



Contribution of the Chair of the World Heritage Committee to the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) 2025

*The 2025 HLPF will review in-depth **the following SDGs**, without prejudice to their integrated, indivisible and interlinked nature:*

- **Goal 3.** *Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages.*
- **Goal 5.** *Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.*
- **Goal 8.** *Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.*
- **Goal 14.** *Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development; and*
- **Goal 17.** *Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development*

Introduction

A number of innovative actions, measures and policies to the theme of the 2025 HLPF, “*Advancing sustainable, inclusive, science-and evidence-based solutions for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals for leaving no one behind,*” have been effectively delivered by the Intergovernmental World Heritage Committee and the UNESCO World Heritage Centre (as the Secretariat for the 1972 World Heritage Convention) in response to the challenges posed by multiple crises including initiatives that promote heritage-based actions to meet Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at the national and local levels and to address key challenges that countries or cultural and natural heritage faces in line with SDG Goals 3, 8, 14 and 17. Furthermore, the actions have also been taken to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls and contribute transversally across several other Goals and Targets contributing to SDG Goal 5.

The World Heritage Committee has reaffirmed its commitment to effectively implementing the 2030 Agenda and its SDGs through several actions, programs, and policy advice. The 2015 UNESCO *Policy for the Integration of a Sustainable Development Perspective in World Heritage Processes* (World Heritage Sustainable Development) is an integral part of UNESCO’s overarching mandate to foster inclusive sustainable development and to promote peace and security, and with a view to ensuring policy coherence with the UN sustainable development agenda as enshrined in the document “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”.

The [UNESCO Policy Document on Climate Action for World Heritage](#) adopted in 2023 by the General Assembly of States Parties to the 1972 Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (World Heritage Convention) has been a landmark document addressing the urgent issue of climate change and its impacts on cultural and natural heritage. Within these frameworks, UNESCO has led various activities to advance climate action for World Heritage properties, while simultaneously advancing sustainable, inclusive and sciences-based solution for the 2030 Agenda and its SDGs.

Safeguarding Cultural and Natural Heritage

The UNESCO World Heritage Committee has actively worked to promote Sustainable Development Goals 3, 5, 8, 14 and 17 through the implementation of the UNESCO World Heritage Convention ensuring global health and well-being, advancing gender equality, fostering inclusive economic growth, protecting marine ecosystems, and strengthening international partnerships for sustainable development.

The 1972 World Heritage Convention has now been ratified by 196 States Parties (including all UNESCO Member States) making it one of the 5 international instruments most ratified in the world. This is a huge accomplishment and an indicator of the almost universal commitment to safeguard and protect cultural and natural heritage. 1, 223 World Heritage properties, of which 952 are cultural, 231 natural and 40 mixed, are included on the UNESCO World Heritage List, providing for a global network in 168 States Parties, with 49 being transboundary properties. The World Heritage Convention supports international cooperation and intergovernmental decision-making and the governance of cultural and natural heritage through its governing bodies, the World Heritage Committee and the General Assembly of States Parties who adopt strategic resolutions and decisions for the implementation of the World Heritage Convention. 56 properties inscribed on the World Heritage List that face

imminent and ongoing threats, including due to armed conflict, are placed on the List of World Heritage in Danger.

The World Heritage Committee at its 46th session (New Delhi, July 2024) decided to dedicate an item of its agenda to World Heritage-related activities for Small Island Developing States (SIDS) at each of its sessions as from 2025, as well as establish global priorities in advancing gender equality (SDG 5).

Since January 2024, 72 States Parties have been protecting and managing their World Heritage properties in the framework of sustainable development of which 16 in Africa and 8 SIDS). Their action, in many cases through direct UNESCO cooperation and in all regions of the world, ranges from risk preparedness, the development of management plans or impacts assessments to onsite conservation activities or support to local livelihood opportunities in and around World Heritage properties (SDG 8 and 17). Recognizing the importance of local communities living in and around World Heritage properties, the World Heritage Committee, in an important step, through its Decision **46 COM 7** called on States Parties to ensure full respect of human rights including the rights of Indigenous Peoples in the management of World Heritage properties.

States Parties have been supported in the implementation of gender-responsive educational and training activities, contributing to increase the active involvement of women in World Heritage conservation as site managers, project coordinators, architects or engineers. Several “cash for work” projects involved women in Mali, Iraq, Yemen and Cambodia in various fields such as masonry, silk weaving, building assessment or building maintenance, to ensure that their impact is significant and the work culture becomes organically inclusive to women, thus promoting further gender equality. Moreover, the activities focused on increasing the number of women enrolled in the capacity-building opportunities, which translated in Yemen to their direct employment contributing to urban rehabilitation activities in line with the set of skills acquired (SDG 5 & 8).

UNESCO has also strengthened international commitments to agreements like the Paris Agreement and the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), enhancing monitoring and accountability mechanisms to track progress on SDGs, and mobilizing innovative sustainable financing to boost investments in marine conservation (SDG 14).

World Heritage Sustainable Development Policy (2015)

Sustainable development has been mainstreamed into the processes of the World Heritage Convention by integrating related concepts actions and monitoring as appropriate. In the framework of the Third Cycle of Periodic Reporting exercise (2018- 2024), UNESCO has ensured the integration of indicators to measure the achievements of the sustainable development implementation of States Parties, in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the [World Heritage Sustainable Development Policy](#).

The [MONDIACULT 2022](#) Declaration, unanimously adopted at the UNESCO World Conference on Cultural Policies and Sustainable Development - MONDIACULT 2022, held in Mexico City, from 28 to 30 September 2022, sets out States’ common priorities in the field of cultural policies and outlines an agenda to mobilize and integrate the transformative potential of culture in sustainable development, calling for culture to be fully recognised as a global public good and as standalone goal in the international World Heritage Convention and development agenda post-2030. MONDIACULT 2022, contributed as Knowledge Partner for

the Group of Twenty (G20), and the Group of Seven (G7). Recently, the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted the '[Pact for the Future](#)', which also highlights culture's role in sustainable development and climate action.

