

Submission by ICOMOS on behalf of the  
Climate Heritage Network

This Submission is made in response to the following Call for Submissions:

**Issue:** Sharm el-Sheikh mitigation ambition and implementation work programme

**Title:** Parties, observers and other non-Party stakeholders to submit their views on opportunities, best practices, actionable solutions, challenges and barriers relevant to the topics of the dialogues referred to in paragraph 13 of Decision 4/CMA.4 (4 weeks before each dialogue)

**Session Name:** SB 60

**Mandate:** Decision 4/CMA.4, para 14 FCCC/PA/CMA/2023/L.16, para 9

Date of Submission: 1 April 2024

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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1. Decision 4/CMA.4, paragraph 1 decided to establish the Sharm el-Sheikh mitigation ambition and implementation work programme (the “Work Programme”) for urgently scaling up mitigation ambition and implementation in this decade in a manner that complements the global stocktake.
- 1.2. Paragraph 8 of decision 4/CMA.4 decided that at least two global dialogues shall be held each year as part of the work programme.
- 1.3. The decision requested the co-chairs of the work programme to decide on and communicate every year the topics to be discussed at each dialogue and to invite views relevant to the topics of these dialogues (4/CMA.4, paragraphs 13 and 14).
- 1.4. On 1 March 2024 the co-chairs communicated that the dialogues taking place under the work programme in 2024 will focus on “**Cities: buildings and urban systems**” and encouraged Parties, observers and other non-Party stakeholders to submit views on opportunities, best practices, actionable solutions, challenges and barriers relevant to this topic.
- 1.5. The Climate Heritage Network appreciates the opportunity to share its views on opportunities, best practices, actionable solutions, challenges and barriers relevant to the topic of “Cities: buildings and urban systems” for urgently scaling up mitigation ambition and implementation in a manner that complements the global stocktake.

The **Climate Heritage Network**<sup>1</sup> (CHN) is a global network whose members are committed to unlocking the power of culture, from arts to heritage, to help people imagine and realize low-carbon, just, climate-resilient futures and to support communities in achieving the ambitions of the Paris Agreement. Both multilevel governance of climate action and intersections of culture and heritage and buildings and infrastructure are key issue areas under the CHN 2022-24 Action Plan.<sup>2</sup>

The **International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS)**<sup>3</sup> is an international non-

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.climateheritage.org/>.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.climateheritage.org/actionplan>.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.icomos.org/fr>.

governmental organization which works for the conservation of monuments and sites around the world. It has over 11,000 members in 132 countries and is an organization with observer status before the UNFCCC and is making this submission on behalf of and for the CHN.

## 2. Cultural Heritage, Mitigation and Cities

In order to provide an urgently needed complement to the global stocktake and to accelerate action in this critical decade, the CHN proposes that the Work Programme's 2024 global dialogues on the topic of "Cities: buildings and urban systems" **include a focus on culture and heritage.**

### 2.1. Culture is crucial to scaling up mitigation ambition and implementation in this decade

The **Emirates Declaration on Cultural-based Climate Action**<sup>4</sup> adopted by over 30 countries at COP28 summarises well the intersection of culture and heritage and mitigation:

We stress that any path to fully achieving the long-term goals of the Paris Agreement, including those related to mitigation ... and in promoting climate-resilient sustainable development, must include a focus on cultural heritage, arts, and creative industries and the socio-cultural enabling conditions for transformative climate action.

We recognize that culture, from arts to heritage, has a fundamental role to play in helping people to imagine and to realise low carbon, just, climate resilient futures and that ... diverse ways of knowing, education and storytelling, art and craft, tangible and intangible heritage, and creativity ... represent culture's unparalleled capacity for enabling a powerfully inclusive response to create the systemic change needed to tackle the climate crisis.

The Declaration calls for scaling-up mitigation activities emphasising the role of arts, culture and heritage programmes in **place-based, demand-side, and people-centred strategies, including a focus on the cultural dimensions of reducing waste and shifting to more sustainable production and consumption approaches.**

IPCC WGIII's 2022 report on Mitigation of Climate Change contains a detailed assessment that reveals how social norms, culture, and individual choices interact with infrastructure and other structural changes, providing insight into climate change mitigation strategies.<sup>5</sup> WGIII found "high confidence in the potential of narrative shifts, social influencers, and thought leaders to drive widespread adoption of emissions-reducing technologies, behaviors, and lifestyles."

