

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

Committee Staff

Director	Max Lacey
Assistant Director	Tobías Jácome

Agenda

- I. Sustainable Tourism and World Heritage Sites
- II. Strengthening Culture and Arts Education

Resolutions adopted by the Committee

Code	Topic	Vote
UNESCO/1/1	Sustainable Tourism and World Heritage Sites	Adopted without a vote
UNESCO/1/2	Sustainable Tourism and World Heritage Sites	Adopted without a vote

Code: 1/1

Committee: The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization

Topic: Sustainable Tourism and World Heritage Sites

The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization,

Acknowledging that World Heritage Sites are part of the cultural birthright of humanity and that Member States have an obligation to protect World Heritage Sites as part of the human right to culture as articulated in Article 27 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), as well as continuing to prevent the effects of deforestation, extinction, and pollution in Natural World Heritage Sites with initiatives to ensure sustainability of the sites and the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) Charter on Sustainable Tourism,

Recognizing UNESCO resolution 78/217 which examines the implementation of Culture and Sustainable Development and which outlines trends in international, regional, and national cultural policies to protect and exercise cultural and educational rights,

Acknowledging Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 17 and the importance of multilateralism to promote best practices related to sustainable development,

Recalling the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) which affirms the right of people to preserve, develop, and pass on their language to future generations,

Encouraging Member States to reaffirm their commitment to SDG 11.4 to strengthen efforts to protect and safeguard the world's cultural and natural heritage, in particular SDG target indicator 11.4.1, which is total per capita expenditure on the preservation, protection, and conservation of all cultural and natural heritage,

Recalling the unique and diverse history and cultures surrounding each individual World Heritage Site,

Further recalling that according to UN Tourism, 790 million tourists travelled internationally in the first seven months of 2024,

Taking into account the Principles on Personal Data Protection and Privacy to facilitate processing of personal data for the development of a practical UN system-wide framework on data privacy and data protection,

Further recognizing Human Rights Council resolution 49/7, which states that the duty of ensuring the identification, protection, conservation, presentation, and transmission to future generations of cultural heritage belongs primarily to the state on whose territory it is situated,

Expressing concern that local businesses often face barriers to entry in a highly competitive tourism market, which create unequal and unfair development outcomes for local communities near World Heritage Sites which at times do not meaningfully benefit from tourism in their communities as reported by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in their report on tourism and the SDGs,

Understanding that unrestricted tourism and development in local communities in the direct vicinity of World Heritage Sites correlates to economic decline and the structural destruction of sites,

Referring to pre-existing frameworks establishing Integrated Tourist Zones (ITZ) to establish designated geographic zones for tourists and strategic tourism planning and management to protect local communities and the natural environment from degradation,

Acknowledging the success of the *World Capacity Building Strategy* (WHCBS) implemented in 2011 by the World Heritage Committee, which represents a shift from targeted instruction to capacity-building, empowering Member States to further protect valuable sites,

Reaffirming UNESCO's key priority of strengthening its focus on Africa as outlined in the *Medium-Term Strategy 2022-2029*,

Appreciating the success of UNESCO's Community Management of Protected Areas for Conservation (COMPACT) initiative, which had over one million beneficiaries and supported community-based projects at World Heritage Sites,

Further promoting emission-free energy including but not limited to hydro, wind, geo, and solar power,

Emphasizing the urgent need to integrate climate-resilient practices to safeguard these irreplaceable assets against the growing impacts of climate change,

Noting that according to the World Bank's Group Paper no.19, the "historic cores of World Heritage Sites have lower emissions compared to the newer parts of town, both on the individual building level and the urban fabric",

Recognizing the unique effects of climate change on World Heritage Sites and indigenous and local communities of those areas,

Further acknowledging the need for comprehensive solutions to the harms of unsustainable tourism in order to best promote international collaboration,

1. *Invites* all Member States to continue open dialogue with an intention to protect World Heritage Sites building on existing global platforms, specifically the Higher Education Sustainability Initiative (HESI), by evaluating the direct conservation issues impacting these sites;
2. *Requests* Member States to create educational programs that connect students to Indigenous experts where possible and in relevant areas to optimize their knowledge of Indigenous World Heritage Sites through:
 - a. Expanding the amount of available instruction taught by Indigenous educators that emphasizes unique climate issues and the history of the site along with sustainable development practices;
 - b. Visiting, where sustainable and feasible, the Indigenous heritage sites to broaden their understanding of the curriculum taught by the Indigenous educators;
3. *Further invites* Member States to expand the role of UNESCO's Global Education Cooperation to build collaborative global networks about urban-rural heritage to face shared challenges and communicate traditions, experiences, language, and culture and in order to increase education,

prioritizing working with local and Indigenous communities within the publicly visited World Heritage Sites;

