

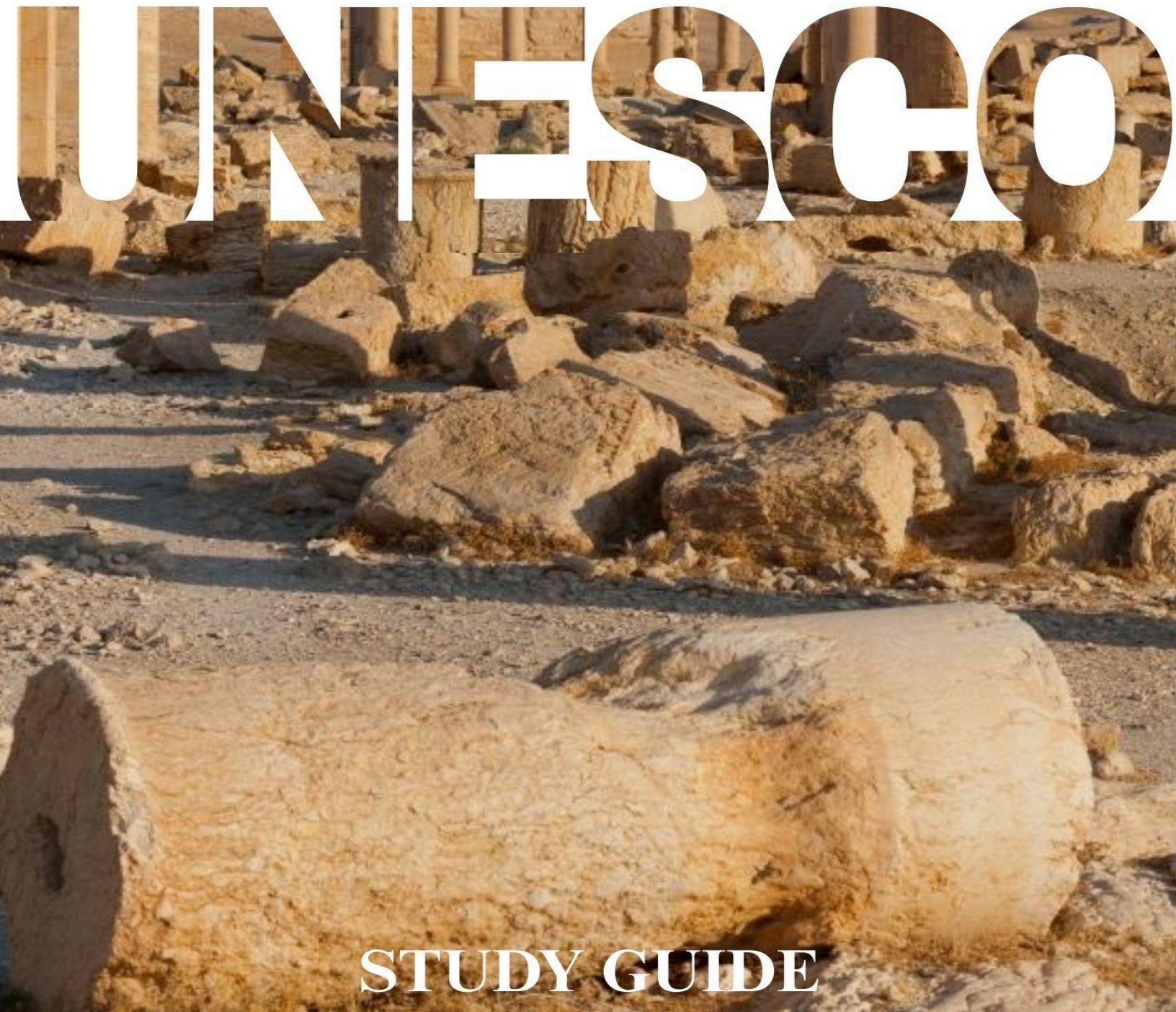


**United Nations Educational,
Scientific and Cultural
Organisation**



AGENDA:

**Deliberating Upon the Protection and Preservation of
Cultural and Scientific Heritage in Conflict-Prone Zones**



STUDY GUIDE



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LETTER FROM THE BUREAU

Namaste Delegates,

It is with immense pleasure that we, the bureau members of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation, welcome you to the 10th Iteration of the Shishukunj Model United Nations.

Before we begin, we would like you all to be informed that even though we have covered the 360-degree aspects of the agenda, it is crucial to understand that this guide only serves as a starting point for your research and not the entire basis of it. Individual research will help you understand the agenda more thoroughly and prepare you to perform well in the committee sessions. Delegates must abide by their foreign policy and see themselves as diplomats of respected countries. Being collaborative and creative will shape you in the committee sessions and the future. Further, we would like the delegates to acknowledge the fact that lobbying during the committee is essential, whether it be forming blocs together or simply helping each other throughout the conference. Also, practical and implementation solutions will be expected from all the delegates.

