art history, tourism, climate change, and digital technology.
- Motivated and committed to implementing the outcomes of the Forum in their respective countries.
- Committed to enhancing community engagement in the management of World Heritage properties.
- Available for the entire duration of the Forum.
- Proficient in English, as the Forum will be conducted entirely in English.

In addition to general eligibility, the following elements will also be considered in selecting the participants:

- Balanced geographical representation.
- Gender equality.
- Diversity of professional backgrounds.
- Ability to disseminate gained experience in the country or institution of origin.
- Knowledge and experience in the management practices for World Heritage sites.

All interested candidates who wish to apply for participation in the World Heritage Young Professionals Forum should fill in and submit the [online application form](#).

The deadline for submitting the applications is [4 June 2023 at 23:59 CET](#)

The selected applicants will be informed by email.

For any clarifications regarding the application form please contact forum@diadrasis.org

Travel and accommodation Information

The participants are expected to arrive on **2nd September 2023** and depart on **13th September 2023**. All related expenses (economy class flights, accommodation, local transportation, and meals) will be covered by the host country for the duration of the Forum. The organizers will also assist in the travel preparations and will provide support to the participants who need a visa.

If any participant wishes to extend his/her stay after 13th September 2023, all related costs will be covered by the participant. In such a case, the host country should be informed in advance, in order to make all the necessary arrangements.