Tools have been developed to support the operationalization of the World Heritage Sustainable Development Policy and emphasised the need for a platform of good practices in integrating heritage conservation with sustainable development, the World Heritage Centre's online platform "[World Heritage Canopy – Heritage Solutions for Sustainable Futures](#)", for heritage conservation-based solutions for sustainable development, has been developed and expanded to include over 65 case studies providing examples of innovative local implementation of heritage-based solutions. In addition, the *Policy Document on Climate Action for World Heritage*, which has been adopted by 196 States Parties in 2023 provides an outcome-oriented policy framework for the development of goals and targets at national and heritage site levels, the updating of national heritage management tools and action plans, and the facilitating of continuous monitoring of the implementation and review of this Policy Document.

a) Your assessment of the impacts of the multiple and interconnected crises on the implementation of SDGs 3, 5, 8, 14 and 17.

The interconnected crises of climate change, biodiversity loss, and loss of cultural and natural heritage are hindering the achievement of several SDGs. Natural hazards have impacted World Heritage properties in recent years – flooding in Afghanistan, Chad, Hungary, Pakistan, Spain, cyclones in Bangladesh and in Mozambique, earthquakes in Japan, wildfire in Canada and Mexico to name a few. Climate change is causing ocean temperatures and acidity levels to rise globally, altering the abundance, diversity and distribution of marine life (SDG 14) including within UNESCO World Heritage marine sites. By disrupting these marine ecosystems, climate change is threatening food security (SDG 2), particularly in regions relying on seafood as a primary source of protein. These impacts are being multiplied by biodiversity loss and the loss of cultural and natural heritage driven by unsustainable practices.

Following the adoption of the *Policy Document on Climate Action for World Heritage* in 2023, UNESCO has been collaborating with ICOMOS, IUCN, and ICCROM on the development of a Climate Action Toolkit to support its implementation.

In collaboration with the Group on Earth Observation (GEO), the Greek GEO Office, and the Academy of Athens, UNESCO assessed the impacts of climate change in 114 World Heritage cities in the Mediterranean, this has been carried out with a view to informing action. Based on Earth Observation (EO) as well Earth System Models (ESMs) and Regional Climate Models, the study shows that nearly two thirds of World Heritage Cities are experiencing at least one climate hazards and by the end of the 21st century more than a half of the selected World Heritage Cities will face at least two climate threat. This assessment shows that if no action is taken the compounding risks for world heritage properties and communities will rise, impacting the achievement of SDG 3 and 8.

The Policy Document has also informed a UNFCCC report on Non-Economic Losses due to climate change impacts that was published in December 2024, for which UNESCO was the co-lead focusing on Cultural Heritage. UNESCO identified the risks related to Non-Economic Losses in the cultural heritage sectors by providing several case studies of the impacts of climate change on the loss of indigenous and traditional knowledge as well as proposing ways forward where culture contributes to the

UNESCO, through the *Re|Shaping Policies for Creativity* (2022), which is the Global Monitoring Report of the 2005 Convention, has assessed that women in culture are paid significantly less than their male counterparts, and have limited access to resources, training and mentorship. These gender disparities in the field of culture frequently reinforce and perpetuate gender inequalities in society at large (SDG 5).

These challenges highlight the need for cross-cutting solutions that address the root causes of the interconnected crises, such as unsustainable management of marine resources, climate change, natural disaster, gender inequalities and the need to continue promoting resilience-based management approaches.

With this view, each time, the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies have reacted quickly to provide support as needed. The World Heritage Centre also provides technical and financial support for properties to minimize the risks of disasters as well as their impact, particularly for properties on the List of World Heritage in Danger. For example, in July 2024, Nauru became the 196th State Party to the World Heritage Convention with a view to protect its unique cultural and natural heritage against the significant threat that climate change poses to the country.

UNESCO has also supported the Resilient Reefs Initiative, which is a good example of a proactive approach to manage the impacts of these interconnected crises by developing and implementing tailored strategies to enhance the resilience of both the marine ecosystem and the communities relying on it in UNESCO World Heritage marine sites across Palau, Belize, France, and Australia (SDG 14).

In February 2024, UNESCO launched a new digital platform, the [UNESCO Urban Heritage Atlas](#) that leverages the power of digital technology to support the conservation and management of the world's historic cities and promote their diversity. The Atlas currently features 10 World Heritage cities from all regions that were part of the pilot project, half of them being on the African continent (SDG 3, 11 & 17).

b) Three key areas where sustainable, inclusive, science- and evidence-based solutions for achieving the SDGs and leaving no one behind are being effectively delivered, especially related to the cluster of SDGs under review in 2025, also bearing in mind the three dimensions of sustainable development and the interlinkages across the SDG Goals and targets.

- **Enhancing marine resilience through inclusive, science-based solutions for achieving SDG 14**

Today, UNESCO World Heritage List includes 51 marine sites spread across 37 countries. These UNESCO World Heritage marine sites are recognized for their unique marine biodiversity, singular ecosystem, unique geological processes or incomparable beauty. Collectively, these sites represent nearly 15% of the world's total coral reef area, more than 20% of the global extent of blue carbon ecosystems, and host nearly 35% of marine species classified as vulnerable or endangered on the IUCN Red List. The loss of these sites would constitute an irreversible loss for humanity.

Established in 2005, the [World Heritage Marine Programme](#) aims to support the States Parties to the Convention in ensuring effective conservation of marine areas of outstanding universal value—whether already designated as UNESCO World Heritage sites or potential

candidates. Its mission is to safeguard and promote the prosperity of these areas for future generations.

In the framework of this Programme, sustainable, inclusive and science-based solutions are being effectively delivered across various areas to advance SDG 14 and SDG 17, including through the establishment of new marine protected areas to protect transboundary biodiversity corridors (for example, the Eastern Tropical Pacific Marine Corridor that connects four UNESCO World Heritage marine sites), sustainable fisheries management using real-time satellite data (being implemented across many UNESCO World Heritage marine sites including the Galápagos Islands in Ecuador, Cocos Island National Park in Costa Rica and the Great Barrier Reef and Lord Howe Island in Australia), citizen science initiatives that involve local communities in data collection in marine protected areas, and nature-based solutions like blue carbon projects that help restore and/or conserve the marine ecosystems while also improving local livelihoods.

