

PRESS RELEASE

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Global network launches new plan to empower people to imagine and realise climate resilient futures through culture -- from arts to heritage

Paris, France – The Climate Heritage Network (CHN) is a global network of more than 250 member organisations committed to supporting communities in achieving the ambitions of the Paris Agreement [1] by scaling up culture-based climate action.

Despite much good work, contemporary climate planning has suffered from a pervasive failure to imagine desirable ways of living not wedded to the carbon economy and the systems that support it. The new Action Plan announced today by the network of organisations, charities, government bodies, universities, memory and cultural institutions, and cultural and creative industries from around the world seeks to fill this gap.

Crucially, the Plan promotes the theory that change happens by unlocking the power of culture to **empower people to imagine and realise low-carbon, just, climate resilient futures.**

To achieve this, it urges cultural voices to challenge the 'petrocultures' and 'carboscapes' that are the heritage of the Anthropocene, while championing those elements of culture that are part of the solution to climate change. These include lessons of historic and traditional buildings and landscapes that pre-date the fossil-fuel era; the worldviews and cultures of Indigenous Peoples and local communities that offer counterpoints to unsustainable paradigms of 'progress;' and artistic, creative, and imaginative tools that help people take climate action.

The CHN's Action Plan is designed to shape change by connecting cultural voices to each other and partners across sectors to transform climate policy, planning, and action at all levels by better taking account of these cultural dimensions, recognising that people and culture are key to climate solutions.

At the core of the Plan are two goals for 2022-24:

- Increase the quantity and quality of culture-based climate action at all levels, and
- Transform climate policy by embedding culture and heritage into strategies to realise low-carbon, just and fair, climate resilient living.

In support of these aims, the Action Plan establishes 12 key focus areas, such as Buildings and Infrastructure, Food and Agriculture, Waste and Consumption, and Just Transition. Outputs will promote more sustainable practices such as the adaptive re-use of buildings and use of local sourcing and traditional agricultural knowledge. Network activities will also spotlight the myriad social and cultural dimensions of climate change impacts, including through the Race to Resilience: Culture Campaign being undertaken by the CHN along with the UN High

Level Champions for Climate Action.

Prioritising support for rights-based, place-based, demand-side, and people-centred strategies are a key to the Plan. The Action Plan also seeks to strengthen frameworks in which cultural actors and operators support climate action by Indigenous Peoples and local communities and build common cause with intersectional interests such as racial and gender equality, linking culture to climate justice in ways that bolster climate action and climate responsive sustainable development.

Looking ahead, the Network will increase its presence at climate change forums, conferences, and events, including the 27th UN Climate Change Conference (COP27) in Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt, in November 2022. The UNESCO Conference on Cultural Policies and Sustainable Development (Mondiacult 2022) being held this week in Mexico City is also a focus.

Since the CHN formed in 2019, increasing numbers of arts and cultural organisation have joined amidst growing concern of climate change and its impacts on places, communities, and audiences. Critically, the growth of this Network also reflects growing recognition of the potential power of culture for connecting people with climate issues.

With the launch of its new Action Plan, the CHN aims to provide more practical tools for its members to connect with local communities and diverse stakeholders in climate action. Planned outputs, including training, resources, and knowledge-sharing, will help members play their part in bolster climate planning and action and preventing irreversible losses and damage to the planet, its peoples, their cultures and heritage.

To find out more about the Climate Heritage Network and its action plan visit <https://climateheritage.org> or contact Andrew Potts, Climate Heritage Network Secretariat, +1 202 215-0993 andrew.potts@climateheritage.org.

Quotes from Climate Heritage Leaders

Albino Jopela, African World Heritage Fund, CHN Co-Chair for Africa and the Arab States; *“I am proud that amplifying cultural voices at COP27 being held in November in Egypt is a goal of the new CHN Action Plan. COP27 constitutes a great opportunity for the African continent to raise awareness about the impact of climate change on the Cradle of Humankind and mobilise culture-driven climate action towards a resilient future.”*

Sneška Quaedvlieg-Mihailovic, Co-Chair of the Climate Heritage Network for Europe said: *“The world is in an urgent race to become climate resilient by 2030. Despite the profound connections between climate change and culture, there are thousands of professionals, from anthropologists, archaeologists, and engineers to urban planners, scientists, and those with indigenous knowledge and local wisdom, whose talents have not yet been mobilised on climate change issues.*

“The Climate Heritage Network’s new action plan focuses on the practical things we can all do in the cultural and heritage sectors to act with more urgency and achieve meaningful solutions in the face of the climate emergency.”

HRH Princess Dana Firas, ICOMOS Jordan President & UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador for Cultural Heritage, Co-Chair of the Climate and Heritage Network Culture at COP27 Working Group said: *“Today, Climate change has become the most significant and fastest growing threat to people’s existence and their cultural heritage worldwide. It has resulted in the often-irreversible loss of beautiful and important places and sites. It has also disrupted the*

bonds people have with their land, their homes, each other and their practices and traditions. This is likely to continue.

“We have to work together to define our priorities and path towards true sustainability, resilience and justice. And we have to keep the most vulnerable communities at the forefront. Here culture matters. Culture is a celebration of beauty, of the imagination, of shared values, and of human connection. These are the very qualities needed to bolster climate planning, policy and action — currently far of course from meeting the objectives of the Paris Agreement.

“We, at the Climate Heritage Network, will work to strengthen the voices of cultural actors as full partners in the design, planning and execution of their communities’ climate action strategies, and to embed culture in international climate policy.”

Andrew Potts, Coordinator of the CHN Secretariat, said: *“Today, the world is dangerously off course to meeting the goals of the Paris Agreement. The new Climate Heritage Network Action Plan launched today reflects a shared belief that we can and must do better and that Cultural Voices are one keys to delivering, with and for the next generation, a more resilient, sustainable, and just planet.”*

ENDS

Notes to editors:

[1] The Paris Agreement is a **legally binding international treaty on climate change**. It was adopted by 196 Parties at COP 21 in Paris, on 12 December 2015 and entered into force on 4 November 2016. Its goal is to limit global warming to well below 2, **preferably to 1.5 degrees Celsius**, compared to pre-industrial levels. To achieve this long-term temperature goal, countries aim to **reach global peaking of greenhouse gas emissions as soon as possible** to achieve a climate neutral world by mid-century. The Paris Agreement is a **landmark** in the multilateral climate change process because, for the first time, a binding agreement brings all nations into a common cause to undertake ambitious efforts to combat climate change and adapt to its effects.