Cultural voices in many cities have not been adequately mobilized for climate action, presenting an immediate opportunity to rapidly scale up mitigation ambition and implementation.<sup>6</sup> This includes individual operators such as archaeologists, architects, landscape architects, administrators, archivists, artists, crafts persons, conservators, curators, engineers, geographers, historians, librarians, musicians, museum professionals, performers, site managers, urban planners, and writers, as well as networks of arts organisations, Indigenous Peoples' organisations, cultural institutions, archives, libraries, museums, and heritage sites. This also includes supporting culture governance, research, and funding mechanisms, including prominently at urban (local and regional) levels.

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<sup>4</sup> <https://tinyurl.com/yc3vzje7>. See generally, COP28 High Level Ministerial Dialogue for Culture-Based Climate Action. <https://www.cop28.com/en/schedule/high-level-ministerial-dialogue-for-culture-based-climate-action>.

<sup>5</sup> Creutzig, F. et al., 2022: Demand, services and social aspects of mitigation. In IPCC, 2022: Climate Change 2022: Mitigation of Climate Change. Contribution of Working Group III to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change [P.R. Shukla et al. (eds.)]. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK and New York, NY, USA. doi: 10.1017/9781009157926.007.

<sup>6</sup> See generally "The Culture for Climate Agenda, Unleashing the Power of Culture as a Pillar of Climate Action: Policy Paper Prepared for the UCLG World Congress and Summit of World Leaders, Daejeon, Korea October 10-14, 2022 [hereinafter, "Culture for Climate Agenda"] (pg. 19), <https://www.uclgmeets.org/processes/Climate-Culture?locale=en>.

## 2.2. Culture is crucial to the topic of cities, buildings and urban systems

Most of the world's population now lives in cities and that number is expected to grow, meaning that climate mitigation at the city level is crucial to tackling climate change. Cities offer a stage where new ideas and cultural change can evolve, testing ways in which climate governance, technology, and action can evolve.<sup>7</sup> The urban context also presents steep challenges as cities are on the frontlines of issues such as inequality and the need for transparent institutions. As cultural expressions themselves, cities are arguably one of humanity's greatest inventions for crafting climate solutions.<sup>8</sup>

Culture and heritage provide powerful vectors for supporting pathways that strengthen mitigation in the context of sustainable development and efforts to eradicate poverty and reduce inequalities, including by supporting just transition, the negotiation of tradeoffs, and the realization of synergies.<sup>9</sup> The Emirates Declaration particularly highlight **co-benefits such as social cohesion, wellbeing, creativity, education and intercultural dialogue** from culture and heritage-based mitigation activities **with reference to the built environment and cities and regions**.

The UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) underscore the point. SDG Target 11.4 expressly links making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, **resilient and sustainable** with strengthening efforts to protect and safeguard the world's cultural and natural heritage.<sup>10</sup>

Tangible and intangible heritage as well as traditional knowledge offer time-tested, low-carbon, circular and regenerative technologies and solutions across sectors including the built environment<sup>11</sup> and urban and territorial planning.<sup>12</sup>

## 2.3. Focus on socio-culture enablers is urgently needed to complement the 2023 Global Stocktake

The first global stocktake adopted at COP28 (GST) is, unfortunately, silent on the socio-cultural enablers of systems transformation. This omission will undermine its effectiveness. Accordingly, there is an urgent need to promote dialogue **during 2024** on culture-based climate action, creativity, ancestral wisdom, values and ethics – especially in the context of urban systems and buildings -- in order to complement the GST and thereby bolster the new round of National Determined Contributions expected in 2025.

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<sup>7</sup> Arikan, Y and Potts, A. 2022: Box 1, "Cities as Engines of Transformation for Global Sustainability in the Urban World of the 21st Century." In: Morel H., Megarry W., Potts A., Hosagrahar J., Roberts D.C., Arikan Y., Brondizio E., Cassar M., Flato G., Forgysson S., Jigyasu R., Masson-Delmotte V., Oumarou Ibrahim H., Pörtner H. O., Sengupta S., Sherpa P.-D., Veillon R. Global Research and Action Agenda on Culture, Heritage and Climate Change. Charenton-le-Pont & Paris, France: ICOMOS & ICSM CHC, 2022 [hereinafter « GRAA »]. <https://openarchive.icomos.org/id/eprint/2716/>; Culture for Climate Agenda, supra note 6 at pp. 19-20. See generally "Urban culture and climate change action: The 10th World Urban Forum," Speech of Joyce Msuya Deputy Executive Director, UN Environment Programme (9 Feb 2020) <https://www.unep.org/news-and-stories/speech/urban-culture-and-climate-change-action-10th-world-urban-forum>; "Urban Agenda for the EU Observatory on culture/cultural heritage and climate change in the urban framework, Action 9." 2022 [https://www.fondazioneesculapatrimonio.it/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/Action-9\\_Booklet.pdf](https://www.fondazioneesculapatrimonio.it/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/Action-9_Booklet.pdf).

