

**CULTURE AND CLIMATE CHANGE-RELATED EMERGENCIES:  
NEW REALITIES, NEW PERSPECTIVES**

Side-event at the 45th Session of the World Heritage Committee  
Co-organized by UNESCO and the International alliance for the protection of heritage in  
conflict areas (ALIPH)  
13 September 2023, 13:15-14:45  
Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

Over the past year, several extreme-weather events have impacted cultural heritage around the globe – from the hurricanes and cyclones in Belize, Malawi or Vanuatu, to fires in Chile and flooding in Pakistan and Yemen. Arguably, the increased scale and frequency of these events point to the growing impact of climate change on our societies, including on culture and cultural heritage.

Adding to other natural hazards, such as the earthquakes in Türkiye and Syria, the international community has been forcefully reminded of the continued importance of emergency preparedness and response for the culture sector.

This roundtable will thus address key issues to increase resilience to the emergencies of tomorrow and identify ways that culture can contribute positively to overcome the emergencies of today.

Many cultural heritage sites remain insufficiently prepared for the impact of climate change, resulting in increased vulnerability to events such as flooding, droughts, sea-level rise, and wildfires. This session will explore how preparedness at cultural heritage sites can be reinforced, be it through strengthening human capacities, adapting policies, or the study of traditional building techniques or retrofitting. Who are the stakeholders and which capacity-building tools exist? What concrete measures can be implemented to preserve culture and heritage in countries threatened by sea level rise over the next decades? What infrastructure or policy adjustments are required to ensure their sustainability and full efficiency?

The use of Information and Communications Technology (ICT)/new technologies in the preparedness for, response to and recovery from emergencies related to climate change, will also be discussed. Indeed, the use of technology may allow the prediction of such events and identify the countries and regions most at risk. The modern technology and tools have allowed to remotely access otherwise inaccessible areas and enabled faster and more precise damage assessment and planning for rehabilitation or recovery. In such context, the roundtable will address the advantages and good practices of the use of ICTs and new technologies for cultural heritage in emergencies, including satellite imagery and 3D modelling, as well as the challenges and limitations of these tools. Finally, while new technologies play an increasing role in enabling communities and the wider public to virtually maintain connection with cultural heritage and engage in the protection efforts, what human or financial capacities does the use of these technologies require? Are these tools truly inclusive or do they risk side-lining certain groups from participating in decision-making related to their heritage or even in accessing it?

Lastly, in line with the human-centered approach to cultural heritage protection advocated by UNESCO and reaffirmed by the Organization's Member States and partners such as the International alliance for protection of heritage in conflict areas (ALIPH) in the MONDIACULT

Declaration adopted in Mexico City in 2022, the roundtable will also emphasize the role of intangible cultural heritage in strengthening communities' resilience in emergencies related to natural and human-made disasters. Looking at culture as a common public good and an enabler of resilience, the session will introduce case studies from the Pacific islands, Africa, Latin America, and South-Eastern Europe, and explore how traditional or indigenous knowledge and practices can be applied to other contexts facing similar challenges.

The roundtable will be moderated by Ms Krista Pikkat, Director, Culture and Emergencies, UNESCO and Mr Bastien Varoutsikos, Director of Strategic Development, ALIPH. The panelists include:

- Ms Anuška Deranja Crnokić, Director, Directorate for Archives, Libraries and Museums, Ministry of Culture and Media of the Republic of Croatia
- Ms. Andrea Richards, cultural heritage expert, UNESCO consultant for the Development of Disaster Recovery Framework for the Culture Sector (Barbados)
- Mr. Penivao Moealofa, Assistant Secretary, Ministry of Local Government and Agriculture, Government of Tuvalu (Tuvalu)
- Dr. Peris Kariuki, Kenya Resource Centre for Indigenous Knowledge, National Museum of Kenya (Kenya)
- Mr. Olivier van Damme, Senior Specialist, Strategic Planning and Coordination Section, United Nations Satellite Center (UNOSAT)