4. *Endorses* the creation of educational programs for local communities to promote sustainable tourism to take care of World Heritage Sites by:
 - a. Creating spaces within schools for local communities and Indigenous peoples to share their cultural heritage and encouraging the sharing of traditions across cultures when wanted by local communities;
 - b. Collaborating with UNESCO volunteers to create tours and increase exploration of World Heritage Sites when permitted by local communities;
 - c. Providing increased opportunities to access UNESCO World Heritage Sites for visitors and local populations by providing monetary contributions through the United Nations Secretary-General's SDGs stimulus funding, supporting schools visiting, utilizing scholarships, and running additional educational programs;
5. *Introduces* the creation of a database that includes the best sustainable practice solutions discussed at the UNESCO Youth Forum by:
 - a. Urging Member States to deepen their partnership through the collective preservation of World Heritage Sites;
 - b. Placing an emphasis on having student discussions regarding best practices for sustainable development to gain better knowledge on cultural heritage;
 - c. Discussing solutions that will receive support through partnerships with governments or non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to help establish global and regional youth networks enabling collaboration on projects, advocacy campaigns, and sharing best practices among participants;
6. *Stresses* the importance of informing tourists on sustainable visitation practices through educational programming such as infographics and verbal instructions from site officials before entering the World Heritage Site;
7. *Encourages* Member States to contribute to the *Vigdís Finnbogadóttir Institute of Foreign Languages* and similar programs operated under the helm of UNESCO, to promote language preservation and educational programs regarding the advancement of Indigenous peoples and local communities in relation to World Heritage Sites;
8. *Suggests* the expansion of the UNESCO World Heritage and Sustainable Tourism Programme's five-day training program piloted in the Socotra Archipelago, which gathered 45 participants from various World Heritage stakeholders within the tourism industry, to additional World Heritage Sites for the purpose of:

- a. Equipping local tour guides and relevant authorities with the knowledge and skills necessary to support conservation efforts, enhance visitor experiences, and building partnerships with local communities;
 - b. Incorporating this training program into UNESCO's List of World Heritage in Danger (LWHD), such as the City of Potosi, Historic Centre of Vienna, Old Towns of Djenne, and Old City of Jerusalem and its Walls, to include its local business owners on promoting sustainable tourism practices including:
 - i. Sustainable business operations;
 - ii. Waste management systems;
 - iii. Financial management;
 - iv. Cultural preservation;
 - c. Furthering collaborating with the World Heritage Fund and non-governmental organizations to provide monetary aid to local communities and organizations in utilizing tourism for economic benefits;
9. *Invites* the United Nations Sustainable Destinations Summit to continue its meetings on an annual basis and retain its current scope while also acting to better keep Member States and stakeholders informed on trends in sustainable tourism and risks to World Heritage Sites by expanding its list of speakers by:
 - a. Including experts and guest speakers from the UNWTO to present economic analysis of the benefits and costs of sustainable tourism as well as relevant statistical information, international and regional trends and challenges in furthering sustainable tourism and threats posed to World Heritage Sites;
 - b. Integrating Indigenous and local community representatives, where relevant and possible, to bring forward unique challenges regarding heritage sites, climate change issues, and community development in tourism to inform future international sustainable tourism practices and understanding of risks facing World Heritage Sites;
 - c. Involving leaders from the tourism industry to speak on industry developments and the ways in which sustainable tourism efforts affect logistical operations and profitability of tourism products relating to World Heritage Sites;
10. *Encourages* the committee to expand UNESCO's *Guide 4 Engaging Local Communities and Businesses*, to include specialized sections and case studies that place a high emphasis on implementing strategies to reduce "barriers to entry" for local entrepreneurs and businesses at World Heritage Sites;
11. *Urges* Member States to encourage and reward businesses that offer training for individuals who are local to World Heritage Sites, invest in sustainable local products or services, or invest in

socio-economic development, providing an incentive for local businesses to adopt sustainable practices including carbon offsetting and supply agreements with local communities;

12. *Recommends* the expansion of the COMPACT initiative to a 4th phase targeting the sites on the LWHD by:

