



# United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
1849 C Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20240

13 May 2016

Executive Committee  
Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage

Re: Call for Information on Related to Migration, Displacement and Human Mobility

To Esteemed Members of the Executive Committee,

I am writing in response to the call that was released by the Executive Committee of the Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage for information related to migration, displacement and human mobility. I strongly recommend that the policy framework for addressing climate displacement take into account the cultural heritage of the displaced people and their communities. Cultural heritage is both a community asset to be conserved during relocation and a tool that can aid in the development of strong, socially cohesive communities once relocated. In particular, I would note that actions to preserve (where possible) and/or document and memorialize the tangible cultural heritage left behind by displaced communities can reduce the stress of loss of place, which is part of the non-economic loss and damage of migration and displacement due to climate change. In turn, in cases where preservation or documentation is portable, such action also can support continuation of intangible heritage of relocated cultures and communities by enabling sharing of memory, stories, and related aspects of identity connected to place into the future.

In that regard, I am submitting the following web links from the US National Park Service Heritage Documentation Programs (NPS HDP). The HDP have more than 70 years of experience in documenting buildings (via the Historic American Buildings Survey [HABS]), cultural landscapes (via the Historic American Landscape Survey [HALS]), and feats of engineering (via the Historic American Engineering Record [HAER]). These programs use combinations of photography, drawings, and text descriptions to create an archive of historic and cultural environments. Recently, laser scanning has been added as an additional tool, although the durability of digital files over many years is not yet well demonstrated. The documentation of cultural heritage created by NPS HDP sets the US national standard for documentation of heritage that will be lost (such as due to development) and is of such quality that it can be used to recreate or represent such heritage in the future.

The NPS HDP has worked in multiple countries around the world to document heritage at risk of damage or loss. Colleagues in the NPS HDP are interested in contributing their

knowledge and expertise in response to the needs of communities displaced by climate change.

Additional information on the work and expertise of the NPS HDP is included here:

- <https://www.nps.gov/hdp/> : overview of the program, history, and techniques
- <https://www.nps.gov/hdp/samples/index.htm>: sample documentation projects on architecture, engineering, and landscapes
- <https://www.nps.gov/hdp/exhibits.htm>: samples of digital work, including scanning

I hope the potential for documentation of cultural heritage can be incorporated into your work.

The NPS is part of a cultural heritage community that has organized a platform for addressing these issues, the Pocantico Call to Action on Climate Impacts and Cultural Heritage, which draws on the work of organizations like the Society for American Archaeology and the International Council on Monuments and Sites. Together, we look forward to the chance to help address difficult issues raised by climate change.

With best regards,

Marcy Rockman

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