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Afghanistan



The World Bank Group



United Nations  
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The French Archaeological  
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MINISTERO  
PER I BENI E  
LE ATTIVITÀ  
CULTURALI

ITALIAN MINISTRY OF  
CULTURAL HERITAGE  
& ACTIVITIES & TOURISM



AGENZIA ITALIANA  
PER LA COOPERAZIONE  
ALLO SVILUPPO  
ITALIAN AGENCY FOR  
DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

**Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan/ World Bank Group/ UNESCO**  
In cooperation with the Italian Government

International Symposium on  
**‘CULTURAL HERITAGE & DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES’**

*A challenge or a contribution to sustainability?*

Palazzo Barberini, Rome/25-27 May 2016

### **Outcomes Document**

We, the participants gathered in Rome on the occasion of the UNESCO International Symposium ‘CULTURAL HERITAGE & DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES’-*A challenge or a contribution to sustainability?* (25-27 May 2016), organized in collaboration with the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and the World Bank Group, wish to express our gratitude and acknowledge the generous institutional support of the Italian Government in hosting a forum to reflect on measures to strengthen the integration between the safeguarding of heritage and modernization processes and to enhance the contribution that cultural and natural heritage can make to the inclusive social and economic growth of a country.

We recall some of the most relevant policy documents adopted in recent years, including the Hangzhou Declaration *Placing Culture at the Heart of Sustainable Development Policies* (Hangzhou, 2013); the Florence Declaration *Culture, Creativity and Sustainable Development. Research, Innovation, Opportunities* (Florence, 2014); the 4<sup>th</sup> UN Resolution on Culture and Sustainable Development (2014) the *Policy Document for the Integration of a Sustainable Development Perspective into the Processes of the World Heritage Convention* (UNESCO, 2015); the Hangzhou Declaration *Culture for Sustainable Cities* (Hangzhou, 2015); and the Recommendations of the International Expert Meeting on Cultural Heritage and Disaster Resilient Communities (Tokyo, 2015), among the others.

We recall, in this regard, that culture has been recently mainstreamed into development policies and strategies, including the new 2030 Development Agenda for Sustainable Development. Indeed, the safeguarding of the world’s natural and cultural heritage has been recognized as a driver for sustainable development. Its contribution to green economies, to livelihoods, to the enhancement of resilience, to social cohesion and justice and human rights, and to economic growth will be crucial for future societies.

We are aware of the challenges affecting heritage, especially where the effects of massive urbanization, uncontrolled and unsustainable development processes, illicit trafficking of antiquities, and climate change continue to threaten cultural heritage preservation. We also underscore that

these challenges can be further exacerbated in conflict/post-conflict contexts, where decades of political instability have left local communities without governance with an impact on their cultural identity leading to a vulnerable conservation context. We therefore emphasize that especially post-conflict/ developing countries should recognize that heritage represents both an asset to be protected, as a way to foster peace and social cohesion through the respect of cultural diversity, and a resource to local communities in terms of job creation and poverty alleviation and a contributor to environmental health.

We recognized the importance of long-term and sustained investment to create tools and financial conditions for the implementation of heritage initiatives.

We acknowledge the urgent need to promote programmes able to strengthen this message and to show that the safeguarding of heritage properties and traditions is not a barrier to modernization, to the improvement of living conditions and to the economic growth of a country, rather a driver for sustainable development.

We consider to this end, that the following recommendations should be taken into account at regional, national and local levels:

### **1- Identifying cultural heritage and understanding the values**

- I. Strengthen investments on capacity building programmes, educational curricula, including e-learning, and awareness-raising campaigns to improve the capability of managing the necessary integration between cultural heritage preservation and modernization processes;
- II. Develop data collection, documentation and methodologies to assess the presence and significance of heritage, both tangible and intangible, to contribute to the planning phase of development initiatives and monitor possible impacts;
- III. Further develop information management systems which include (i) well defined information needs (for both cultural heritage and possible risks induced by new development initiatives); (ii) complete inventories and appropriate documentation of all heritage assets, including immovable heritage, artifacts and intangible cultural heritage, possibly on updatable digitized platforms.
- IV. Encourage studies aiming at better understanding the technical, social and environmental knowledge behind heritage to better recognize its relevance in today's world, side by side with modern technologies, and possibly improving them through retro-engineering research projects.

### **2- Strengthen sustainable development governance**

- I. Strengthen the legal and institutional frameworks, including enforcement mechanisms, to protect heritage, to facilitate addressing sustainable development issues, and to clarify the roles and responsibilities of concerned institutions and social actors;
- II. Include heritage and traditional knowledge considerations into master plans, land-use plans, building codes and other regulatory mechanisms, taking into account the specificities of each heritage context;
- III. Build International, Regional, National and Local Platforms for sustainable development to involve systematically all relevant social actors including representatives of the cultural heritage, education and development sectors;

- IV. Empower local authorities and social actors through the establishment of appropriate coordination mechanisms, improving communication protocols, adequate resources allocated as well as the necessary tools and trainings provided to address cultural-based regeneration processes;
- V. Include communities and the most vulnerable populations in planning and implementing conservation and valorization programmes to enhance their engagement to the preservation of their own cultural identity.
- VI. Strengthen measures to prevent illicit trafficking and establish instruments to facilitate their return to legitimate owners in line with UNESCO 1970 and UNIDROIT 1995 Conventions and taking note of other related efforts.

### **3- Invest in culture as a vector for inclusive social and economic growth**

- I. Promote the inclusion of 'Culture' in National Development Strategies, thus strengthening the importance of its role in terms of long-term strategic planning, especially in post-conflict/developing contexts;
- II. Invest in communication campaigns aimed at re-building and/or improving the perception of cultural heritage to create the basis for future sustainable development endeavors
- III. Establish public-private partnerships for the strengthening of the protection of heritage within development initiatives, and the harnessing of the potential of heritage to contribute to the social and economic growth of a country;
- IV. Strengthen the preservation of heritage within sustainable development initiatives through appropriate integrated people-centered/place-based approaches to heritage management;
- V. Strengthen capacity-building programmes relating to indigenous traditional knowledge systems and culture/creative industries to promote environmental sustainability, economic growth and social empowerment.
- VI. Establish and strengthen mechanisms to recapitalize cultural resources for future development.