- a. Implementing strategies and best practices outlined in the UNESCO World Heritage and Sustainable Tourism Programme by building the capacity of stakeholders and facilitating communication between international and local groups, allowing them to share insights on the effectiveness of these strategies for continuous improvement;
- b. Building broader community support, outside of the specific leaders, to empower local people in the conservation and sustainability of tourism sites;
- c. Funding the expanded initiative with a diverse mix of sources such as the UNESCO General Fund, Funds-in-Trust endowed by Member States, ECOSOC contributions and other sources, prioritizing those Member States who are unable to support the initiative independently;

13. *Urges* this committee to strengthen the *World Heritage Capacity Building Strategy* (WHCBS) by:

- a. Following the *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention* to establish a special advisory body ensuring that strategic programs are implemented, international progress is tracked, and the capacity of Member States to add sites to the WHL and remove sites from the LWHD is expanded, further aiding underrepresented Member States; composed of:
 - i. Rotating Member States;
 - ii. Experts and leading practitioners selected by UNESCO;
- b. Increasing financial support for underrepresented Member States, such as but not limited to those in Africa, from NGOs, willing Member States' Funds-In-Trust, and other sources, in alignment with SDG target indicator 11.4.1 to ensure equitable representation;

14. Expresses the hope that Member States build upon the WHCBS to create a framework for implementing ITZs to mitigate the effects of over-tourism on local economies through strategic development management by:

- a. Establishing designated tourist zones to limit the impact of unsustainable tourism practices on communities and natural environments in proximity to World Heritage Sites;
- b. Supporting local businesses in the presence of foreign enterprises;
- c. Limiting overly-consumptive and dangerous products in eco-fragile zones;
- d. Implementing a tourist tax for entry to help with the cost of waste management and preservation;

- e. Managing tourists' visitation of endangered heritage sites in order to allow for the continued stability of the Heritage Site;
 - f. Partnering with the private sector companies to support the development of new areas and amenities in order to attract tourists to sites and increase development;
15. *Recommends* enhancing existent mid-term and long-term plans for reducing harms posed to World Heritage Sites as a result of climate change by:
- a. Expanding current UNESCO efforts, such as the Berlac Project to:
 - i. Collaborate with methodologists and scientists to evaluate and assess potential vulnerabilities;
 - ii. Encourage Member States to conduct structural and non-structural safety assessments of UNESCO World Heritage Sites worldwide;
 - b. Sharing best practices to preserve World Heritage Sites, promoting increased ecotourism through efforts such as:
 - i. The Amazon Rainforest Project, engaging tourists in valuable efforts to preserve rich biodiversity;
 - ii. The Great Barrier Reef Project, including the education of protection of species, habitats and coral restoration during site visits;
16. *Promotes* the development of emission-free energy sources to better promote sustainability within the tourism industry through encouraging Member States to utilize and promote these energy sources close to World Heritage Sites by:
- a. Encouraging countries and local jurisdictions to continue updating infrastructure and regulation regarding waste and water and energy consumption by:
 - i. Implementing updated building codes for hotels and tourism activities near World Heritage Sites to reflect the international updates in technology and lower energy and water use;
 - ii. Recognizing that there is no current tourism business framework for lowering water and energy emissions;
 - iii. Recognizing that according to the UN Tourism ESG Research Findings, there is a lack of standardization and limited comparability in ESG across borders;
 - b. Recommending the use of reusable products including, cloth bags, and glass bottles rather than single use plastic products to avoid high levels of waste and increase reusability of products.



Code: UNESCO/1/2

Committee: The United Nations Educational, Science, and Cultural Organization

Topic: Sustainable Tourism and World Heritage Sites

The United Nations Educational, Science, and Cultural Organization,

Recognizing General Assembly resolution 77/178 on the promotion of sustainable and resilient tourism, including ecotourism, for poverty eradication and environmental protection and UN Tourism's *Statistical Framework for Measuring the Sustainability of Tourism*,

Reaffirming General Assembly resolution 78/260, noting the importance of bridging the digital divide experienced by developing states, and how it pertains to sustainable development for tourism practices through data collection, efficient and modern management, eco-friendly travel and more sustainable consumption practices,

Recalling Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) target 8.9 on devising and implementing policies to promote sustainable tourism that creates jobs and promotes local culture and products, target 9.1 on developing quality, reliable, sustainable and resilient infrastructure, including regional and transborder infrastructure, to support economic development and human well-being, with a focus on affordable and equitable access for all, and target 12.b on developing and implementing tools to monitor sustainable development impacts for sustainable tourism that creates jobs and promotes local culture and products,

