



The Group of Friends of
Culture Based Climate Action

Emirates Declaration on Cultural-based Climate Action

We, Ministers gathered at the High-Level Ministerial Dialogue on Culture -based Climate Action organized at COP28 for the launch of the Group of Friends of Culture-Based Climate Action at the UNFCCC,

Acknowledging our collective concern about the latest findings of the IPCC that confirm the need for unprecedentedly ambitious and inclusive efforts within this decade to limit global warming to 1.5°C in order to mitigate the most catastrophic climate impacts, including irreversible losses and damages to culture and heritage;

Underscoring the devastating impacts of climate change already being felt today by people across the globe, threat to tangible and intangible heritage risks leading to significant disruption of inter-generational transmission of socio-cultural practices, infringement on cultural rights of peoples and communities, and limitation of cultural diversity, thereby depriving us of precious sources of resilience, meaning, identity, knowledge, livelihoods, and economic benefits;

Acknowledging that the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), its Kyoto Protocol and its Paris Agreement are the foundation for negotiating effective multilateral response to climate change;

Recalling the Preamble to the Paris Agreement which notes “the importance of ensuring the integrity of all ecosystems, recognized by some cultures as Mother Earth, and also noting the importance for some of the concept of ‘climate justice’, when taking action to address climate change;”

Noting the 2023 Synthesis Report by the co-facilitators on the technical dialogue of the first global stock take including is discussion of the need to support “whole-of-society approaches,” and immediately strengthen “social” enabling conditions while “finding creative ways to overcome “social and capacity barriers” and “siloeed responses;”

Recalling Section 13 of Guidelines of the G20 Kashi Culture Pathway of August 2023 “We encourage continued dialogue and exchange of expertise on climate action across the culture workstream as a critical cross-cutting issue striving towards environmental sustainability, notably by joining efforts to protect and safeguard the world’s cultural and natural heritage from the impact of climate change, noting growing culture-related concerns raised in the context of the UN Climate Action Summit and the COP, by (i) building on the opportunities of culture-related practices and knowledge systems, including local and indigenous knowledge and practices, to inform adaptation and mitigation strategies and plans as well as solutions for climate action; (ii) assessing the impact of climate change on cultural, natural and living heritage, as well as cultural institutions; and (iii) sustaining efforts towards monitoring the impact of the cultural and creative sectors and industries, including in the digital space;”

Recognizing the increasing engagement of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) with culture, heritage, social science, and with the valorization of diverse knowledge systems, as reflected in the report “Climate Change 2022: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability;”

Recalling the International Meeting on Culture, Heritage and Climate Change co-sponsored by the IPCC, ICOMOS and UNESCO and held in December 2021;

Recalling the central role that cultural and natural heritage play in “making cities and human settlements

inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable” as reflected in UN Sustainable Development Goal 11.4 and noting the Final Declaration of the UNESCO Ministerial World Conference on Cultural Policies and Sustainable Development at MONDIACULT 2022, which calls on the UN Secretary General to firmly anchor culture in the development agenda beyond 2030;

Taking note of the UNFCCC-UNESCO-Greek Government initiative on Climate Change and Protection of Cultural Heritage (2020);

Expressing appreciation to the Ministers who participated in the COP27 Ministerial Dialogue on Cultural Heritage-based Climate Solutions in Sharm El-Sheikh, and for the commitments made to work together and with non-Party stakeholders to accelerate culture-based climate action;

We stress that any path to fully achieving the long-term goals of the Paris Agreement, including those related to mitigation, adaptation, and means of implementation for loss and damage, 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 by harnessing the power of culture – including diverse ways of knowing, education and storytelling, art and craft, tangible and intangible heritage, and creativity and encompassing the full range of voices, perspectives and tools to communicate urgency, mobilise action, and champion sustainable and justice-led ways of living – represent culture’s unparalleled capacity for enabling a powerfully inclusive response to create the systemic change needed to tackle the climate crisis.