Now, as we dive into our agenda for this year, we would like to introduce you to the committee: UNESCO. As you all may know, heritage sites play a crucial role in laying the foundation and preserving the very identity of a nation's cultural and ethical heritage, making it pivotal to conserve and protect these sites. UNESCO precisely promotes world peace through education, science, and culture, and is committed to preserving prestigious heritage sites across the globe. Our agenda, **“Deliberating upon the Protection and Preservation of Cultural and Scientific Heritage in Conflict-Prone Zones,”** revolves around the ongoing intentional targeting of various cultural sites worldwide and calls for substantive solutions to prevent such actions. Please ensure that you read and research each of these subtopics thoroughly to gain a comprehensive understanding of the agenda.

Additionally, we have a zero-tolerance policy regarding the use of any form of AI and plagiarism; all solutions must be entirely original, and all sources used must be properly cited and presented during the committee sessions.

So, fasten your seatbelts and get ready to be part of engaging debates, meaningful discussions, and much more. We look forward to seeing you all and to making this conference a huge success.

Good luck!

Yours sincerely,

Nivedita Mehta, Chairperson

Kavya Dwivedi, Co-Vice Chairperson

Atharv Verma, Co-Vice Chairperson



INTRODUCTION TO THE COMMITTEE

The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) was established on November 16, 1945, to promote peace and security worldwide. It deals with the protection and maintenance of cultural heritage sites and works significantly for advancements in the fields of science, education, and culture. It is the only UN organization with a mandate to address every aspect of education. Its current priorities include eliminating poverty, ensuring access to education and healthcare for all, and protecting biological diversity and cultural heritage. 194 member states are working towards these goals, and 12 related members worldwide.

The workings as well as the focus are streamlined by the General Conference, which approves its budget every two years. The executive board (EB) carries out the decisions made by the General Conference, prepares the agenda, and reviews the work and budget. These decisions are then implemented by the Secretariat, led by the Director-General.

Its headquarters are located in Paris, France, an architectural landmark that reflects its commitment to globalisation and international cooperation.

UNESCO strives to instill understanding, knowledge, and respect between nations and lay the foundations of a unified, harmonious global community.



PAST ACTIONS

Over the course of the past 60-70 years, several measures have been taken by UNESCO to ensure the betterment and safeguarding of Cultural and Heritage Sites. Some of them are as follows -

1. **Various Conventions:** Various conventions have been recognized by the UNESCO committee, which has the aim of safeguarding cultural heritage. Some of these are-

- 1954 Hague Convention- This was the first international convention signed to safeguard cultural heritage during times of war
- 1970 UNESCO Convention on the Illicit Trafficking of Cultural Property - Its primary goal is to combat the illicit trafficking of cultural property by establishing a framework for international cooperation.

These conventions establish legally binding international frameworks that guide how heritage is identified, preserved, and protected, especially in times of conflict, or cultural destruction.

2. **International Charters:** International Charters such as the *Washington Charter* (1987), which was an international guideline focusing on conservation of historic towns and urban areas, The *Burra Charter* (1999) which provides guidelines for the conservation of places of cultural significance and emphasizes respect for all aspects of heritage and the *Valletta Principles* (2011) which also focuses on the safeguarding of historic cities, all are recognized by the *ICOMOS (International Council on Monuments and Sites)*, have the intent of Safeguarding and Protecting Cultural Heritage by focusing on the cultural significance of the place.

3. **Advisory Bodies:** Various Bodies such as the *ICOMOS (International Council on Monuments and Sites)* which is a global organisation that works for the conservation and protection of cultural heritage places around the world , *IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature)* which advises the *UNESCO* to conserve natural heritage and *ICCROM (International Centre for the Study of Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property)* whose aim is to promote the conservation of cultural heritage have all been formed which support the Protection of both cultural and Natural heritage worldwide.



INTRODUCTION TO AGENDA

The agenda for UNESCO this year is “ **Deliberating upon the Protection and Preservation of Cultural and Scientific Heritage in Conflict-Prone Zones** ”. This is not a mere concern, but a growing problem in recent times, cultural and scientific heritage sites of a country have been one of the most targeted sites during wars. Countries like Iraq, Syria, Ukraine, and many more have been the victims of this.

Scientific and Cultural Heritage is crucial for preserving cultural identity, promoting peace and are one key reason by which we know about a country. Cultural heritage includes various things such as old historical laboratories, museums, observatories and observation sites, digital archives, and much more. These resources are essential for scientific progress, education, innovation, and international cooperation, and when such heritage is destroyed, it is not only a loss to the nation but to the entire global community. In recent decades, emerging conflicts have placed scientific heritage at significant risk.