<sup>8</sup> GRAA, supra note 7.

<sup>9</sup> Potts, Andrew (2021) "The Role of Culture in Climate Resilient Development", UCLG Committee on Culture Reports, n°10, and Climate Heritage Network (Working Group 5), Barcelona, 5 November 2021 [hereinafter "Culture in Climate Resilient Development"]. [https://agenda21culture.net/sites/default/files/report\\_10\\_-\\_culture\\_and\\_climate\\_resilient\\_development\\_-\\_en.pdf](https://agenda21culture.net/sites/default/files/report_10_-_culture_and_climate_resilient_development_-_en.pdf).

<sup>10</sup> See generally UNESCO, 2016: Culture: urban future; global report on culture for sustainable urban development. United Nations Education, Science and Culture Organisation, Paris, France, 303pp. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000245999>.

<sup>11</sup> See ICOMOS Climate Change and Cultural Heritage Working Group. 2019. The Future of Our Past: Engaging Cultural Heritage in Climate Action, July 1, 2019. Paris: ICOMOS. [Hereinafter, "Future of Our Past"], pp. 47-56. <https://www.icomos.org/en/77-articles-en-francais/59522-icomos-releases-future-of-our-pasts-report-to-increase-engagement-of-cultural-heritage-in-climate-action>; Potts, A (Lead Author). 2021. European Cultural Heritage Green Paper. Europa Nostra, The Hague & Brussels. [hereinafter, "Cultural Heritage Green Paper"], pp. 17-33. <https://www.eurpanostra.org/putting-europes-shared-heritage-at-the-heart-of-the-european-green-deal/>.

<sup>12</sup> Cultural Heritage Green Paper, supra note 11 at p. 35.

The GST synthesis report<sup>13</sup> released by the UNFCCC in September 2023 found that to strengthen the global climate response, governments need to support “systems transformations,” “whole-of-society approaches,” **“and immediately strengthen “social” enabling conditions while “finding creative ways to overcome “social and capacity barriers.”** The IPCC has also identified socio- culture as a key enabling condition for climate action and for achieving sustainable development in a 1.5°C warmer world.<sup>14</sup> All of this underscores the immediate opportunity to complement the GST through attention to the socio-cultural dimension in the dialogues of the Work Programme.

### 3. Culture, mitigation and cities: best practices, actionable solutions, challenges and barriers

Drawing on existing science and recent policy developments, the CHN submits the following best practices and actionable solutions as well as challenges and barriers relevant to the topic of “Cities: buildings and urban systems” for urgently scaling up mitigation ambition and implementation.

#### 3.1. Cities and urban systems

The 2021 **International Co-Sponsored Meeting on Culture, Heritage and Climate Change** co-sponsored by the IPCC, ICOMOS and UNESCO is a valuable source on this topic. Of note is the Global Research and Action Agenda (GRAA).<sup>15</sup> GRAA Case Study Box 1 on “Cities as Engines of Transformation for Global Sustainability in the Urban World of the 21st Century”<sup>16</sup> identifies the following key mitigation-related areas concerning the role of culture and heritage for climate change in urban areas:

- Use of **heritage methodologies and culturally sensitive approaches to achieve more equitable inclusion of diverse individuals and communities in mitigation decision-making** processes at urban scales.
  - Potential best practices and actionable solutions:
    - City of San Antonio (USA) Climate Equity Screening Tool “cultural preservation” theme<sup>17</sup>
    - Benny Farm Redevelopment Stakeholder-led urban design process, Montreal, Canada<sup>18</sup>
    - Citizen Participation to Achieve Sustainable Mobility in the Historic Center of Quito, Ecuador<sup>19</sup>
- Strengthening **connections between urban planning and spatial design and the key roles culture, values, and heritage** play in circular economies; mobility and walkability; local self-sufficiency; gastronomy and healthy living.
  - Potential best practices and actionable solutions:
    - Denso Hall Rahguzar (Walking Street) Eco Enclave, Karachi, Pakistan<sup>20</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Technical Dialogue of the First Global Stocktake: Synthesis Report by the Co-facilitators on the Technical Dialogue (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, 2023); <https://go.nature.com/3LkZgCX>.