For instance, **UNESCO's eDNA Expeditions** recently engaged local communities in environmental DNA sampling to monitor marine biodiversity in 21 UNESCO World Heritage marine sites across 19 countries, providing critical data for conservation efforts and promoting global cooperation in protecting ocean health. eDNA Expeditions' 250 volunteers – ages 6 and up, from 19 countries – identified over 4,000 species. Their data suggest that warming oceans risk pushing many species outside of their known thermal ranges, raising key questions about how to protect them. This groundbreaking initiative demonstrates that people of every nation and of all ages can help document the ocean's rich biodiversity and the changes already underway. A publication [*Engaging communities to safeguard ocean life: UNESCO Environmental DNA Expeditions*](#) describing this initiative, its methods and findings, has been published by UNESCO in 2024. It includes on-the-ground stories of citizen science, inspiring readers to get involved in science and contribute to safeguarding our planet. Regular eDNA monitoring as described in this report can provide the data needed to support science-based decision making. It can also revolutionize the world's understanding of marine biodiversity—and help reach the global target of protecting 30% of the ocean by 2030.

With regard to capacity-building efforts and regional cooperation, the first regional meeting of UNESCO World Heritage marine site managers in Latin America and the Caribbean was organised at the World Heritage site of Península Valdés, in Argentina in September 2024. This meeting contributed to the exchange of best practices and promote collaborative strategies on shared challenges at regional level, with a focus on climate and environmental threats such as avian influenza, increased warming waters and other climate change related effects.

UNESCO has also supported the development of an underwater archaeological research project in Lake Titicaca in Bolivia to better identify the impacts of climate change on the lake and its derived effects on cultural heritage protection and conservation.

These projects align with UNESCO engagement in enhancing environmental resilience through inclusive and science-based solutions by both safeguarding natural and cultural heritage and revitalising global and regional partnerships for achieving SDGs.

- **Gender equality, an UNESCO Global Priority (SDG 5)**

UNESCO is committed to gender equality as a human rights issue and a precondition for sustainable people-centered development. As one of the Global Priorities, gender equality

underpins all of UNESCO's actions in the field of culture. In 2019, the World Heritage Committee has updated the Operational Guidelines of the World Heritage Convention ([Decision 43 COM 11A](#)) at its 43rd session in Baku, introducing the need for gender-balanced participation in every step of the implementation of the Convention.

Despite notable progress in recent decades, women are underrepresented in almost all cultural fields, including film, music, museums, art, heritage and digital media, particularly in leadership positions. UNESCO has assessed the gender gap in the cultural sector at the global level. According to [ReShaping Policies for Creativity \(2022\)](#), the Global Monitoring Report of the 2005 Convention, women in culture are paid significantly less than their male counterparts, and have limited access to resources, training and mentorship. These gender disparities in the field of culture frequently reinforce and perpetuate gender inequalities in society at large. Strengthening women's participation in and access to culture can also be a powerful means of promoting gender equality. This is why, UNESCO is working to integrate an awareness of gender into all its programmes and activities, including in the field of culture, in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, with the ultimate goal of closing this gender gap and achieving gender equality. This is also in line with MONDIACULT's call for more systemic inclusion of gender perspectives across cultural policies (paragraph 4, 7, 10 and 11).

A flagship programme of the World Heritage Centre on this matter is the **UNESCO Mentorship Programme for African Heritage Professionals**, which was developed in 2020 to empower, train and expand the roster of African experts, with the objective to establish a solid gender-balanced roster of heritage experts in Africa, by creating opportunities for junior heritage practitioners to strengthen the implementation of the 1972 Convention in Africa. This initiative, in partnership with the African World Heritage Fund (AWHF) and ICCROM, and in collaboration with ICOMOS and IUCN, aims to facilitate job opportunities, all while seeking to create a shared training and knowledge exchange platform between cultural and natural heritage professionals in addition to building collaborative and cross-generational relationships between experts. As of February 2025, the Programme has enrolled 60 African experts (30 men and 30 women) from 46 countries, and the target set by the Strategy for World Heritage in Africa to mentor 60 junior experts (30 men and 30 women) by 2025 has therefore been reached. This has been made possible thanks to the generous support from the Governments of Australia, China, France, Japan and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. This unique programme with balanced participation of both men and women reflects the Programme's commitment to promoting gender equality in the field of heritage conservation in Africa, therefore contributing to the two UNESCO Global Priorities, namely Gender and Priority Africa.

Another outstanding example is the project ***Promoting sustainable tourism and private sector engagement for inclusive community development in response to the COVID-19 crisis*** for World Heritage sites, financed by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). In 2021-2022, UNESCO engaged over 3,300 women as beneficiaries in 10 World Heritage sites. Women accounted for 69% of the beneficiaries, reflecting the project's strong focus on gender-inclusive recovery efforts. The project implemented capacity building initiatives on sustainable tourism and heritage conservation, and furthered digital literacy and business skills through a blended learning programme targeting artisan entrepreneurs and tourist guides. It also provided short term-employment opportunities in tourism and heritage conservation through a series of 'cash for work' programmes. The project upskilled thousands of women who had been adversely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, helping to build resiliency and support sustainable visitor

management in World Heritage communities. Participating sites included: Old Bridge Area of the Old City of Mostar (Bosnia and Herzegovina), Angkor (Cambodia), Colchic Rainforests and Wetlands (Georgia), Historical City Centre of Yogyakarta - Tentative List (Indonesia), Fort Jesus, Mombasa and Lamu Old Town (Kenya), Namib Sand Sea and Twyfelfontein (Namibia) and Trang An Landscape Complex and Hoi An Ancient Town (Viet Nam).