To conclude this, preservation and protection of scientific and cultural heritage is a necessity and to preserve humanity’s shared knowledge and progress. The destruction of cultural heritage sets back not just one nation, but the global scientific community and hence, it's important to save it.



KEY TERMS

- 1. Cultural Cleansing-** Cultural cleansing denotes the deliberate removal or destruction of cultural identifiers belonging to or related to certain groups or heritage in a geographic space, frequently tied to conflicts or repressive political administrations
- 2. Intangible Cultural Heritage-** the traditions, expressions, and symbols, as well as associated artifacts and areas, regarded by communities, groups, or individuals as part of their intangible cultural heritage
- 3. Tangible Cultural Heritage-** the physical, material entities that are culturally important and transmitted from one generation to another, i.e., buildings, artifacts, and paintings. It includes the objects and buildings that symbolize a culture's tradition, values, and history
- 4. Rapid response action-** an urgent and quick reaction to a given situation, usually an emergency or a crisis, to avoid harm or minimize damage
- 5. Cultural Emergency:** a condition whereby cultural heritage or practice is threatened immediately or has suffered serious damage through conflict, disaster, or other crises. It entails an urgency to halt the loss through rapid action, stabilize the situation, and recover cultural assets.
- 6. International Cooperation:** International cooperation refers to the joint action of nations, organizations, and other entities to address common challenges and achieve shared objectives in the international sphere.
- 7. Illicit:** any activity forbidden or prohibited by law or social norms for cultural property. This includes activities such as theft, destruction, or illegal export of cultural goods.
- 8. X-Ray Fluorescence:** a non-destructive analytical method utilized to identify the elemental composition of the material in artifacts, enabling researchers and conservators to learn their chemical structure and history
- 9. Radiocarbon Dating:** a method that is employed to find the age of organic material by measuring the concentration of radioactive carbon-14



10. Heritage Listing Process: recognizing and listing places and spaces of cultural or historical importance, to conserve them. It is a process of placing a site on a list of significant heritage sites to recognize its worth and allow for its meaning.

11. Community Engagement: a planned process whereby an organization or institution actively engages with community members to establish relationships, create communication, and coordinate interactions.

12. Photogrammetry: Photogrammetry is a technique that uses images to create 3D models of physical objects and environments

13. Art Forgery: Art forgery involves creating or altering artworks to falsely attribute them to a more famous artist, with the intent to deceive and profit from the forgery

14. Organic Materials: Organic materials, in a broad sense, refer to substances derived from or produced by living organisms



INTENTIONAL TARGETING OF HERITAGE SITES

Are heritage sites being targeted to erase a nation's identity and cultural footprint? Sadly, the answer is yes. Cultural heritage represents the soul of a country, its beliefs, traditions, and history. Destroying a country's cultural sites is a powerful weapon of war, as we have witnessed this in Syria, where ISIS deliberately destroyed Palmyra, and in Afghanistan, where the Taliban bombed the Buddhas of Bamiyan, both symbolic acts meant to erase cultural identity. Such targeting is not incidental; it is intentional, systematic, and ideological.

Moving forward, there is an urgent need to map and identify the heritage sites most prone to being targeted. Many such sites are located in conflict zones—Yemen, Sudan, Iraq, Ukraine, and parts of South Asia. These places are vulnerable due to weak governance, armed conflict, or religious extremism.

Finally, we cannot ignore the economic motives behind cultural heritage targeting. The destruction of heritage sites is not always for ideology; sometimes it is for profit. In conflict zones, looted artifacts are sold on the black market to fund terrorism and organized crime. For example, antiquities from Iraq and Syria have been smuggled and sold in international markets, turning cultural destruction into a revenue stream. This raises the need for stricter border checks, transparent art trade laws, and international cooperation to stop the illegal trafficking of cultural property.

Why is heritage being targeted?

Targeting of cultural heritage is intended as an attack on the communities for which the heritage is an essential part of their unique cultural identity. This not only steals lives in the country, but also “steals the souls of millions”. Highlighting that many cultural objects have a high commercial value in international markets, they are exploited by non-state actors to raise funds. For example, the antiquities division raised funds through the issuing of licenses for archaeological digging and collected taxes through the trafficking of objects. It has been estimated that many non-state groups made millions of dollars from their activities relating to the illegal antiquities trade.



How is cultural heritage protected?

Cultural heritage is protected in international law. The 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict was the first international treaty dedicated solely to the protection of cultural heritage. The convention obligated member states to “respect” and “safeguard” property during conflict. It also focused on the value of such heritage by stating that any damage to cultural heritage, regardless of the people it belongs to, damages the cultural heritage of all humanity.

Other protections of cultural heritage include the two protocols that supplemented the 1954 Hague Convention and the 1970 UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property.