Noting the essential role of international and multi-stakeholder cooperation, including South-South and North-South cooperation, in strengthening socio-cultural enabling conditions for responding to climate change, and of non-state actors including multi-level action through regional and local governments; museums, archives, libraries, monuments and other cultural institutions; the private sector, as well as creative industries; artists; researchers, scientists, teachers, and traditional knowledge holders; youth, women and Indigenous Peoples and local communities;

We affirm that the cultural sector, inclusive of cultural institutions, cultural offerings, and natural and cultural heritage sites, must urgently adapt and transform in order to respond to the imperatives of climate change.

We declare our intention to work collaboratively and expeditiously to pursue the following objectives:

1. Scaling-up culture and heritage-based strategies for enhancing adaptive capacity, strengthening resilience, avoiding maladaptation, and reducing vulnerability to climate change impacts, through financial and technical support for solutions, capacity building, and policy and practice innovations that promote attention to values, diverse knowledge and support systems; local self-sufficiency; equity; social cohesion; and inter-cultural understanding.
2. Scaling-up mitigation activities and responses at the national and, as appropriate, at subnational levels, and, in accordance with national laws and regulations and within the respective capacities, including the development and implementation of actions 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.
3. Giving increased attention, as appropriate, to the cultural dimensions of the causes of anthropogenic climate change and, in keeping with the MONDIACULT 2022 Final Declaration, to reducing the carbon footprint of the cultural sector, including cultural tourism;
4. Promoting sustainable and resilient communities by increasing efforts to support vulnerable people through approaches that value diverse knowledge systems and cultural expressions and safeguard natural and cultural heritage, anchored in shared human values of solidarity, care and respect; targeting research and innovation; and focusing on the specific needs of women, children and youth, Indigenous Peoples, traditional knowledge holders, local communities and persons with disabilities, among others;
5. Supporting artists, creatives, indigenous knowledge holders, and culture and heritage workers and those working in cultural tourism, including women and youth, whose livelihoods are threatened by climate change

or who would benefit from response measures in the face of green transformation, to maintain culture expression, heritage transmission, and inclusive, decent work, through context-appropriate approaches.

6. Maximizing climate, social, and environmental co-benefits such as social cohesion, wellbeing, creativity, education and intercultural dialogue, across sectors including the built and natural environment, agriculture, cities and regions, energy, and care for habitats and communities, by including the conservation, protection and safeguarding of cultural heritage and the promotion of culture in adaptation and mitigation activities.

To achieve these aims – according to our own national circumstances – we commit to expedite the integration of attention to culture, values, and diverse knowledge systems into our climate action and, simultaneously, to mainstream climate action across our policy agendas and actions related to cultural heritage, arts, and creative industries.

In fulfilling this commitment, we intend to strengthen our respective and shared efforts by:

1. Launching and sustaining the Group of Friends of Culture-Based Climate Action at the UNFCCC (GFCBCA), an informal coalition of UNFCCC parties focused on strengthening political momentum for an effective, coherent, and coordinated action to support and advocate for culture and heritage-based climate action as well as for the protection of culture and heritage from climate impacts.
2. Promoting the recognition that we are not just facing a financial, technical, and scientific challenge but a cultural one as well and that the urgent climate change mitigation and adaptation needed to achieve the Paris Agreement goals will require unprecedented inclusivity and collaboration across all sectors, including culture.
3. Working in advance of COP29 and COP30 to explore ways to facilitate greater and consistent culture content in future COPs and in the work of the UNFCCC, including the possibility of a Joint Work on Culture and Climate Action.
4. Pursuing, before the convening of COP30, broad, transparent, and inclusive engagement, as appropriate within our national contexts, to integrate cultural heritage, arts, and creative industries into National Adaptation Plans, Nationally Determined Contributions, Long-term Strategies, and other related strategies, including also Adaptation Communications as called for in the Rome Declaration adopted at the 2021 meeting of the Ministers of Culture of the G20, in line with their national priorities and competencies.

To maintain momentum, we intend to utilize the platform afforded by the Group of Friends to coordinate around relevant regional and global convenings in order to benefit from sharing experiences and to accelerate national and collaborative action. We will review our collective progress next year at COP29 and invite the hosts of COP29 to convene another high-level meeting of the Group of Friends.

Hereby, we the founding member parties of the GFCBCA agree that our collective aim is to strengthen political momentum for effective, inclusive, coherent, and coordinated action by advocating for culture and heritage-based climate action and creating a path for integrating culture into climate action in the future.