Further, under the Revive the Spirit of Mosul initiative and the UNESCO-EU cash-for-work programme in the World Heritage Cities of Yemen, special attention has been paid to promoting the employment of women in heritage reconstruction and the cultural and creative industries. For instance, Yemen cash for work consisted in a first phase (2018-2021; Funded by the EU – US\$ 11 million), in which over 4,000 young women and men have participated in the project; over 200 historical buildings, two public squares and street pavement covering 5,700 m² were restored and rehabilitated, with public infrastructure upgraded on 365 m² in three sites included on the List of World Heritage in Danger (Old City of Sana'a, Old Walled City of Shibam and the Historic Town of Zabid), as well as in the historic city of Aden. The project resulted in more than 50 specialized training courses benefiting 425 young women and men in the field of conservation and traditional building skills, while jobs opportunities were created for over 555 young people (including 239 women). As part of Phase II of the project, "Youth Employment through Culture and Heritage in Yemen – YECHY" (US\$ 22.5 million; 2022-2026)", UNESCO will expand the geographic scope of the project to target eight different governorates in Yemen; increasing the targeted areas by four new important cultural heritage regions in the country. The project will aim to create employment opportunities for 8,000 young women and men in the field of culture through a cash-for-work modality in urban rehabilitation and cultural programming.

- **Building on interlinkages between SDGs to promote Inclusive livelihoods and sustainable economic growth**

UNESCO support several projects and initiatives to promote sustainable and inclusive livelihood through heritage conservation and sustainable economic growth for all.

For instance, UNESCO organized a side event on World Heritage sites and MAB reserves during the 4th International Conference on SIDS in Antigua and Barbuda in May 2024, which showcased the importance of UNESCO designated sites in promoting sustainable economic diversification in SIDS.

Another example of sustainable and inclusive development and World Heritage conservation is represented by the case of **Lake Malawi fish conservation project**. In 2020, UNESCO, in partnership with Malawi and Ripple Africa, launched the **Lake Malawi fish conservation project** to protect the World Heritage site's ecosystem. The project focuses on sustainable fisheries management, protecting cichlid fish species, and enforcing fishing bylaws. With support from the Norwegian government, it has strengthened local committees, improved park management, and reduced illegal fishing by over 50%. Community awareness campaigns, incorporating cultural heritage like traditional dances, promote conservation and sustainable fishing practices. The initiative fosters collaboration between government authorities, local communities, and partners to restore the lake's biodiversity and ensure sustainable resource use.

Several activities dedicated to **enhancing livelihoods and tourism management** benefited SIDS in 2024 and contributed to Output 1.1: Creative entrepreneurship and sustainable

livelihoods promoted in SIDS of the SIDS Accelerators 3 (*Protecting and promoting culture for resilience and sustainable development in SIDS*).

For example, with the support of the UNESCO/Netherlands and UNESCO/Japan Funds-in-Trust and the UNESCO Earth Network, and as a joint effort among local indigenous communities, the Solomon Islands Government, local experts and UNESCO, a series of community consultation meetings and capacity building activities were organized in East Rennell in Solomon Islands, a property on the List of World Heritage in Danger, to enhance livelihoods and food security of the local communities, notably through promoting sustainable use of agrobiodiversity while strengthening environmental resilience by addressing impacts of climate change and diseases affecting locally consumed staple crops. Model farm workshops are being organized by Kastom Gaden Association, a Solomon-based NGO specialized in training and capacity-building in traditional food systems, to promote sustainable farming practices building on traditional knowledge and practices while maintaining World Heritage values. These activities are directly contributing to a number of SDGs and its ultimate goal to leave no one behind.

Belize, Cuba and the Dominican Republic have benefited from the capacity-building workshop on visitor management and sustainable and inclusive tourism, while Saint-Lucia has received International Assistance to improve the visitor's experience at the Pitons Management Area World Heritage site. Visitors' management is also an integral part of the management plan of the Botanic Gardens submitted by Singapore in May 2024.

Since December 2023, UNESCO Jakarta has been actively **engaging with university students, local youth, and communities around Borobudur Temple Compounds** through webinars and site visits. These initiatives have covered a range of topics, including the World Heritage Convention, management of Borobudur Temple Compounds, improving local livelihoods, safeguarding the environment from tourism impacts, and leveraging digital technology to transform World Heritage Sites into hubs for sustainable development.

UNESCO Montevideo contributed to the ***Food Atlas and Digital Platform for Safeguarding, Promoting, and Transmitting Foodways to Future Generations*** project by mapping food experiences related to Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) in Bolivia and Peru. This initiative highlights practices connected to World Heritage Sites and heritage cities, promoting food security, healthy eating habits, and sustainable production and consumption. Additionally, it supports climate action (SDG 13) by linking traditional foodways to sustainable resource use and climate change adaptation.

As regard to advancing Goals 3 and 8, UNESCO implements several activities aimed at the protection of natural World Heritage properties in tropical forest which contribute to the provision of ecosystem services such as clean air, water, medicinal resources and healthy soils. Through the project, "Promoting entrepreneurship and socio-economic development through eco-tourism and/or interpretation of Gabon's World Heritage (2024 – 2027)", UNESCO is strengthening local capacity and entrepreneurship by supporting the development of community-based micro-enterprises within the Ecosystem and Relict Cultural Landscape of Lopé-Okanda and the Ivindo National Park in Gabon. This initiative aligns with SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) and SDG 15 (Life on Land), thereby enhancing sustainable livelihoods while promoting biodiversity conservation.

UNESCO recently started the implementation of a project to strengthen community-based conservation and sustainable tourism at Cameroon's natural World Heritage properties. It is

promoting the participation of local conservation enterprises in the management of the Dja Faunal Reserve and the Lobéké National Park. Through this initiative, UNESCO is providing capacity building and direct financial support to 21 community-based institutions and associations representing indigenous peoples and local communities. Among the beneficiaries are seven women-led associations and five associations of the indigenous Baka people. This initiative aligns with SDG 5 (Gender Equality) and SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities), as it promotes gender inclusion, empowerment of indigenous communities, and equitable participation in natural resource management.

These projects and initiatives serve as key examples of UNESCO's efforts in working across SDGs, particularly by promoting inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all, gender equality and revitalising global partnerships to ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages (SDGs 3, 5, 8 & 17).

c) Three examples of measures to accelerate progress towards SDGs through well-coordinated actions in key transitions to bring progress to scale (food security, energy access and affordability, digital connectivity, education, jobs and social protection, climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution), building on interlinkages between SDGs to ensure cohesive progress.

