



## Asia–Pacific Regional Conference for the 50th Anniversary of the UNESCO 1970 Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property

29–30 June 2021  
10:00–14:00 (GMT+7)

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### 1. Rationale and background

The Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property was the first international treaty concerning the protection of cultural heritage in peacetime when it was adopted in 1970 (hereafter ‘1970 Convention’ or ‘Convention’). UNESCO, as the Convention’s secretariat, dedicates its efforts to the fight against illicit trafficking of cultural property and to the implementation of the Convention through knowledge sharing, technical assistance, awareness-raising, capacity building and cooperation with State Parties and key partners. Fifty years of such joint efforts has contributed to strengthening the international legal framework against illicit trafficking of cultural property, significantly influencing public attitudes and professional ethics, raising global awareness and generally improving capacities worldwide.

Despite these notable achievements, the plundering and deliberate destruction of cultural heritage have not been significantly reduced. Alarmingly, for instance, the unprecedented growth of global illicit trade, especially through online sales of cultural objects continues to generate financing for terrorist activities. Climate change and natural disasters also cause damage and degradation to cultural property worldwide. Such trends have raised great concern and have recently given rise to calls for more proactive and effective implementation of the 1970 Convention, still one of the best instruments for ensuring that cultural property is protected and stays where it belongs.

Considering the cross-cutting role of culture in achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals, which enjoy increasing global recognition and new expectations, it is crucial to improve the coordination and alignment of the implementation of the 1970 Convention at the global and regional levels, to support the 2030 Agenda’s vision on fostering the universal respect of human rights, the appreciation of cultural diversity, and intercultural understanding

and global citizenship. Against such a backdrop, more and more Member States have called on UNESCO to further strengthen its actions against the illicit trafficking of cultural property and to lend more visibility to this issue on a global scale.

On 22 April 2020, the fight against the illicit trafficking of cultural property was recognized as one of the top priorities and major challenges by the virtual forum of Ministers of Culture organized by UNESCO. In May and June 2020, UNESCO convened several online meetings with key partners to share experiences, identify key measures and reinforce joint actions to face the new challenges brought on worldwide by the COVID-19 pandemic. It was noted at these meetings that while international priorities inevitably needed to shift away from cultural property protection to address the more urgent healthcare crisis, the rise of the pandemic situation has witnessed an increase in crimes against cultural heritage, the development of new methods of clandestine trafficking and a weakened capacity of law enforcement to proactively prevent and fight illicit trafficking.

The year 2020 marked for the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the UNESCO 1970 Convention. In recognition of this anniversary and despite the many travel restrictions necessitated by the pandemic, UNESCO has organized several celebratory activities in close cooperation with its partners. The international conference on [“Cultural Heritage and Multilateralism”](#) has been organized in Berlin, and a global communication campaign, [“The Real Price of Art”](#) was launched worldwide. Regional conferences have also been organized in [Latin America and the Caribbean](#) and [Africa](#). In October 2020, the Subsidiary Committee of the UNESCO 1970 Convention, in its [Decision 8.SC7](#), decided to extend the 50th Anniversary Celebration until 14 November 2021, primarily to accommodate the postponement of many celebration activities due to the global public health crisis. UNESCO has also invited States Parties to submit recommendations to strengthen the implementation of the 1970 Convention based on regional priorities for the ongoing fight against the illicit trafficking of cultural property.

The Asia–Pacific region represents one of the lowest ratification rates (48%) to the 1970 Convention.<sup>1</sup> This is doubly notable given that the region provides fertile ground for illicit trafficking of cultural property due to its rich cultural heritage, its emerging role in the global art market and easy accessibility to a number of global hubs. At the same time, the countries in the region are committing great effort to the fighting of illicit trafficking, especially in the area of return and restitution of cultural property, and their various experiences can potentially serve as great examples for others to learn from. All challenges currently faced, good practices and lessons learned, and regional and sub-regional priorities merit greater attention and analysis if

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<sup>1</sup> The 22 countries that have ratified the 1970 Convention include Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, China, Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, India, Iran, Iraq, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Palestine, Republic of Korea, Sri Lanka, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Viet Nam. Notably, only 8 countries have ratified the complementary 1995 UNIDROIT Convention on Stolen or Illegally Exported Cultural Objects (Afghanistan, Cambodia, China, Iran, Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Myanmar, New Zealand and Pakistan).

the Asia–Pacific region hopes to raise awareness and seek broader consensus on the combatting of illicit trafficking.

The Asia–Pacific Regional Conference has been conceived within this framework to celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the 1970 Convention, to take stock of concrete achievements to date and to collectively debate and agree upon a set of priorities for the region. It will target senior officials of national and local governments across various sectors (culture, law enforcement, foreign affairs, trade, tourism, etc.), national and international institutions, professionals and experts, representatives of the private sector and civil society, and cultural leaders and related stakeholders.

