

ICOMOS -ICORP Statement
Heritage And Resilience

Honorable Chairman.

Distinguished Delegates.

Ladies and Gentlemen.

The safety and protection of people is the first and foremost priority in any disaster, as is the resilience of their communities in times of disasters. The themes, presentations, discussions and conversations surrounding this Global Risk conference strongly support life safety being paramount, as do we within ICOMOS-ICORP. (International Council on Monuments & Sites, International Committee on Risk Preparedness)

As Chairperson of ICOMOS-ICORP, I would like to add additional thoughts that should also be addressed as we move forward, particularly with regards to disaster risk management and how heritage can be better protected from disasters while contributing to the resilience of societies.

Recent disasters have shown the need to incorporate the protection of historic properties and cultural resources into the broader disaster mitigation strategies and emergency response planning as there have been significant losses in these areas not only from the actual disaster, whether natural, or man-made, but also via post-event demolition of these structures.

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Loss of life during these events has been tragic, as has the impact these events have had on property damage and disruption to social and economic aspects felt locally, regionally and globally.

Historic cities, towns, sites, and buildings including monuments, places of worship, museums, libraries, and archive centers and their contents, whether they be artistic, historic, educational, scientific or of social importance, are being lost forever. In addition, there are unquantifiable adverse impacts to local communities due to loss of cultural heritage; these go beyond the purely physical damage and are often not considered and need to be addressed as well. This includes the local communities' reliance on cultural heritage for numerous reasons such as:

- providing an area of refuge in emergency situations;
- acting as a meeting place and strengthen relationships with their community;
- providing a sense of local and regional identity and a link to the past which is vital to help ensure long term survival of the community;
- acting as an invaluable educational resource;
- helping shape a sense of a place, and maintain community pride and a sense of belonging; and
- serving as physical anchors within a community.

Heritage tourism is a fundamental element of local economies. Throughout the world historic and cultural resources facilitate heritage tourism and contribute billions of dollars annually to the economy, including increasing local jobs, supporting local businesses, local real estate values, and additional tax money.

It is important therefore from both a communities' emotional as well as economic interest to plan to increase the overall resilience of these resources; appropriately protect them and to prevent their loss both during the event, as well as appropriately restoring and celebrating them following a disaster.

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Therefore, to supplement the measures that are required for broader disaster risk reduction as are being discussed throughout this conference, the following are some recommendations that ICOMOS-ICORP recommend be incorporated into these disaster risk management plans with regards to protecting heritage and making communities more resilient in times of disaster.

During these efforts we need to remember that it is imperative to build relationships between the heritage conservation community, emergency management officials and first responders before disasters occur.

- Undertake an inventory of cultural heritage properties, artifacts, traditions, etc. to be done in conjunction with the local community
- Assess heritage vulnerability, hazards and risks and develop prevention, mitigation, response and recovery plans with the community and others.
- Raise local awareness regarding significance of cultural heritage and its benefits
- Undertake cost-benefit analyses to assess the economic impact of disasters on community/communities.
- Document indigenous construction methods, materials and techniques, and understand their performance during disasters. (e.g. photographs, drawings, etc.)
- Work closely with emergency response teams.
- Utilize the latest technology to help survey damaged and dangerous buildings (e.g. robots, etc.), and recover heritage related items.

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- Develop post-disaster demolition permitting process requiring conservation professionals.
- Identify and integrate local, regional and international experts and associations (e.g. ICOMOS) that are developing standards and guidelines.
- Implement special security measures for heritage at risk.
- Foster partnerships that protect and draw on heritage for disaster risk reduction at the local level.
- Consolidate Available Guidance And Data On Heritage And Promote New Research And Tools.
- Assess Risks To Heritage.
- Design Culturally Informed Campaigns For Risk Communication And Post-Disaster Recovery.
- Build Capacities For Reducing Disaster Risks To Heritage.
- Engage Heritage Managers And Related Institutions In National Platforms.
- Advocate Cultural Heritage In Global Agendas.
- Identify funding

Through these efforts ICOMOS/ICORP feel we can help to better maintain our cultural heritage and make communities more resilient, not only on a global basis, but more importantly in supporting the needs of local communities in coping and recovering from disasters.

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In light of the above, please note that ICOMOS-ICORP, UNESCO, and ICCROM, in conjunction with other partners including UNISDR and Marsh have developed a publication entitled 'Heritage and Resilience: Issues and Opportunities for Reducing Disaster Risks' that was published for this conference and is now available through UNISDR.

ICOMOS-ICORP would like to thank you for this opportunity to speak and we look forward to the continuing positive impacts the Global Platform for Risk Reduction has on our people, our heritage, and our world and making it more resilient to disasters.

Thank you.

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