- **Monitoring of Cultural Heritage to accelerate SDGs achievement**

UNESCO through the **State of Conservation** Information System tool offers a trove of valuable data on the state of conservation of World Heritage properties since 1979 and the threats they have faced in the past or are currently facing. Once a site achieves World Heritage status, its conservation is continuously monitored. The monitoring results inform the World Heritage Committee who holds nations accountable for their action (or non-action) to protect the special place for humanity. This oversight is carried out by UNESCO's World Heritage Centre in collaboration with its Advisory Bodies and is the only such mechanism in the world. Through the World Heritage Convention's Reactive Monitoring Process, UNESCO and the Advisory Bodies monitor and prepare evaluations on how States Parties protect their sites including by conducting field visits and collecting scientific data. In 2024, the World Heritage Committee has examined 123 State of Conservation reports on 123 properties located in 76 States Parties. The majority of the reports concerned threats related to management systems/management plan (87) and housing (49).

Periodic Reporting is the other core conservation monitoring mechanism of the World Heritage Convention. Every eight years or so, the States Parties are invited to submit to the World Heritage Committee a Periodic Report on the application of the World Heritage Convention in their territory. States Parties are requested to submit reports on the legislative and administrative provisions they have adopted and other actions which they have taken for the application of the Convention. Additionally, the reports include the state of conservation of the World Heritage properties located on their territories. Periodic Reporting is important for an effective long-term conservation of the properties inscribed, as well as to strengthen the credibility of the implementation of the Convention. It is also an important tool for assessing

the implementation by States Parties and World Heritage properties of policies adopted by the World Heritage Committee and the General Assembly.

The Third Cycle of Periodic Reporting exercise (2018 - 2024) integrated Sustainable Development policy (WH-SDP) and the UN 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda within in its framework. The Monitoring Indicators that were developed for this Cycle include “Sustainable Development”, which measures the application of the Convention contributing to environmental sustainability, inclusive social development, and inclusive economic development, as well as the fostering of peace and security. For example, the Third Cycle of Periodic Reporting revealed that the States Parties consider that the inscription of properties on the World Heritage List contributes to achieving objectives related to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, mainly in areas such as: promoting economic investment and quality tourism (89%), protecting biological and cultural diversity and providing ecosystem services and benefits (87.4%) and strengthening capacity-building, innovation and local entrepreneurship (80.1%). These data provided by the States Parties allow analysis of the progress made towards integrating a Sustainable Development perspective in the implementation of the Convention as well as in the management of World Heritage properties.

Measures to accelerate progress toward SDGs, particularly in addressing interconnected challenges like climate change, food security and biodiversity loss, include aligning climate and biodiversity policies to create synergies, fostering a blue economy that promotes sustainable marine resource management and sustainable jobs that reduce pressures on marine ecosystems, and utilizing new technologies like environmental DNA for biodiversity monitoring and satellite technology for real-time data on illegal fishing.

As an example, several UNESCO World Heritage marine sites are in the process of establishing blue carbon projects that will work to restore and better conserve seagrass and mangrove ecosystems through engaging the local community in management efforts as well as educating the community on the importance of these blue carbon ecosystems for things like food security and disaster risk reduction, thereby also improving the livelihoods and education of the local community. Blue carbon strategies have been developed at the national level for several countries hosting UNESCO World Heritage marine sites (e.g. Costa Rica, Indonesia and Australia) to facilitate this.

- **Measuring Culture’s contribution to the 2030 Agenda**

The UNESCO Thematic Indicators for Culture (*UNESCO Culture|2030 Indicators*) is a framework of thematic indicators whose purpose is to measure and monitor the progress of culture’s enabling contribution to the national and local implementation of the Goals and Targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The framework assesses both the role of culture as a sector of activity, as well as the transversal contribution of culture across different SDGs and policy areas.

The framework, developed following extensive consultation with international experts and in collaboration with the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS), is composed of 22 indicators across four thematic dimensions: “Environment & Resilience”, “Prosperity & Livelihoods”, “Knowledge & Skills”, and “Inclusion & Participation”. 30 SDG Targets across the 17 SDG Goals have been identified where culture contributes across the six UNESCO Culture Conventions and the three recommendations.

The first cycle of implementation of the *UNESCO Culture|2030 Indicators* took place during 2021–2023 with 12 countries and 14 cities using the methodology to construct the 22 indicators. The second cycle of implementation is ongoing with more than 15 countries and 15 cities participating in the initiative. The first cycle of implementation was supported by the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID), the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), the European Union (EU) and UNESCO. Sida and the EU continue to support financially also the second implementation cycle. The initiative has highlighted the institutional, regulatory and policy issues that need to be structured to harness the full potential of culture for sustainable development.

Considering the mapping of specific SDG Targets across the 17 Goals, implementing the framework allows countries and cities to gather evidence-based information on the contribution of culture to the achievement of these SDG Targets.

In particular, the contribution of culture to **SDG 14** is included under the first dimension “Environment & Resilience”, with the conservation of natural heritage, including water ecosystems and marine areas (target 14.5_marine areas conservation).

SDG 8 is included in the second and third dimensions, “Prosperity & Livelihoods” and “Knowledge & Skills”. The second dimension focuses on assessing the contribution of culture in driving more inclusive and sustainable economies, by generating income and employment, as well as stimulating revenue through cultural goods, services, and enterprises. The third dimension focuses on the contribution of culture to the transmission of local cultural values, knowledge and skills and fostering empowerment through education training, processes, policies and materials. The Culture sector has a direct and significant impact on GDP and jobs and businesses creation, notably in the field of heritage conservation and heritage tourism. Jobs are also created through the cultural and creative sectors, which open the possibility of professional vocations, training young people and adults for decent jobs, and enhancing innovation and entrepreneurship. (target 8.3_Jobs, entrepreneurship & innovation; Target 8.9_Policies for sustainable tourism).

Key findings from the first cycle implementation are summarised in the Cultural profiles generated for each participating country and city. To provide some examples, among others, in the Philippines, regularly hit by flooding and landslides, the implementation highlighted that there is insufficient focus on safeguarding heritage from the impacts of climate change. It was also stressed the need to ratify the Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage considering its rich underwater natural and cultural heritage, as well as the potential, both in curatorial and economic terms, of its 2,229,438 square kilometres of territorial waters that is rich in marine life. In Colombia, the implementation identified that there was no monitoring review of the contribution of national forests and marine sites to climate change mitigation in the last 5 years. (**SDG 14**).