3. The Illicit Trading of Cultural Heritage

Looters frequently target ancient tombs and historic sites, plundering artifacts that are then sold on the black market. This trade not only strips countries of their culture but also erases vital historical records that contribute to our understanding of human civilization. When artifacts are removed from their original context, the historical and cultural significance they hold is lost. This can make it difficult to understand the artifacts’ meaning and importance in ancient cultures. The looting of the Nok terracotta sculptures in Nigeria has deprived scholars of key insights into early African societies. This can have significant emotional and psychological impacts on the people who are connected to these artifacts.

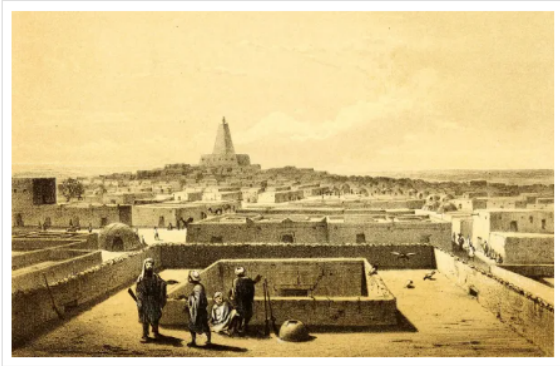
Cultural violence, as the deliberate destruction of tangible and intangible cultural heritage, has to be understood in terms of collective and intergenerational harms to a community. It is through sites and objects, traditional practices, and know-how that older generations communicate collective memory, knowledge, and identity to the younger.

What next?

The physical destruction of heritage can rupture social connections between the individuals within communities, and between these and the rest of society. The more intangible violence against culture occurs when communities are prohibited from practicing their religions, speaking their languages, or transmitting their stories and values to younger generations, can have even more long-lasting effects. Recovery is complicated by the dispersal of communities, the direct targeting of particular cultural groups and holders of traditional knowledge, and the loss of performance spaces. Both forms of heritage destruction can be viewed as collective and intergenerational harms to a community, since tangible and intangible heritage are the principal



means by which collective memory and shared identity are preserved. Focusing on the reconstruction of material heritage while excluding the repair of the intangible fails to appreciate the full range of heritage's meanings, roles, and capacities in society.



View of Timbuktu in 1858 by explorer Heinrich Barth



An undated photograph of Djinguereber Mosque in Timbuktu.



SUGGESTING PREVENTIVE MEASURES AND EMERGENCY PROTECTION FOR CULTURAL PROPERTY

Strategies to Safeguard Assets from Various Threats with Emphasis on Natural Disasters

Now we delve into one of the most crucial topics of our agenda, suggesting preventive measures and emergency protection for cultural property. Nature, though without which we would cease to exist, is also one of the most destructive forms of disaster. Natural calamities like tsunamis, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, etc, devastate various civil settlement areas, cause casualties of millions of lives each year, and obliterate prestigious sites, which causes great cultural as well as economic harm to countries. It has been recorded that approximately 40,000-50,000 people lose their lives due to natural disasters per year. It is pivotal to consider factors like location, environmental conditions, and structural integrity while formulating a proactive strategy for this issue. Some notable examples of the same are-

1. Kathmandu Valley earthquake 2015- A 7.8 magnitude earthquake struck Kathmandu in 2015, causing significant damage to various prestigious temples, ancient statues, and pagodas.
2. Christchurch Cathedral, New Zealand earthquake 2011- A prominent religious site, the Christchurch Cathedral, was severely damaged by a powerful earthquake that struck in 2011. In 2020, a restoration project was funded with \$104 million to rebuild the cathedral using seismic reinforcement and traditional design.

Formulation of Rapid Response Actions during Emergencies

This part of the agenda addresses the immediate actions to be taken when a cultural property is at risk or has already been struck by an emergency. In contrast to long-term preventive strategies, rapid response measures minimise damage during and immediately after an event.

This is to prepare for sudden, chaotic situations, such as after an earthquake or flood, when decisions must be made quickly to prevent damage. This includes how governments, agencies, or even civil residents can act swiftly to evacuate valuable items, stabilize various structures, or perform emergency conservation. These include: evacuation procedures, risk management, which provides for enhancing an individual's critical thinking abilities, etc. It highlights the



necessity of having well-defined protocols, a trained workforce, and efficient communication channels in place before a disaster strikes.

Sharing Global Knowledge and Resources to Protect Cultural Heritage during Emergencies

Protecting heritage sites isn't just the role of local and national governments but a global concern and responsibility. Given the above, keeping in mind the rising global tensions, calls for international cooperation and sharing knowledge globally to enhance countries' ability to respond during such emergencies and prevent maximum damage.