## 2. Objectives and expected impact

### Objectives

1. Identify key challenges in fighting illicit trafficking of cultural property in the region;
2. Identify current obstacles to the ratification of the 1970 and 1995 Conventions, and suggest ways for UNESCO Member States in the region to join these instruments;
3. Exchange good practices for fighting illicit trafficking and implementing the conventions, in a wide range of fields such as national legislation and administrative structures, capacity-building, cross-sectoral cooperation, law enforcement, international cooperation and mechanisms, return and restitution, and dynamic engagement with partners;
4. Promote stronger regional and sub-regional cooperation in the fight against illicit trafficking of cultural property and in implementing the Conventions.

At the end of this Conference, participants will collaboratively arrive at a list of challenges and priorities, and good practices and recommendations, which will be compiled in a report to be presented at the International Conference “The fight against illicit trafficking in cultural property: Towards a reinforced global dialogue” in September 2021.

### Expected impact

1. Awareness raised in Asia and the Pacific on the urgency to strengthen efforts against illicit trafficking of cultural property, as well as to ratify and implement the Conventions;
2. Enhanced legislative, administrative and enforcement capacities of UNESCO Member States in the region through the exchange of good practices;
3. Improved engagement among relevant partners;
4. Improved bilateral, regional and sub-regional cooperation among UNESCO Member States and with partners.

### 3. Agenda

Tuesday 29 June 2021

<b>Session 1: Opening and setting the ground</b>	
10:00 – 10:25	<b>Opening remarks</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Mr. Shigeru Aoyagi, Director of UNESCO Bangkok</li><li>• Mr. Lazare Eloundou-Assomo, Director of Culture and Emergencies Entity, Secretary of the 1970 Convention, UNESCO Headquarter</li><li>• H.E. Ms. Nomin Chinbat, Minister of Culture, Mongolia</li><li>• H.E. Mr. Hoang Dao Cuong, Vice Minister of Culture, Sports and Tourism, Viet Nam</li><li>• H.E. Mr. Itthiphol Kunplome, Minister of Culture, Thailand</li></ul>
10:25 – 10:45	<b>Background</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The UNESCO 1970 Convention by Ms. Duong Bich Hanh, Program Specialist, UNESCO Bangkok</li><li>• The UNIDROIT 1995 Convention by Ms. Marina Schneider, Principal Legal Officer and Treaty Depositary, UNIDROIT</li></ul>
10:45 – 11:05	<b>Keynote Address</b> <p>Setting the Scene: Asia-Pacific and the fight against illicit trafficking of cultural property by Prof. Dr. Amareswar Galla, UNESCO Chair on Inclusive Museums and Sustainable Heritage Development, AnantU, India</p>
<b>Session 2: Identifying key challenges and priorities</b>	
11:05 – 12:00	<b>Panel 1: Key challenges and good practices of fighting illicit trafficking of cultural property from sub-regional perspective</b>  <b>Speaker:</b> Dr. Simon Mackenzie, Professor of Criminology, Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand

	<p><b>Panelists:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ms. Lu Qiong, Director-General, Department of Laws and Policies, National Cultural Heritage Administration, China</li> <li>• Mr. Abi Kusno, Directorate of Cultural Protection, Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology, Indonesia</li> <li>• Mr. Maksat Argynbekov, Deputy Chairperson of the Committee for Culture, Ministry of Culture and Sports, Kazakhstan</li> <li>• Mr. Damodar Gautam, Director General, Department of Archaeology, Nepal</li> <li>• Dr. Mehmood-ul-Hassan, Assistant Director, Department of Archaeology and Museums, Pakistan</li> </ul> <p><b>Moderator:</b> Ms. Duong Bich Hanh, UNESCO Bangkok Office</p>
12:00 – 12:45	<p><b>Panel 2: Challenges of ratification of the two Conventions and legislative convergence</b></p> <p><b>Speaker:</b> Dr. Ana Filipa Vrdoljak, Professor of Law and UNESCO Chair on International Law and Cultural Heritage, University of Technology Sydney, Australia</p> <p><b>Panelists:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dr. Kono Toshiyuki, Executive Vice President, Kyushu University, Japan</li> <li>• Dr. Keun Gwan Lee, Professor, School of Law, Seoul National University, Republic of Korea</li> <li>• Mr. Tsetsegbaatar Chuluunbaatar, Culture Specialist, Ministry of Culture, Mongolia</li> <li>• Ms. Maleebhon Kumkasem, Senior Legal Officer, Fine Arts Department, Ministry of Culture, Thailand</li> </ul> <p><b>Moderator:</b> Mr. Etienne Clement, UNESCO Expert</p>
12:45 – 13:30	<p><b>Panel 3: Capacity building needs and improving cross-sectoral cooperation</b></p> <p><b>Speaker:</b> Mr. Corrado Catesi, Coordinator, Works of Art Unit, INTERPOL</p> <p><b>Panelists:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dr. Charlotte Galloway, Myanmar Research Centre, Australian National University, Australia</li> <li>• Mr. Lot Loeuy, Deputy Director of Heritage Protection Police Department, Ministry of Interior, Cambodia</li> <li>• Mr. Collin Sowani Yabaki, Director, Department of Heritage, Ministry of</li> </ul>

