



Declaration of the Young Professionals Forum 2024

46th World Heritage Committee

We, the participants of the UNESCO World Heritage Young Professionals Forum 2024 would like to extend our sincere gratitude to the Chairperson of the 46th session of the World Heritage Committee, and to the UNESCO World Heritage Centre. We are grateful to the Government of India, the Ministry of Culture, and the Archaeological Survey of India for hosting the Forum. Our transformative time in India was enriched by the invaluable insights of the experts, facilitators, and site managers who shared their experience, knowledge, and passion. Through our exchanges in the last few days we explored critical challenges of World Heritage including: participatory engagement with communities, sustainable tourism, climate change and its impact, and the integration of innovative technologies. We address you as representatives of the future leaders of World Heritage. This is what matters to us.

We honour the sovereignty, rights, land, knowledges, of Indigenous peoples and local communities who will continue to inhabit and steward World Heritage sites. As young professionals, we recognize that World Heritage conservation depends also on the communities within or near these sites. We commit to reinforcing spaces for meaningful dialogue with local communities that enable a participatory approach for learning and collaborative documentation towards to revitalization of local and Indigenous knowledges. We therefore urge the responsible Committee members, States Parties and UNESCO to support community engagement by encouraging youth-led initiatives and social inclusion as drivers for sustainable World Heritage management. Community participation strengthens protection, longevity, and continuity, therefore we commit to engaging with communities to preserve our Outstanding Universal Values for posterity.

We recognize the importance of sustainable tourism and that it must be incorporated in national regulations tailored to the specific needs of World Heritage sites. We highlight the significance of traditional knowledge of communities living in and around World Heritage sites into the formulation of sustainable tourism policies as an integral

component of management plans, ensuring they can benefit both economically and culturally. We believe that sustainable tourism starts with accountability, prioritising people, communities, and the preservation of their heritage. To achieve this, we recommend fostering stronger partnerships between governments, NGOs, the private sector, and educational institutions. Accordingly, we advocate for empowering young people with training and educational opportunities in heritage management and sustainable tourism practices. We encourage stakeholders to cooperate on developing a common inventory of best practices for sustainable tourism that is accessible to all.

We call upon all States Parties to take immediate, and comprehensive action to recognize the need for enhanced collaboration and robust implementation of climate policies at all levels. We propose a multidisciplinary approach, empowering local communities through education and a global knowledge-sharing network to ensure effective management. We urge the use of methods which will prioritize climate resilience, climate adaptation, and utilize sustainable resources. Continuous risk assessments and monitoring of climate impacts through innovative technologies will encourage wider reach and rapid action for the protection of World Heritage. Such unified actions to safeguard our irreplaceable heritage is a critical step in tackling climate change and securing a sustainable future.

Innovative technologies have the potential to improve heritage experience through education and entertainment, connecting it with local communities while contributing to the Sustainable Development Goals. We encourage stakeholders engaged with technologies to consider human rights, ethics and Outstanding Universal Values. Technological approaches should be in close association with traditional techniques and practices, to balance the digital with the tangible. Technologies have the power to enhance accessibility and connection to World Heritage, making it more inclusive; facilitating protection, management, disaster resilience and security. The effective implementation of technologies can benefit from the investment in training, future-thinking, and the integration of multiple knowledge systems.

Our World Heritage is all of ours, and with that comes a shared responsibility. We have laid before you a blueprint of the future and will spend our lives working to make this vision a reality. This future, however, relies on all of us building a strong foundation.

We are the future, and now is our time to act. Dhanyawaad.