

## Outline Presentation Page

- Title of the technical paper: Non-Economic Losses from Climate Change Impacts: Cultural Heritage
- Workstream/expert group: Prepared under the UNFCCC Plan of Action of the Expert Group on Non-economic Losses of the Executive Committee of the [Warsaw International Mechanism](#) for Loss and Damage (WIM ExCom). Type (A) product: ExCom product, with UNFCCC ownership; technical paper.
- Plan of Action Activity (please include the full text of the activity):
  - Mid-March 2025: First draft outline.
  - April-end 2025: Consultations with international experts on measuring Cultural heritage in climate change
  - June-August 2025: Consultations with selected UNESCO Field Offices.
  - September 2025: Draft outline to share for endorsement by ExCom
  - January 2026: Draft text to be shared with WIM Expert Group on NELS for their feedback.
  - May 2026: Final text shared for endorsement by EXCOM
- Lead experts/organization. Contact information (optional): UNESCO. (Contact: Jyoti Hosagrahar ([j.hosagrahar@unesco.org](mailto:j.hosagrahar@unesco.org)))
- Target audience: Stakeholders engaged in developing policies and actions at the international, national, and local levels including the operationalization of the Fund for responding to Loss and Damage (FRLD) established under the UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement as well as the work of the Santiago Network. More broadly, the work of the FRLD is also related to the overall Goals of the UAE Framework for Global Climate Resilience that also recognizes cultural heritage as one of the important targets in the framework of climate resilience and adaptation. Furthermore, alignment with the *UNESCO Policy Document on Climate Action for World Heritage*, adopted by 196 States Parties of the 1972 World Heritage Convention anchors the work in wider global efforts to address climate change impacts on cultural heritage as well as ways to avert, minimise, and address them.
- Timeline for producing a final document for the endorsement by the ExCom: May 2026
  - To align with the UNFCCC WIM EXCoM Meeting as well as World Heritage Day in 2026.
- Is stakeholder consultation planned for preparing this product? If yes, in which format? Yes, two major international workshops were organized in March and April that will inform the document. Consultations with selected UNESCO Field Offices as well as relevant site authorities are being carried out online to develop the case studies, using a template to support their development and submission of case studies. UNESCO will published next week a major publication *Indigenous Peoples' Knowledge and Practice in UNESCO-Designed Sites* on Indigenous Peoples and the Natural Environment that includes global examples and case studies of Indigenous and local knowledge systems. Ongoing research for the publication and its designation of case studies would inform this technical paper's process for case examples. Any case studies that the ExCom would like to propose are very welcome.

The template would also be shared with the WIM Expert Group and ExCom members for their proposal of case studies.

- How does the product take into account perspectives of gender, youth, indigenous peoples, local communities, and persons with disabilities? The development process of the product ensures that perspectives on gender, youth, Indigenous peoples, local communities, and persons with disabilities are meaningfully integrated. This is achieved through comprehensive consultations with Field Offices, which serve as a foundational step in capturing and incorporating these diverse viewpoints. The template developed for the case studies will include these aspects to ensure they are included.
- Any other relevant information, e.g.:
- Are there plans to connect this product to a capacity-building activity? This report would be linked to the ongoing work at UNESCO on capacity building for the *UNESCO Policy Document on Climate Action for World Heritage (2023)*
- Are there plans to launch or advertise the product? Do you have recommendations for how ExCom could help launch and advertise the product? The ExCom could support a launch of the product through a side-event at COP30 or the next SB meeting in May 2026.
- Specific guidance that might be needed from the ExCom to advance the work: Inputs from the ExCom would be particularly welcome in the following ways.
  - Feedback on the outline
  - Inputs on the case study template with suggestions of specific case studies
  - Review of the draft report
  - Support for the launch and dissemination of the report to the broader areas of work on loss and damage including the FRLD and the UAE Framework for Global Climate Resilience.
- In the current environment of inadequate funds, the work on this important topic will be carried out with available resources. Any support from any of the Champion countries or organisations would be greatly welcomed.

# Non-Economic Losses from Climate Change Impacts: Cultural Heritage

## 1. Introduction

The introduction will include a background on the establishment of the UNFCCC Warsaw International Mechanism (WIM) Executive Committee and of the UNFCCC Expert Group on NELS under it, the Action Plan developed by the NELS Expert Group and the NELS technical paper endorsed in 2024 leading up to this report. The introduction would include the growing recognition of cultural heritage within the work of the UNFCCC as evidenced by the UNFCCC Decisions related to NELS and the COP28 Decision on the UAE Framework for Global Climate Resilience, the UAE-Belem Work Programme, as well as the follow up to the UNGA's High-level meeting on Sea Level Rise.

The introduction would aim to showcase examples of cultural heritage loss that provide insights on the range of losses resulting from cultural heritage highlighting their complexity. The objective of this paper would be to inform and guide policy and action including the operationalization of the Fund for responding to Loss and Damage established under the UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement building on case studies from selected Field Offices of UNESCO identifying the multiple and overlapping losses resulting from the loss of cultural heritage.

## 2. Significance of Cultural Heritage Loss due to Climate Impacts

Culture and cultural heritage are variously understood across different fields of scholarship, practice, and in international conventions. With a view to having a clear understanding of cultural heritage, its various forms and multiple values, the first part of this section would establish the range of cultural heritage being impacted by climate change. From built and natural heritage and cultural landscapes to the knowledge and practices of communities, moveable art and objects, and underwater cultural heritage, this section would examine the types of cultural heritage and their values at important spatial scales from local communities to nation states and the global communities.

The second part would analyse selected case-studies identified across different regions through the UNESCO Field Offices. It would also analyse reporting to UNESCO by States Parties to UNESCO on the implementation of the 1972 Convention on the Protection of the World's Cultural and Natural Heritage, this section would provide an analysis of the types and variety of experiences resulting from the loss and damage to cultural heritage of all types from climate change. This section would also highlight the contribution of cultural heritage to resilience to climate related disasters. The case studies would represent perspectives from a diverse cross section of people globally, including Indigenous Peoples and local communities.

## 3. Actions to Avert, Minimize, and Address Cultural Heritage Loss Due to Climate Change: Safeguarding Cultural Heritage and Managing Loss and Damage

This section would examine safeguarding cultural heritage by minimizing, averting, and addressing loss across three types of actions. First, governance actions related to policies to manage cultural heritage from international agreements and conventions to community actions at the local level. Second, resilience actions at the local level to

advance resilient cultural heritage properties as well as sustainable development for local communities. Finally, cultural heritage led mitigation and adaptation actions showcasing local and regional actions where cultural heritage contributes to mitigation and adaptation actions. This section would also reflect on the role of diverse actors at different levels from international to local.

#### **4. Conclusions and Ways Forward:**

This section would analyse the key lessons learned from the case studies related to the loss of cultural heritage due to climate change impacts. Since 'cultural heritage' at UNESCO includes natural heritage, the intersections of cultural heritage loss with biodiversity and losses of ecosystem services would be fundamental. Some reflections on ways forward would be proposed for actions to avert, minimize, and address the NELS of cultural heritage due to climate change.