<sup>14</sup> See, for example, Allen, M.R., et al., 2018: Framing and Context. In: Special Report on 1.5°, 56 (“The feasibility of staying within 1.5°C depends upon a range of enabling conditions with geophysical, environmental–ecological, technological, economic, socio-cultural, and institutional dimensions.”).

<sup>15</sup> GRAA, supra note 7. See also Shepherd, Nick, Cohen, Joshua Benjamin, Carmen, William, Chundu, Moses, Ersten, Christian, Guevara, Oscar, Haas, Franziska, Hussain, Shumon T., Riede, Felix, Siders, A. R., Singh, Chandni, Sithole, Pindai and Troi, Alexandra (2022) ICSM CHC White Paper III: The role of cultural and natural heritage for climate action: Contribution of Impacts Group III to the International Co-Sponsored Meeting on Culture, Heritage and Climate Change. Discussion Paper. ICOMOS & ICSM CHC, Charenton-le-Pont, France & Paris, France, 91p. ISBN 978-2-918086-73-4. [Book] <https://openarchive.icomos.org/id/eprint/2719/>.

<sup>16</sup> GRAA Box 1, “Cities as Engines of Transformation for Global Sustainability in the Urban World of the 21st Century,” supra note 7.

<sup>17</sup> Culture in Climate Resilient Development, supra note 6, at pg. 52.

<sup>18</sup> Id. at pg. 74.

<sup>19</sup> Id. at pg. 78.

<sup>20</sup> Id. at pg. 50.

- Landscape Metropolis – Landscape as Mobility Infrastructure, Ferrara, Italy<sup>21</sup>
- 848<sup>th</sup> Street Rehabilitation Demonstration Project, Izmir, Turkey<sup>22</sup>
- Van Gogh Bicycle Path (Eindhoven, Netherlands) and NCF Gares & Connexions – Culture programme (France)<sup>23</sup>
- Examples listed in the United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) report on the role of culture and history in ensuring sustainable consumption and production patterns by centering local, traditional foods and products (Chefchauen, Morocco; Florianópolis, Brazil; La Paz, Bolivia; Gaziantep, Turkey).<sup>24</sup>
- **Challenging Inherited Mindsets and Shifting Narratives:** artists, creative activists, designers, culture and heritage institutions and civil society bringing together both professionals and volunteers, as well as scholars and holders of ancestral wisdom, enlightened policy makers, and communities and audiences, to challenge dominant paradigms and offer visions and examples of sustainable futures, freed of reliance on fossil fuels, restoring biodiversity, and championing social justice.<sup>25</sup>
  - During COP28, a coalition of 175 organizations hosted the inaugural Entertainment and Culture Pavilion in the Blue Zone. The Pavilion showcased diverse programming to involve creative industries and key stakeholders on culture-based climate action. The Entertainment + Culture Pavilion is also planning editions for SB60, COP16 and COP29 in Baku.
  - Makers Valley/Community Recycling Swop Shop, Johannesburg, South Africa.<sup>26</sup>
  - Culture & Creative Sectors & Industries driving Green Transition and facing the Energy Crisis Brainstorming Report Appendix of Case studies and best practices, Voices of Culture, European Commission Structured Dialogue with the Cultural and Creative Sectors in the EU. 2023.<sup>27</sup>
- **Need for finance, new partnerships, connections and research** supporting a larger role for culture and heritage in the design of climate action for cities.
  - California Cultural Heritage and Climate Action Integration Analysis Project, Sacramento USA<sup>28</sup>
  - ROCK: Regeneration and Optimisation of Cultural Heritage in Creative and Knowledge Cities, European Union Horizon Project (Bologna (Italy), Lisbon (Portugal), Skopje (Macedonia); Athens (Greece), Cluj-Napoca (Romania), Eindhoven (Netherlands), Liverpool (UK), Turin (Italy) and Vilnius (Lithuania))
  - World Cities Culture Forum, Culture and Climate Change Handbook for Cities Leaders.<sup>29</sup>

### 3.2. Buildings

Existing and historic buildings and traditional knowledge present tremendous climate mitigation opportunities. Two-thirds of the buildings that exist today will still be here in 2040. In the Sixth Assessment Report, the IPCC both identifies the SER framework - which prioritises sufficiency and efficiency - and advises that rates of retrofit must increase significantly to meet climate targets. The Global ABC's "Building Materials and the Climate: Constructing a New Future," identifies the criticality

<sup>21</sup> Id at pg. 59.

<sup>22</sup> Id at pg. 61.