It includes the role of international organizations, such as UNESCO, and professional bodies like ICOM (International Council of Museums) and ICCROM (International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property), which work to build global capacity, provide guidance, and coordinate support during disasters. It is the need of the hour for everyone to learn basic emergency protocols and know how to respond to situations and acknowledge their responsibility towards their culture and heritage. This calls for international as well as national unity to preserve prestigious heritage sites



A temple lost to the earthquake in Nepal



PROMOTION OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Many of you would be aware that cultural assets have been of great importance in many places. For these cultural assets to be preserved, valued, and managed sustainably, it is essential to raise community knowledge and encourage participation in cultural heritage. This subtopic talks about how the community which revolves around a cultural heritage site, can be of importance and how we can engage the community to make sure that they are aware, and protect the cultural heritage sites around them.

Developing educational initiatives, boosting community involvement, and utilizing a range of communication methods are all components of increasing awareness and encouraging involvement in the community in cultural heritage preservation efforts. Organizing heritage festivals, workshops, and engaging local communities in decision-making are a few examples of how to do this. There is a huge importance for promoting cultural heritage, its awareness and community engagement. Cultural heritage enhances the traditions, history, and artifacts of a society that are regarded as valuable and worth preserving.

Participation in Heritage Listing Processes

Participation in heritage listing processes is one of the most important things. It refers to the active participation and involvement of the local community, local heritage organizations, indigenous groups. One of the primary reasons the involvement of these mentioned above is necessary is the unique and irreplaceable knowledge that communities hold. Traditional customs, their histories and the cultural rituals and much more information, may not be known by government officials. Participation matters because of its legitimacy and accuracy, sustainability, and its easiness to avoid conflict.

There are various stages in heritage listing processes, with the first one being identification of all heritage zones. This would include participation from local communities, researchers and NGO's to those heritage sites which they deem to be important and can be of significance. Once heritage zones/sites are identified, the next step would be to document those heritage sites, this would include research and surveys of the sites. Following this, it would be national organizations who would be responsible for evaluating and nominating the important heritage sites. Finally, it would include listing those heritage sites and managing them.



Promotion of Community Value with Emphasis on Traditional Knowledge and Community Engagement

Promotion of community value through traditional knowledge and community engagement is a must to promote development and to preserve cultural identity for a place. Traditional knowledge about a place is a principle and is often transmitted from generation to generation verbally, especially in remote areas. It includes everything from architecture, medicinal properties, rituals etc. Promoting this knowledge is not only about cultural preservation, but also about empowering communities to shape their futures through their heritage.

Active community engagement would ensure that preservation of cultural heritage is generationally protected. It can be done by a few methods such as festivals and heritage trails. This allows communities to tell their stories, insert their values among tourists, which in turn leads to more and more attractions benefiting the community and the heritage sites around it. To conclude, promoting community value with an emphasis on traditional knowledge and community engagement is an important key to building culturally rich societies.

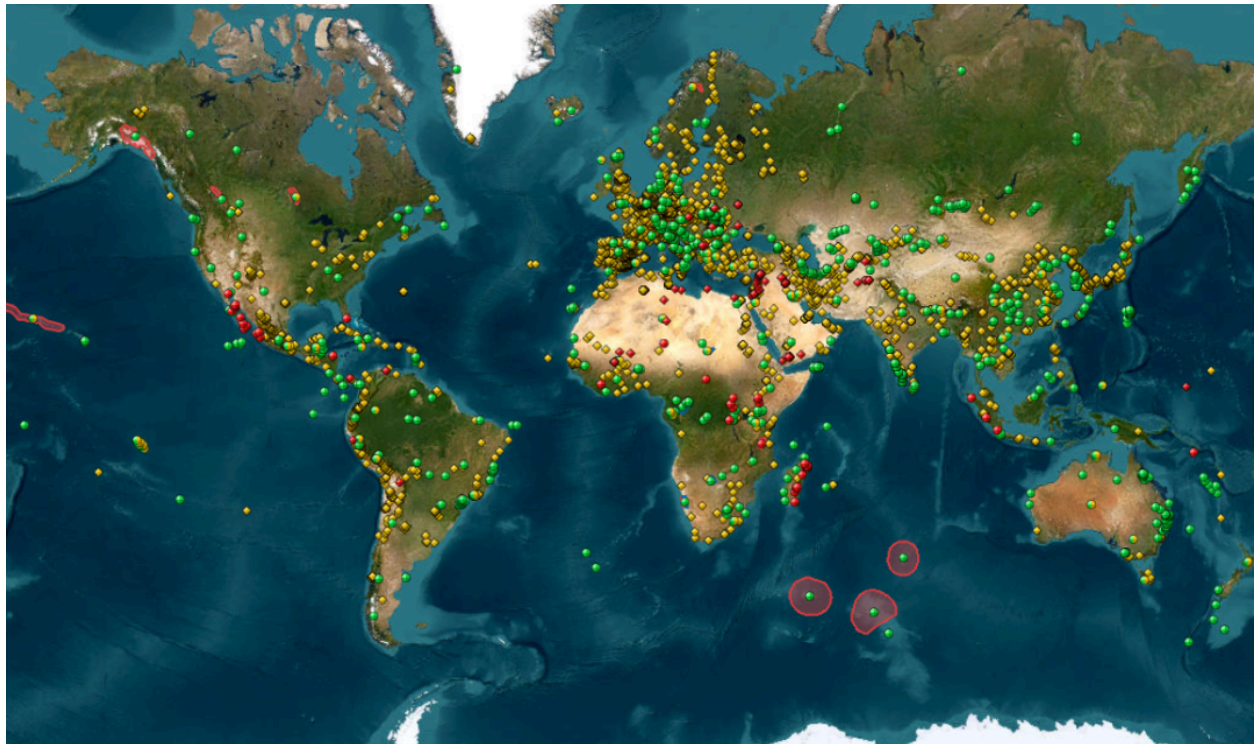
Using Heritage Protection as a Means of Tourism to Make Way for Jobs and the Growth of the Economy