Further acknowledges the importance of the Joint Sustainable Development Goal fund that supports countries in accelerating progress towards the SDGs, particularly those that relate to and further sustainable tourism and the protection of World Heritage Sites,

Understanding the value of frameworks like the European Union's *Transition Pathway for Tourism* in ensuring sustainable consumption of natural resources in relation to tourism destinations, demand, and development,

Welcoming the continuing assistance and cooperation of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) with efforts to expand sustainable tourism and support the equitable socio-economic development of affected communities near World Heritage Sites where relevant,

Cognizant of the monetary funds necessary to fulfill future needs and the limited availability of the World Monuments Fund,

Aware of the impact of transportation on the environment and communities through air pollution and carbon emissions brought forth by the tourism industry which is set to grow as reported by the UNWTO,

Deeply preoccupied with the inaccessibility and lack of visitation to certain remote or rural World Heritage Sites, while simultaneously acknowledging the significance of SDG target 11.2 by providing sustainable transportation routes to rural and remote communities,

Acknowledging the importance of ensuring accessible tourism for all people, in particular those in rural and remote areas as well as accounting for individuals' disabilities and varying capabilities,

Having considered the concentrated tourism populations in large cities and the need to provide green transportation opportunities to rural and remote communities,

Guided by UN Tourism's 2020 *Goa Roadmap for Tourism as a Vehicle for Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals* (Goa Roadmap) to address the fact that inequality of digital access disproportionately impacts vulnerable groups, such as young people, women, Indigenous persons and persons with disabilities,

Recognizing the insight, expertise, and other benefits to be gained from consultation with private sector actors in the tourism industry to reduce the negative impacts of over tourism on World Heritage Sites,

1. *Recommends* the reallocation of UNESCO funding to the World Heritage Fund, with the inclusion of a supplemental oversight board, to assist Member States in site preservation and conservation by:
 - a. Reallocating 1% of annual private sector contributions to the fund, with an additional 0.1% increase for each ensuing year until the year 2030;
 - b. Utilizing the preexisting UNESCO Internal Oversight Service for conducting quarterly audits to ensure proper use of funds and provide a report to the External Auditor;
 - c. Utilizing the External Auditor to conduct an annual review of funds and expenditures;
2. *Calls for* the expansion of funding for the World Heritage Fund, in tandem with the reallocation, through a feasibility study which will:
 - a. Examine if Member States could implement a tourist tax on World Heritage Sites that would supplement Member States with additional income in order to assist in the protection of World Heritage Sites during times of decreased tourism, such as COVID-19 or economic recession;
 - b. Gauge their level of interest or need for additional income;
 - c. Determine relevant government or private bodies that will oversee this process, as well when this tax would take effect;
3. *Requests* that a portion of Member States' flexible funding from voluntary contributions be designated to the continued development of accessible transportation around World Heritage Sites where such adequate infrastructure is lacking by:
 - a. Encouraging the inclusion of accessible infrastructure such as ramps, visual information displays, and audio recordings to accommodate individuals with hearing, visual, and other impairments;

- b. Developing multi-stakeholder partnerships with the private sector to capitalise on the technical expertise they can provide in further improving accessibility functions for the promotion of inclusive tourism activities;
 - c. Working with ECOSOC where possible to encourage and help the development of new infrastructure projects facilitating tourism to World Heritage Sites where the existing infrastructure is inadequate;
 - 4. *Calls upon* Member States to prioritize sustainable transportation infrastructure in order to increase the capacity of access to World Heritage Sites and reap the economic benefits of tourism, whilst mitigating the environmental impacts by:
 - a. Increasing the access and utilization of sustainable transportation infrastructure such as efficient road systems, rail, bus and metro systems to World Heritage Sites as well as continuing to develop pedestrian, and cyclist networks reducing the environmental impacts of travel and tourism in these areas;
 - b. Creating new and overhauling existing travel routes to increase sustainability, aid the protection of endangered and remote areas, and decrease the negative impacts of tourism;
 - c. Securing funding through various international and regional sources such as the Joint Sustainable Development Goal Fund, NGOs, and willing Member States;
 - d. Studying previous frameworks and sustainable tourism successes including the European Union's *Transition Pathway for Tourism*;
 - 5. *Petitions* for an accessibility framework pilot program, in partnership with regional and local governments, that provides specific tourist routes to three distinctly remote sites, including the Huai Kha Khaeng in Thailand, East Rennell in the Solomon Islands, and the Heart of Neolithic Orkney in the United Kingdom, through:
 - a. Including participation from three government tourism agencies, community members, and local travel agencies;
 - b. Running for a period of one year, collecting data on the:
 - i. Number of tourists using the designated tourist routes;
 - ii. Environmental impact of the route on the World Heritage Site using existing UNESCO environmental monitoring programs;
 - iii. Economic impact on local community members;
 - c. Encouraging the three governments to create a final report that shares the data collected after the trial period and present the reports to the UNESCO General Conference, who will:
 - i. Evaluate the efficiency of the pilot program;
 - ii. Further recommend the expansion of the program to other remote World Heritage Sites;