<sup>23</sup> Marcolin, V. 2021: "Accelerating the shift to sustainable and smart mobility." In: Cultural Heritage Green Paper, supra note 11.

<sup>24</sup> [https://www.uclg.org/sites/default/files/culture\\_in\\_the\\_sdgs.pdf](https://www.uclg.org/sites/default/files/culture_in_the_sdgs.pdf)

<sup>25</sup> See Bridging the gap – the role of equitable low-carbon lifestyles, Capstick, S. et al. In: UNEP (2020). The Emissions Gap Report 2018. United Nations Environment Programme, Nairobi. Pg 75 (noting that research indicates that changes to underlying cultural norms are more difficult to accomplish than transitory behavioural changes but once established, are likely to be more durable and to support a wider range of low-carbon lifestyles)

<sup>26</sup> Culture in Climate Resilient Development, supra note 6, at pg. 56.

<sup>27</sup> [https://voicesofculture.eu/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/VoC-Report\\_Greening-CCSI.pdf](https://voicesofculture.eu/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/VoC-Report_Greening-CCSI.pdf).

<sup>28</sup> Culture in Climate Resilient Development, supra note 6, at pg. 75.

<sup>29</sup> <https://julesbicycle.com/resource/world-cities-culture-forum-handbook/>.

of both reusing existing materials and scaling up the use of natural, traditional materials. All of these recommendations align with activating heritage and indigenous knowledge in the built environment.

Challenges to unlocking this potential exist, however. To date, sectoral approaches to climate action in the built environment have been dominated by Global North industrial practices, products, and markets; and a focus on new construction and technologies. This has overlooked embodied and avoided carbon; critical knowledge from history and from indigenous practice; and the inherent societal capacity-building potential of cultural heritage.

Two important pathways to overcoming these challenges are set forth in the recently adopted **Declaration de Chaillot**.<sup>30</sup> This Declaration aims to enable international cooperation towards a rapid, fair, and effective transition of the building and construction sector. It was adopted by representatives of 70 countries in March 2024 at the first Buildings and Climate Global Forum organised by the French Government and the UN Environment Programme (UNEP). The Declaration calls for, inter alia:

- Prioritising the **reuse, re-purposing and renovation of existing buildings** and infrastructures
- Plan, design, build, operate and manage **culturally and socially climate adapted buildings** through a whole life cycle approach
- Prioritising **on-site assets, recycled and end-of-life use, local, sustainable building materials**
- Enhancing local sourcing of **traditional appropriate low-tech solutions**

The CHN recommends that these themes be emphasised in buildings-related dialogue within the Work Programme through a focus on the following best practices:

- Raising the profile of reuse and retrofit of the existing built environment as an effective means of achieving sectoral decarbonization and resilience.
- Illustrating why heritage and indigenous knowledge must inform contextually appropriate assessment frameworks, metrics, and practices for new development in the Global South to achieve sustainable and equitable climate action.
- Showing the added value of built heritage as a test-bed for both low-tech and high-tech climate solutions, including: cultural visibility and reach; passive strategies for operation; stress testing of materials and technology; and proven approaches to weather- and climate-adapted design.
- Identifying the key multi-level governance arrangements, financing initiatives, and collaborators needed to activate, manage, and adapt the existing and historic built environment; thereby avoiding mal-mitigation, and ensuring durable climate action.
- Highlighting the culture-based climate action opportunities and co-benefits inherent in the historic built environment to mobilise action, strengthen social inclusion, and build social capital, as well norms and values that support notions of sufficiency and circular economy.

Action solutions include: The [Architecture 2030 Challenge](#); [CARE Tool](#), [Guidance Wheel](#), [ZNC Renovation Programme by HQE](#), European Research Infrastructure on Heritage Science E-RIHS, and the Methodology for the Energy Renovation of Heritage Buildings using BIM, and student programs such as the [UIA Great Green Wall competition](#); CREBA - A Resource Center for Energy Rehabilitation of Old Buildings (Cerema, Sites et Cités Remarquables de France);<sup>31</sup> Otamari, Green Architecture, Écomusée Tata Somba, Commune de Boukoumbé, Benin<sup>32</sup>; Patrimonio y Cambio Climático.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> <https://www.ecologie.gouv.fr/sites/default/files/declaration-de-chaillot-forum-batiments-climat.pdf>.

<sup>31</sup> <https://www.rehabilitation-bati-ancien.fr/>.

<sup>32</sup> Culture in Climate Resilient Development, supra note 6, at pg. 60.

<sup>33</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/pacc.fops>.