Heritage protection means taking good care of cultural heritage sites. The sites in good condition would lead to more tourists visiting and those who are seeking authentic and meaningful experiences, which in turn would lead to larger revenue. More revenue will increase the economy for that country, and hence, funding can be received for cultural sites to be protected and preserved. It can be regarded as a powerful strategy and can generate more employment in various sectors such as transportation, hospitality, and guiding. However, it's essential to note that this should respect the cultural integrity of the sites and the surroundings.

Using Digital Platforms to Animate Historical Places and Raise Awareness

Social media and doom scrolling work hand in hand but what if we make it to take a turn in the positive and make it a platform to help raise awareness about various heritage sites. An option could be to use digital platforms and new technologies like VR (virtual reality), AR (augmented reality) and interactive websites. Digital animation of a site helps in a lot of ways, such as raising awareness, especially to young generations by making it more accessible and fun for them.

To sum up, digital platforms offer strong chances to protect, preserve and connect people to various historic places. Connecting technology and heritage will lead to greater awareness and global engagement, and would ensure that cultural heritage legacies will stay for a long time.



All the world heritage sites officially recognised by UNESCO

Source - <https://whc.unesco.org/en/interactive-map/>

USE OF SCIENTIFIC AND MODERN INNOVATION



Scientific and modern innovations play a crucial role in preventing damage to cultural property by offering advanced methods for preservation, analysis, and protection. These innovations include digital technologies, advanced materials, and specialized techniques that help to safeguard cultural heritage for future generations.

Role of Digital Technologies

3D laser scanning and photogrammetry are used to capture exact, accurate measurements and generate detailed models. Photogrammetry helps to create high-resolution, highly accurate models of cultural heritage sites. With photogrammetry, even if the object is struck with a tragic event such as a natural disaster or war, that object/site can be reconstructed from crowdsourced photos from tourists who might have visited that place in the past. These can also be combined from institutions to recreate the site. Photogrammetry also serves as a past and accurate method of transferring the real-world artifact into a virtual world. The created virtual and augmented technologies also enable cultural heritages from across the globe to be accessible to everyone in a 3d version, and it serves as a testament to how the use of modern technologies helps preserve cultural heritage sites and objects.

Use of Material Sciences

1. XRF

The role of techniques from the natural sciences is XRF, which stands for X-Ray fluorescence which is used to analyse the material aspects and is used in fields like art history, conservation and heritage sites. XRF also analyses the elemental composition of the materials by bombarding X-Rays. It is also useful for identifying pigments in paintings which is also done by the elemental composition of the layers and also determines the composition of the pigment and its origin. XRF can also characterize the materials including ceramics, materials and textiles helping archaeologists to examine the manufacturing techniques and materials used to create these artifacts. Also plays a pivotal role in verifying the authenticity of the artwork in context of art forgery by enabling the non destructive analysis of an art works elemental composition. Lastly the major

advantage of XRF is that it is non destructive in nature which allows for the analysis of fragile materials without causing much damage.

2. RadioCarbon Dating

Other uses of material sciences include radiocarbon dating which is essential in studying cultural heritage, especially those which are made of organic materials. It helps to



determine the age of the objects by providing a precise measurement of the artifacts age. Radiocarbon Dating also somewhat relies on Carbon dating where living organisms constantly take in Carbon including “ ^{14}C which naturally existing is an isotope of Carbon. When an organism dies, it stops absorbing Carbon and the ^{14}C within it begins to decay at a uniform rate. By measuring the amount of ^{14}C researchers can calculate the time elapsed since the organism's death. Similarly this method is used in archaeology to understand the timeline of past civilizations and artifacts. Radiocarbon dating involves sample collection of organic materials like wood, bone, charcoal and textile. After this, the sample is measured by the technique previously used, which helps us to determine the age of that artifact, helping to establish a timeline and helping in understanding the development of different cultures. To reiterate, radiocarbon dating is only applicable on organic materials like rock and metals and is only used for small samples as it can be expensive and requires special expertise.