In Morocco, it was found that small craft businesses contribute enormously to the growth of the economy. The key role of the craft sector was demonstrated by its 0.84% contribution to GDP and 5.2% to employment as well as its expanded role in consumption. Culture creates 5.2% of total employment, rising to 10.4% if crafts are included. Tourism remains a key driver of demand for the craft sector with strong cultural content, as emphasized by the 2030 Handicrafts Development Strategy, which aims to develop sustainable tourism policies that enhance local culture. Similarly, findings in Costa Rica demonstrated that thanks to the early adoption of the Cultural Satellite Account, it was possible to document culture’s contribution to economic growth in both GDP and jobs at 1.9% per annum since 2010. Local cultural products

and sustainable tourism play a strong part in this, providing evidence of interministerial cooperation between bodies responsible for culture and tourism. In the same vein, it emerged that the city of Hue (Viet Nam) diversified more investment in creative industries, including the formation of incubators for creative start-ups and a moved towards expanding more entrepreneurial private sector businesses, demonstrating culture's role as a driver of job creation, entrepreneurship and innovation.

In Morocco, it appears that small craft businesses contribute enormously to the growth of the economy with its 0.84% contribution to GDP and 5.2% to employment as well as its expanded role in consumption. Culture creates 5.2% of total employment, rising to 10.4% if crafts are included. In the Philippines, the implementation also highlighted that cultural policies are designed to support the creative industries, particularly small cultural businesses and artists, including by providing relevant training. These contribute to create jobs and new business as well as to sustained growth to exports. **(SDG 8)**.

The above-mentioned examples provide a snapshot of the insights gained by implementing the *UNESCO Culture|2030 Indicators* that equip countries and cities to identify the appropriate policies and actions to foster the achievement of the SDGs.

As an overarching priority, gender equality **(SDG 5)** is addressed transversally across the framework rather than only through a specific indicator dedicated to gender. As methods supporting the construction of indicators can be either quantitative or qualitative, the gender dimension is tackled by collecting sex-disaggregated data and by including at least one item on gender issues in the qualitative checklists. This allows the appreciation of sex disaggregation across a number of data points from access to opportunities and participation in social, economic, political and cultural life. For instance, in Costa Rica, the implementation confirmed the need to keep combining gender and environment, highlighting the important role played by women in the sustainable environmental management of resources with around 12,598 women producers who own 106,564 hectares of land in different regions of the country, representing 15.6% of all farms and 8.1% of the total agricultural area belonging to individuals. In Burkina Faso, the 2009 National Plan for Gender Equality, along with actions by professional bodies are identified as instruments to support the advancement of women as culture professionals, promoting gender equality and supporting the empowerment of all women and girls in all fields, including culture. **(SDG 5)**.

Finally, the *UNESCO Culture|2030 Indicators* initiative as a whole contributes transversally to **SDG 17** by the very nature of UNESCO's multilateral structure and operation, including through the Culture Conventions.

- **Promoting international cooperation and global partnerships (Goal 17 - Partnerships to achieve the Goal)**

The implementation of the World Heritage Convention builds on international cooperation and global partnerships to address global inequalities and enhance protection of the world's cultural and natural heritage. Three key vectors for international cooperation include World Heritage International Assistance, technical assistance provided through UNESCO Funds-in-Trust supported by donor countries and transboundary and transnational projects.

International Assistance under the World Heritage Convention provides financial assistance to States Parties to the World Heritage Convention in order to help them protect the cultural and natural heritage sites inscribed on the World Heritage List or on the List of World Heritage

in Danger. States Parties may request International Assistance for Conservation and Management of their World Heritage properties, Emergency Assistance to address threats facing a property, or Preparatory Assistance with a view to developing their Tentative Lists or nomination dossiers.

In 2023-2024, State Parties submitted 101 International Assistance requests for funding from the World Heritage Fund, of which 55 were approved, including 62% from the Africa region, 18% from Asia and the Pacific, 11% from Latin America and the Caribbean, and 9% from Arab States. In all regions, most of the funded projects concern conservation assistance (58%) and preparatory assistance (33%). 5 Emergency Assistance requests were also approved: one for recovery plan in two World Heritage sites in Chad (Ennedi Massif and Lakes of Ounianga) following the damages caused by flooding and rising water levels since July 2024; one for restoration of the western tower of Aleppo City Wall (Adjacent to the Qinsreen Gate) one for the design and implementation of remediation measures of illegal works (opening of a new road and cutting of trees) at the World Heritage property Ouadi Qadisha (the Holy Valley) in Lebanon; one for reconstruction and stabilization of sections of Thimlich Ohinga dry stone walls in Kenya; one for mitigating the effects of an oil spill that occurred on 23-24 January 2023 in the Socotra Archipelago in Yemen from an oil tanker.

In terms of emergency, UNESCO and the World Heritage Centre further supports risk management, emergency preparation, and recovery through projects and funds, including through the Heritage Emergency Fund (HEF).

The **Heritage Emergency Fund**, a multi-donor fund for the protection of culture in emergencies, was established by UNESCO in 2015 to respond effectively to crises resulting from armed conflicts and disasters. The Fund finances activities in emergency preparedness and response within the domains of the UNESCO Culture Conventions.

UNESCO works with Member States by strengthening their ability to prevent, mitigate, and recover the loss of cultural heritage and diversity in emergencies and by advocating for the integration of the protection of culture into humanitarian action, security strategies, and peace-building processes, including harnessing the potential of culture to strengthen resilience and support recovery.

