



GERMANY 2015  
39TH SESSION OF THE WORLD HERITAGE COMMITTEE  
YOUNG EXPERTS FORUM

## WORLD HERITAGE YOUNG EXPERTS FORUM 2015

### “Towards a Sustainable Management of World Heritage Sites”

18 to 29 June 2015 in Koblenz and Bonn, Germany

#### DECLARATION

We, the participants of the World Heritage Young Experts Forum 2015 “Towards a Sustainable Management of World Heritage Sites”, would like to thank the Federal Foreign Office of Germany, the German Commission for UNESCO and the Ministry for Education, Science, Lifelong learning and Culture of Rhineland-Palatinate for hosting this important event. We would also like to extend our gratitude to the Chairperson of the World Heritage Committee for this opportunity to deliver our message, hoping that it will be heard and acknowledged.

Recalling the Declaration of the Youth Forum to the 38<sup>th</sup> Session of the World Heritage Committee in Doha and considering the threats currently facing cultural properties in countries affected by armed conflicts and the damages caused to natural properties, we reconfirm youth participation in heritage management and support the creation of measures towards promoting their initiatives at the national level.

Understanding that sustainable management is the key strategy to ensure continuous recognition and appreciation of our common treasures, we learned the significance of engaging youth and local community in sustainable management of the World Heritage sites. Individuals and communities at multiple levels share the responsibility for our heritage sites by exchanging knowledge and experience, and developing stronger international network cooperation.

Therefore, we would like to put forward the following:

Having conducted a Youth Model Simulation of the World Heritage Committee during our Forum, we found this exercise to be engaging and educational as it deepened our understanding of the workings of the World Heritage Committee. We recommend the States Parties to the World Heritage Convention to promote this simulation among youth in their respective countries.

Emphasizing the importance of education as one of the strongest tools for proper preservation and management of World Heritage sites creates a sense of responsibility and devotion and facilitates building stronger connections between the community and the sites they are attached to.

Compared to any other age group, the young generation of today has the best capacity to understand and maximize the potential of modern networking platforms. We feel it is time to create new structures amongst young experts to share valuable knowledge and experiences gained from youth-led initiatives, and to link this community with that of heritage professionals.

Involving local communities with young people is vital for sustainable management as their commitment is essential for the implementation of the Convention. At the same time, utilizing volunteering as a method contributes to develop multipliers of actions. Some countries have already implemented successful volunteering approaches in World Heritage site management. However, we feel the potential of this approach has yet to be realized to its full extent.



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Thus, we propose the following actions:

We request the States Parties to further integrate the World Heritage educational programs in national curricula from early childhood to higher education levels. Moreover, the States Parties could pave the way for additional international opportunities and scholarships on the studies of heritage.

We encourage the World Heritage Committee to support heritage-related initiatives developed by young experts. We call on our peers to multiply these youth-led actions. The World Heritage Committee's support will contribute to increasing the pool of resources and experiences in the networking platform. It will greatly help young heritage experts if the States Parties could provide a forum in relevant national agencies to effectively carry out our work.

We encourage the States Parties to establish means and mechanisms to promote youth representation within the National Commissions for UNESCO. The enthusiasm and creativity young people bring to the National Commissions will contribute to addressing the issues of sustainability mentioned in the present Declaration.

We ask the World Heritage Committee to encourage the States Parties to promote local community including youth engagement as an integral part of the management plans and monitored in the periodic reporting.

We as young experts are eager to commit ourselves to collaborate on the questions concerning youth and issues that are most relevant to us.

Thank you.

*The Young Experts Forum 2015 was:*

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