CASE STUDIES



The case studies provided below are intended for delegates to gain a better understanding of the agenda in terms of protecting culture and heritage.

The Battle of Aleppo

Syria is a country torn with long years of war, with its social, economic, and cultural heritage all in shambles. This case study talks about the destruction of the World Heritage Site of Aleppo from 2012-2016.

The Battle of Aleppo, one of the longest and most deadly conflicts since World War II, raged for five years, from 2012 to the end of 2016, and involved a range of actors, both on the Syrian government's side (the Syrian army, Hezbollah, Iranian government forces, and later the Russian army) and on that of the opposition (the Free Syrian Army, the Aleppo Military Council, ISIS, the Levant Front and the Syrian Islamic Front). Kurdish forces like the People's Protection Units (YPG), other anti-Assad groups supported by the US, and the Turkish military were also used.

Culture Destroyed:

1. The Umayyad Mosque

The Umayyad Mosque in Aleppo, which dates back to the eighth century AD, was damaged as a result of the battles that took place in and around it. It was destroyed by terrorists in 2013 with explosives. The minaret was destroyed during fighting in April 2013. In September 2012, a huge fire in the covered suqs damaged much of the eastern side of the mosque and destroyed the library. In addition, the stone-tiled courtyard is partially destroyed

2. Prophet Hori "Cyrus"

As for the archaeological site that had been subjected to illegal excavations, deliberate vandalism, looting, and smuggling of antiquities. Here we mention the famous site of the Prophet Hori "Cyrus", which, according to reports, the archaeological site of the Prophet Hori "Ancient Cyrus" in the Afrin region in the northern countryside of Aleppo was subjected to systematic sabotage and illegal excavations by terrorist organizations, which led to extensive damage. Because of the illegal excavation using bulldozers by terrorist groups, to uncover treasures and archaeological finds for looting. The terrorist organizations also destroyed the pyramidal building that includes the archaeological tomb of the Prophet Hori and the construction of a two-storey concrete building within the site



next to the shrine, in addition to destroying parts of the discovered Roman house and the mosaic panel in it.

3. Intangible Culture

Intangible cultural heritage was also jeopardized by the massive destruction of the workshops, shops, storage facilities, and by the emigration of a large number of craftsmen outside the country. Unfortunately, a large number of people from Aleppo who fled the city also took with them the expertise inherited by their ancestors. Following the intensified conflict at the end of 2016, around 121.350 people of eastern Aleppo were registered as displaced as of 20 January 2017.

The destruction of heritage is a long-standing weapon used by one force against a people, resulting in the erasure of another culture's identity. Used as a means through which to dominate local historical narratives, suppress particular communities, and exploit resources (in the form of artifacts) for their gain.



A 2017 photograph in the northern Syrian city of Aleppo, which was recaptured by government forces in December 2016, shows a general view of the destruction at the site of the ancient Great Umayyad Mosque in the old city.



Bamiyan Buddhas

Two monumental Buddhist statues located in the Bamiyan valley of Afghanistan, and coming directly on the route of the Silk Road, the Bamiyan Buddhas were recognized as a truly important heritage site for Afghan Buddhism. These statues, built in the 6th century, standing at 115 and 174 feet tall, made them one of the tallest standing Buddha statues in the world at the time.

However, sadly, in the year 2001, following the orders of Taliban leader Mullah Muhammad Omar, these statues were destroyed by the Taliban groups over the course of 25 days. This act was a statement against the international community from the Taliban to display a political message to the world, as the Western Nations and UNESCO had urged the Taliban to preserve this monumental heritage site. The original statues cannot be completely rebuilt, as the destruction was extensive and the fragments were shattered, blown into thousands of pieces.

Two years after this event happened, UNESCO added the Bamiyan Buddhas to the list of World Heritage Sites and declared this area of land as “ World Heritage in Danger ”. Post destruction, UNESCO had made various efforts to document, preserve, and possibly reconstruct the sites. Use of various technologies like 3D imaging, drone mapping, and photogrammetry were used digitally to reconstruct the site, and there were plans to restore it. To date, physical reconstruction has not been achieved. However, some stabilization and reconstruction work has been carried out. Although destroyed, the outlines and some features of the statues are still recognizable to this day.

The fall of the Bamiyan Buddhas is a strong reminder of the fragility of cultural heritage in the times of war. Though the physical statues are gone, their legacy continues to endure stronger, representing not only Afghanistan's rich pre-Islamic heritage, but the world's responsibility to protect heritage without borders. Current global endeavors, digital reconstructions, and conservation efforts guarantee that the essence of the Buddhas inspires resilience, dialogue, and a new determination to preserve humanity's common cultural heritage.