In 2024, the UNESCO Heritage Emergency Fund was activated to face two extreme weather events that occurred in Brazil, the floods in Rio Grande do Sul and the fires in the Pantanal. At the end of April, Rio Grande do Sul faced one of the biggest climate disasters in its history. The floods lasted for weeks, affected more than 2 million people in 471 municipalities and caused numerous damages to cultural institutions throughout the state. According to data from the government of Rio Grande do Sul, 50 museums, 41 libraries and 42 archives were affected. With resources from the Heritage Emergency Fund, UNESCO mobilized an international emergency mission, with experts to prepare a *Post-Flood Needs Report*, built a *Practical Guide for cultural emergencies*, and held *Training Workshops on Cultural Emergencies for Movable Property*, which had 185 enrolled in 3 online modules and 1 face-to-face module held in the municipalities of Porto Alegre, Dona Francisca and Rio Grande. In the central region of the country, another emergency directly linked to climate change also had activities financed by the Emergency Heritage Fund. The world's largest tropical floodplain, the Pantanal, which has been a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve since 2000, has been destroyed by a series of fires. To strengthen resilience to disasters and to protect two sites inscribed on the World Natural Heritage list, the "Pantanal Conservation Area" and the "Cerrado Protected Areas: Chapada

dos Veadeiros and Emas National Park", the fund was activated and financed capacity-building activities of local agents for the preparation and response to emergencies caused by fires. Among the actions suggested for adaptation to climate change, there are the mapping of the threats that cause the greatest impacts on the Pantanal's water resources, and the structuring and application of communication plans to sensitize the population about the importance of the Pantanal's headwaters to ensure the survival of its biodiversity.

Following torrential rains in July and August 2024, and a request from the Minister of Culture of Yemen and Permanent Delegation of Yemen to UNESCO, the UNESCO Doha Office led emergency responses to impacts of disasters on Yemen's vulnerable heritage sites. Emergency kits for house owners were provided to the communities living within the historical buildings of the Old city of Sana'a and Historic Town of Zabid, World Heritage sites in danger. In November 2024, emergency repairs were undertaken on five historic buildings in the Old City of Sana'a, ensuring their structural stability and safeguarding the livelihoods of local communities. The emergency intervention addressed the houses Abu-Talib, Al-Soraihi, Jahwash, Zaid and Al-Sanan. The repairs addressed structural damages in walls, ceilings, and strengthening unstable parts in the buildings, while ensuring the use of traditional building materials in implementing the works.

A few examples of initiatives/projects of global level with multilateral cooperation

In November 2023, UNESCO, IUCN, and the Netherlands Commission for Environmental Assessment (NCEA) have signed an agreement to facilitate cooperation to support States Parties in undertaking Strategic Environmental Assessments (SEAs) and Environmental and Social Impact Assessments (ESIAs) for World Heritage sites, by reinforcing capacity building and quality assurance. In 2024, NCEA provided a coaching to Thailand to assist implementing the World Heritage Committee's request to undertake a SEA for Dong Phrayayen-Khao Yai Forest Complex in Thailand.

In August 2024, Asunción hosted the presentation of the initial results of the project 'Design and implementation of the Risk Management Plan for the Jesuit Missions of Santísima Trinidad de Paraná and Jesús de Tavarangüe, World Heritage site in Paraguay', financed by the Netherlands Funds-in-Trust and implemented by the National Secretariat of Tourism-SENATUR and UNESCO Montevideo, in coordination with the Latin America and Caribbean Unit of the UNESCO World Heritage Centre. The work carried out for the preparation of the risk management plan document through various workshops and training sessions lays the foundations for a long-term inter-institutional commitment between SENATUR and the National Secretariat of Culture-SNC, as well as coordination with local and departmental governments and other key institutions of the central administration, such as the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, National Emergency Secretariat, National Institute of Indigenous People, Armed Forces, National Police, INTERPOL Paraguay, among others. This cooperation will continue in the future to further develop risk prevention and risk management protocols that will prevent or reduce the negative effects of potential disasters on the World Heritage property and thus protect its outstanding universal value.

UNESCO contributed to the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework by organising an expert meeting in November 2024 to better harness the contribution of the World Heritage Convention to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, and by supporting Member States in their actions to implement national biodiversity strategies and action plans through improved conservation and management of UNESCO-designated sites.

The World Heritage Volunteers 2024 Campaigns consisted of 76 action camp projects implemented at 68 World Heritage properties and sites on the Tentative Lists, by 57 organizations in 36 countries around the globe promoting concrete awareness-raising and hands-on activities at the sites, carried out by young volunteers, NGOs and institutions, and local communities.

With regard to supporting and promoting **transboundary and transnational cooperation**, the World Heritage Convention has proven to be a powerful tool to strengthen international cooperation on shared heritage resources and promoting sustainable development by combining a global standard framework with the development of operational projects and concrete collaboration.

The inscription of the Qhapaq Ñan, Andean Road System in itself is an outstanding example of international cooperation. After more than a decade of collaboration, six countries—Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru—have established a robust and innovative participatory management structure for this serial transboundary cultural itinerary. With the guidance of the World Heritage Centre, these nations have been working together to develop joint conservation and monitoring strategies, safeguard intangible heritage, and implement risk preparedness and disaster management approaches. They also created a framework for Heritage Impact Assessments (HIAs) to prevent potential developments in and around the property from harming the site’s Outstanding Universal Value (OUV), ensuring the long-term protection of this remarkable legacy. These collaborative efforts and best practices have been documented in an UNESCO publication, *Qhapaq Ñan, Andean Road System: New steps towards its sustainable conservation* (2021), which serves as a valuable resource for ongoing and future conservation initiatives.

A key strength of the Qhapaq Ñan’s conservation approach lies in its deep-rooted emphasis on community participation and local development, particularly involving indigenous peoples. This helps to foster a sense of shared responsibility and cultural pride. The ongoing efforts of these six nations exemplify how international partnerships can successfully balance conservation, cultural identity, and sustainable development, making Qhapaq Ñan a global model for transnational heritage protection.

Recently, UNESCO supported the feasibility study of a potential transboundary extension of the Okavango Delta World Heritage property to Angola and Namibia. In addition, Saint-Vincent-and-the-Grenadines and Grenada have received upstream support for a potential transboundary nomination.