	<p>Education, Heritage and Arts, Fiji</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mr. Esteban Felipe De La Torre, Regional Coordinator, Border Management Programme, UNODC Regional Office for Southeast Asia and the Pacific</li> </ul> <p><b>Moderator:</b> Ms. Junhi Han, UNESCO New Delhi Office</p>
13:30 – 14:15	<p><b>Panel 4: Enhancing international cooperation, bilateral agreements, joint actions and good practice of return and restitution</b></p> <p><b>Speaker:</b> Etienne Clement, UNESCO Expert</p> <p><b>Panelists:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mr. Wen Dayan, Deputy Director-General, Department of Foreign Affairs, National Cultural Heritage Administration, China</li> <li>• Mr. Sipiriano Nemami, Director, Fiji Museum, Fiji</li> <li>• Mr. Ugo Boni, Counsellor, Embassy of Italy to the Kingdom of Thailand</li> <li>• Mr. Noel Hidalgo Tan, Senior Specialist in Archaeology, SEAMEO-SPAFA</li> <li>• Prof. Anura Manatunga, Director-General, Department of Archaeology, Sri Lanka</li> <li>• Prof. Gamini Ranasinghe, Director-General, Central Cultural Fund, Sri Lanka</li> </ul> <p><b>Moderator:</b> Ms. Himalchuli Gurung, UNESCO Beijing Office</p>

### Wednesday 30 June 2021

Session 3: Engaging stakeholders	
10:00 – 10:10	Recap of Day 1 and introduction to Day 2
10:10 – 10:55	<p><b>Panel 5: Voices of communities in the fight against illicit trafficking</b></p> <p><b>Speaker:</b> Ms. Adi Meretui Ratunabuabua, Chairperson of the Blue Shield Pasifika</p> <p><b>Panelists:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mr. Im Sokrithy, Heritage Watch - APSARA, Cambodia</li> <li>• Mr. Anuraag Saxena, Co-Founder, India Pride Project, India</li> <li>• Ms. Nassim Zand Dizari, Co-Founder, Sarvsaan Cultural Heritage Group, Iran</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mr. Chiri Babu Maharjan, Mayor of Lalitpur Metropolitan City, Nepal</li> </ul> <p><b>Moderator:</b> Ms. Nipuna Shrestha, UNESCO Kathmandu Office</p>
10:55 – 11:40	<p><b>Panel 6: Engaging the Art Market: online trade, responsible market, and professional ethics</b></p> <p><b>Speaker:</b> Ms. Charlotte Papillaud Loram, Researcher, University of Western Australia</p> <p><b>Panelists:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ms. Lucille Karen Malilong-Isberto, Founder, Hearth Collective, Philippines</li> <li>Ms. Linda Cheng, Managing Director, River City Bangkok, Thailand</li> <li>Ms. Tess Davis, Executive Director, the Antiquities Coalition, United States</li> </ul> <p><b>Moderator:</b> Ms. Moe Chiba, UNESCO Jakarta Office</p>
11:40 – 12:25	<p><b>Panel 7: The role of cultural institutions and museums in fighting illicit trafficking of cultural property</b></p> <p><b>Speaker:</b> Ms. Sophie Delepierre, Head of Heritage Protection Department, ICOM</p> <p><b>Panelists:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ms. Jiao Lidan, Deputy Director, Division of Museums, Department of Museums &amp; Private Collections, National Cultural Heritage Administration, China</li> <li>Ms. Nusi Lisabilla Estudiantin, Indonesia National Museum, Indonesia</li> <li>Mr. Tsetsenbileg Magsarjav, Cultural Heritage Specialist, National Centre for Cultural Heritage, Mongolia</li> <li>Dr. Jack Tsen-ta Lee, President, Singapore Heritage Society</li> <li>Mr. Richard Shing, Director, Vanuatu Cultural Centre, Vanuatu</li> </ul> <p><b>Moderator:</b> Ms. Aigul Khalafova, UNESCO Almaty Office</p>
<p><b>Session 4: Recommendations for effective implementation of the Conventions</b></p>	
12:25 – 13:40	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Presentation of a draft list of recommendations and actions</li> <li>Plenary discussion</li> </ul>

## Session 5: Closing

13:40 –  
14:00

Closing remarks:

- H.E. Dr. Phoeurng Sackona, Minister of Culture and Fine Arts, Cambodia
- Mr. Hu Bing, Deputy Administrator, National Cultural Heritage Administration, China
- Mr. Ernesto Ottone R., UNESCO Assistant Director-General for Culture