- iii. Allow other Member States to volunteer remote World Heritage Sites to participate;
 - d. Highlighting local culture in pursuit of SDG Target 8.9;
 - e. Reducing the financial and situational burden on tourists to find adequate traveling routes;
- 6. *Strongly recommends* Member States manage unsustainable tourism levels and work towards creating durable destinations by optimizing and managing tourism flows through:
 - a. Developing physical and online public awareness campaigns to promote least visited cultural and natural World Heritage Sites, particularly those in rural and remote areas;
 - b. Implementing insights gained from multi-stakeholder discussions, reports, and existing forums to share and disseminate information on effective practices such as commercial cruise ship reductions, entry fees, and curfews to better mitigate negative environmental and social impacts;
 - c. Encouraging tourists to plan visits through incentives such as the provision of discounted entry fees and exclusive package options, in collaboration with the private sector and tourism agencies;
- 7. *Invites* willing and able Member States to share green infrastructure and technologies that significantly reduce waste — such as 3D mapping, low-flow fixtures, and smart technology systems that maximize sustainable tourism flows — with less developed Member States to bridge the technological divide between least and most developed countries, thus providing insights based on best practices for sustainable tourism to develop medium-long term national strategies that preserve and manage World Heritage Sites;
- 8. *Supports* the development and implementation of frontier technologies at World Heritage Sites to optimize tourist flows, provide actionable insights, and build off of the *Statistical Framework for Measuring the Sustainability of Tourism* while facilitating international knowledge-sharing to bridge the digital divide;
- 9. *Calls upon* Member States to expand accessibility in technology for vulnerable groups, through providing equitable access to digital tools and infrastructure, such as through ensuring access to broadband in order to promote inclusiveness following the Goa Roadmap;
- 10. *Highly encourages* Member States who participate in regional and international forums such as the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC) and UN Tourism to combine, establishing a singular voluntary digital forum under the purview of UN Tourism by:
 - a. Establishing distinct sub-forums related to the multifaceted issues of sustainable tourism;
 - b. Sharing successful past history and new research in the field of sustainable tourism;
 - c. Encouraging and assisting the increased access and participation of stakeholders who have not had the opportunity to participate in forums before;

11. *Urges* Member States to foster increased long-term public-private partnerships (PPP) between travel agencies, tourism companies, and other private sector actors in the tourism industry with government bodies that focus on sustainable tourism practices, reducing travel waste, and promoting eco-friendly travel habits at and around World Heritage Sites by means of:
 - a. Strengthening the role of the private sector in infrastructure projects, for example by investments in national parks and forests, transportation and accommodation;
 - b. Encouraging collaborations and research amongst stakeholders, such as enterprises, governments, and scientific institutions, without compromising tourist experiences;
 - c. Utilizing data collection and eco-labeling programs to inform consumers of the environmental impact, waste and inefficiencies of tourism products that have been identified as the most environmentally damaging by UN Tourism including:
 - i. Large passenger cruise ships and cruise tours that focus on providing close sight of World Heritage Sites to passengers through their advertising for tourism activities;
 - ii. Commercial tour flights in small passenger jets or helicopters seating less than 8 people whose routes are in very close proximity to World Heritage Sites for the purposes of tourism activities;
 - d. Consulting with private sector partners on tourism market demand and over-demand for tourism products related to World Heritage Sites;
12. *Encourages* Member States and actors in the private tourism industry to allocate resources and support to local communities and Indigenous peoples that are stakeholders to World Heritage Sites to promote inclusive and fair development, thereby adhering to and building upon the UNESCO community-based tourism program in partnership with ECOSOC.