UNESCO is also supporting States Parties in Asia to enhance **transnational and regional cooperation**. Following the adoption of the *Regional Framework Action Plan for World Heritage in the region of Asia and the Pacific 2023-2030* developed based on the results of the Third Cycle of the Periodic Reporting for Asia and the Pacific region, UNESCO organized a series of sub-regional workshops for the appropriation of the Regional Framework Action Plan, including for the Pacific (Suva, November 2023), for Southeast Asia (Bangkok, August 2024), for East Asia (Beijing, October 2024) and for Central Asia (Almaty, October 2024), which resulted in the identification of priority actions based on the national and sub-regional needs. In the framework of the UNESCO/Republic of Korea Funds-in-Trust project “*Enhancing Transnational Cooperation and Fostering Peace: Natural and Mixed World Heritage in Asia*”, and based on the outcome of the sub-regional workshop held in Almaty in October 2024, the World Heritage Centre and the UNESCO Regional Office in Almaty, in close cooperation with the Advisory Bodies and experts, are developing capacity-building activities with aim to

enhance transnational cooperation and management in Central Asia, including the organisation of a capacity-building workshop in April 2025 for the serial transnational property 'Western Tien-Shan' (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan) to support ongoing efforts by the concerned States Parties and site managers to strengthen their joint management and governance of the serial transnational property.

d) Follow-up actions and measures being undertaken by your intergovernmental body or forum to support implementation of the 2023 SDG Summit Political Declaration and the outcomes of the 2024 Summit of the Future, to advance the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The adoption of the "Pact for the Future" marks a significant milestone as it represents the first time that states have explicitly recognized culture as an "action point" within the United Nations' Sustainable Development Agenda, following the directives of MONDIACULT 2022 hosted by Mexico and organized by UNESCO. This Pact calls for the integration of culture into policies related to economic, social, and environmental development. Additionally, it aims to enhance international cooperation concerning the return and restitution of cultural properties. Heads of State and Governments gathered at the UN General Assembly and recognized the key role of culture in addressing the strategic challenges of our time.

The summit serves as a pivotal moment, though it is not the final step, in advancing a comprehensive global vision and fostering support for culture. Building on the momentum generated, UNESCO will host the World Conference on Cultural Policies and Sustainable Development (MONDIACULT 2025) in Barcelona, Spain. This conference will aim to facilitate consensus-building among high-level decision-makers and civil society representatives regarding the role of culture in development.

Over the past three biennium's, from 2020 to 2025, UNESCO has successfully mobilized almost **US\$ 34 million** to support World Heritage in Africa. Over the past 5 years, **177 projects** have been implemented in every African country. Notably, **US\$ 1.5 million** has been dedicated to supporting African States Parties in their effort to develop nomination dossiers, focusing on the 11 countries which have no sites inscribed on the World Heritage List.

The flagship programmes Priority Africa 2022-2029: *Fostering cultural heritage and capacity development*, achieved outputs such as: (1) African Member States are supported in building World Heritage capacities, particularly for nominations and removal of sites from the List of World Heritage in Danger, as well as for harnessing good conservation practices for socio-economic development and promoting cultural heritage expertise in Africa. (2) African Member States are supported in the fight against illicit trafficking of cultural property and the promotion of return and restitution, through enhanced collaboration with the ICPRCP, as well as the promotion of the role of museums.

The programmes foster contribution to the 2030 Agenda SDGs and Agenda 2063 Aspirations contributing to SDGs 4 (Quality Education), 5 (Gender Equality), 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions), and 17 (Partnerships for the Goals), this flagship program will respond to Aspiration 5 (Africa with a strong cultural identity, common heritage, values and ethics), Goal 16 (African cultural renaissance is pre- eminent), and Priority Area 31 (Cultural Heritage, Creative Arts and Businesses) of the African Union's Agenda 2063.

As we look ahead, UNESCO will continue to prioritize the representation of Africa on the World Heritage List, with our Operational Strategy for Priority Africa as our guide. This is not just about preserving the past - it is about securing Africa's rightful place on the World Heritage List and ensuring its heritage drives sustainable development and community empowerment.

Further, since January 2024, 48 States Parties (19 in Africa and 7 SIDS) have been supported in preparing potential World Heritage nominations, aiming for a more balanced and credible List. The Open-ended Working Group, established in 2023, continues to address the List's representativity until at least the 47th session in 2025.

In 2024, UNESCO organized capacity-building workshops including gender balance in their participants for heritage management and conservation, promoting sustainable tourism. Webinars in April and May addressed avian influenza impacts on wildlife, while online meetings equipped coral reef managers with knowledge on pollution and bleaching events. In addition, from 2 to 8 November 2024, UNESCO organized the 2nd Capacity Building workshop on Digital documentation of World Heritage Sites in the Arab States in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. This workshop was organized in collaboration with the Ministry of Culture and the Saudi National Commission for Education, Culture and Science and the Heritage Commission in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

UNESCO has become a Knowledge Partner of the Group of Friends of Culture-Based Climate Action, which aims at strengthening the integration of culture in the global climate agenda. Formed at COP28 in Dubai, the group is co-chaired by Culture ministers of Brazil and UAE. This international coalition of UNFCCC Member States is building political momentum for effective, coherent and coordinated action to support and advocate for culture and heritage-based climate action.

e) Recommendations and key messages to be considered for inclusion in the Ministerial Declaration of the 2025 HLPF.

- We commit to ensuring cultural rights for all, supporting inclusive access to and participation in cultural life and strengthening the economic and social status of culture professionals, including in the digital environment;
- We advocate for the protection of the diversity of cultural and natural heritage including marine heritage as well as the local communities who are integrally associated with them;
- We call on the UN Secretary-General to firmly integrate cultural and natural heritage as an important vector for sustainable development in the Pact for the Future beyond 2030. We advocate for the collection of quality data related to cultural and natural heritage in line with the MONDIACULT 2022 Declaration, including with the implementation of the UNESCO Thematic Indicators for Culture together with the UNESCO Institute of Statistics as well as with the 1972 World Heritage Convention and its Periodic Reporting to support evidence-based policies and actions;
- We call for recognizing the importance of safeguarding World Heritage properties from climate change impacts as well as recognizing the role of cultural and natural heritage for climate action acknowledging that it cannot happen in isolation due to the global nature of the problem. While many properties have illustrated how engaging with local

communities strengthens resilience and fosters sustainable futures, management systems must expand these approaches towards facilitating the transformative change needed to address climate change effectively;

- We advocate for the urgent need to protect marine biodiversity by scaling up efforts to expand marine protected areas and reach the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework "30x30" target, ensuring the necessary biodiversity corridors and refugia for marine life in the face of an ocean being impacted by the interconnected crises of climate change and biodiversity loss.