A 1997 photograph shows an Afghan walking near the world's tallest standing statue of Buddha in Bamiyan province of Afghanistan, which were later destroyed by the Taliban.

Source - <https://www.history.com/articles/cultural-sites-heritage-wars>



CONCLUSION

Preserving cultural heritage is now a global responsibility, not just the governments', but every citizen's. Our culture and heritage are our reflections, how we were and how we are supposed to be in the future; they lay the foundations of our identity. In the first sub-agenda, the delegates are supposed to research upon the destruction of various cultural sites that are targeting the sentiments of the indigenous communities. You are also supposed to research any past cultural heritage that might have been stolen or damaged through the years, as it will also help you figure out your country's stance. In the second sub-agenda, delegates are expected to form solutions for the problems discussed, with special emphasis on preventive measures and rapid response actions. In the third sub-agenda, delegates are to focus on modern scientific technologies that are being used to recoup or replace the already damaged sites. In the fourth sub-agenda, the promotion of awareness and community engagement in cultural heritage, the delegates should focus on the various aspects of interactions between people through heritage sites and their role in social and economic development. At last, the case studies serve as examples of the great cultural damage wars bring to one country's heritage and the further psychological impacts on people.

Possible solutions-

The main agenda for the committee is to find solutions to safeguard cultural heritage, hence, we need the delegates to dive deep into a particular solution that they are presenting, ensuring that all the key aspects are covered in order for the solution to be effective and adaptable.

In order to help the delegates understand this crucial aspect, we introduce you to the "4 W and H Rule," which stands for What, Where, Who, When, and How. You are expected to use this rule to form achievable and relevant solutions.

To achieve that, you need to:

- Identify the root cause of the problems
- Recognize the area/place where the solution should be implemented
- Know the 'people' who will be implementing your solutions eg. the UN, NGOs etc
- Identify the resources and actions needed for the implementation of the solution

Most importantly,

You need to ensure that the solutions make sense and are implementable.



An example we take is climate change, which is a pressing issue. However, this is an example unrelated to the agenda or the committee and is presented solely for your understanding of solution creation.

To tackle climate change, the government has to be more active at the ground level. This solution is a bad example because it does not follow the “4W and H rule”. This would be a very vague solution. Now, to make this a comprehensive solution, we must answer all the questions that come to our minds. We must look at who will be responsible for doing this, how it will be done, and what ensures the solution is implemented properly.

So an epitome of solutions will be: “To tackle climate change, the government should implement activities like promoting renewable energy sources, improving energy efficiency, and adopting sustainable practices in transportation. Additionally, regular checks by an independent authority can ensure these practices ultimately reduce climate change.”



EXPECTATIONS FROM DELEGATES

It's important to recognize the crucial role that each delegate plays in shaping the discussions and outcomes of the committee. With this in mind, the bureau has outlined a set of expectations that we'd like you, as delegates, to keep in mind and follow.

1. The guide serves as the starting point for your research. We would like you to thoroughly read it and formulate your thoughts and articulate your speeches through it.
2. Please do not only stick to the guide, use reliable sources, and extend your research to all aspects of the agenda.
3. Try stretching your imagination to find innovative and practical solutions that haven't been thought of before and are also easily implementable.
4. Find nations on the agenda that hold similar beliefs to your own.
5. Examine previous agreements with other nations over the agenda and take into account regional alliances. Engage prospective ally nations in casual discussions.
6. Most importantly, make sure that all the information you present is authentic and verified, as the use of AI is strictly prohibited. You can refer to and use different websites that you have done your research from, but please strictly avoid plagiarism.
7. This guide is only a reference, and you are not supposed to directly write your speeches from the material provided in the guide.
8. The ultimate aim of the conference is for the delegates to come up with solutions to address the agenda. Hence, focus on a solution-oriented approach throughout your research.



QUESTIONS A RESOLUTION MAY ANSWER

Q1. How can cultural heritage be protected from intentional targeting? What measures can be taken to involve communities in decision-making processes regarding cultural Preservation?

Q2. What are the threats to cultural heritage and knowledge? How can this be Documented, and what support mechanisms are required for its preservation?

Q3. How can digital technologies be utilised to preserve and propagate cultural heritage effectively? How can it also be legally protected?

Q4. What strategies can be implemented to stop illicit cultural trafficking? What roles can the community play in these efforts?

Q5. How can we help bridge the gap between various communities and barriers that prevent the exchange of cultural knowledge in countries that are conflict-ridden?

Q6. How can rapid response actions be used to prevent damage to cultural properties? What are some rapid response actions for the same?

Q7. How can global knowledge be a key to preventing cultural damage? How can this knowledge be spread to increase awareness?



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