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# ROME APPEAL

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## PREAMBLE

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All participants in the conference recognize that documentation plays a critical role in managing, safeguarding and ensuring the respect for cultural heritage. Documenting is essential when it comes to the identification, protection, interpretation, and physical preservation of movable objects, historic buildings, archaeological sites, and cultural landscapes, as well as intangible heritage.

It has never been more urgent and imperative to find ways to ensure the preservation and permanence of world cultural heritage for present and future generations. Today's documentation has the potential to play a key role in achieving this goal. The measures referring to documentation are already in force in all major international conventions on the protection of cultural heritage, attesting to the importance of these activities.

At the same time, participants acknowledge that while an institutional framework for documenting cultural heritage at risk is well defined, both politically (for example by the mandate attributed by all international conventions and normative instruments), and also in terms of programmes, through the actions of various intergovernmental organizations such as UNESCO and ICCROM, and non-governmental organizations such as ICOMOS and ICOM, there is often a lack of financial and technical resources to allow Member States to efficiently document their own cultural heritage.

## WHEREAS

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- Article 5 of the 1970 UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export, and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property calls for the establishment and maintenance of national inventories of cultural property;
- Article 5.4 of the 1972 UNESCO Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage calls on each State Party to the Convention: "...to take the appropriate legal, scientific, technical, administrative and financial measures necessary for the identification, protection, conservation, presentation and rehabilitation of this heritage;" where the identification in particular, but also all other subsequent steps of the conservation process, imply the documentation of the cultural and natural heritage;
- Article 2 of the Council of Europe's Convention for the Protection of the Architectural Heritage of Europe (Granada, 1985) states that:

*"For the purpose of precise identification of the monuments, groups of buildings and sites to be protected, each Party undertakes to maintain inventories and in the event of threats to the properties concerned, to prepare appropriate documentation at the earliest opportunity";*

- Article 2 of the Council of Europe's Convention on the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage (Valletta, 1992) requires each party to make provision for *"the maintenance of an inventory of its archaeological heritage and the designation of protected monuments and areas"*;
- The 1995 UNIDROIT Convention on the International Return of Stolen or Illegally Exported Cultural Objects underlines the importance of inventories, according to Article 4, which states that the possessor of a stolen cultural object who is required to return it shall be entitled to fair compensation only if it can be proved that he or she:
 

*"exercised due diligence when acquiring the object. In determining whether the possessor exercised due diligence, regard shall be had to the circumstances of the acquisition, including the character of the parties, the price paid, whether the possessor consulted any reasonably accessible register of stolen cultural objects, and any other relevant information and documentation which it could reasonably have obtained"*;
- The ICOMOS Principles for the "Documentation of Monuments, Building Groups and Sites" (1996), which indicate the reasons and responsibilities for heritage documentation and identify the principles of planning, managing, disseminating and sharing documentation and content;
- Article 5 of the Second Protocol of 1999 to the Hague Convention of 1954 on the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict includes, inter alia, preparatory measures adopted in peacetime for the protection of cultural heritage against the effects caused by armed conflicts, in accordance with Article 3 of the Convention, including the preparation of inventories;
- The UNESCO General Conference, through Resolution 38 C/48, adopted in 2015 the Strategy for Reinforcing UNESCO's Action for the Protection of Culture and the Promotion of Cultural Pluralism in the Event of Armed Conflict, followed by a Plan of Action for its implementation which also includes natural disasters;
- UN Security Council Resolution 2347 of March 24, 2017, the first resolution devoted entirely to the protection of cultural heritage during armed conflicts, underlines the link that exists in many cases between destruction and smuggling of cultural heritage and threats to international peace and security;
- The Final Statement of the G7 Meeting of Culture, held in Florence at the end of March 2017;
- The Council of Europe adopted (3 May 2017) a new convention on criminal offenses relating to cultural property, in which Articles 22 and 23 draw attention to the importance of documenting as a means of preventing and combating the destruction, damage and illicit traffic of cultural goods;
- The European Parliament and the Council of Europe, have announced 2018 as the European Year of Cultural Heritage;

## GOALS

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We attending the International Conference on Documenting our Heritage at Risk – held in Rome on 19 and 20 May 2017 in Palazzo Poli, where the Trevi Fountain is located, and in the Ex-Planetarium of the National Museum of Rome at Terme di Diocleziano – make the following appeal:

a. The Member States of UNESCO and ICCROM should:

- take the necessary measures to document their cultural heritage, as provided for in the above-mentioned international instruments;
- share cultural heritage data banks in order to create a common knowledge platform for cultural heritage;

b. The Member States of UNESCO should:

- undertake, in the appropriate ways and times, specific activities under the Action Plan for the implementation of the Strategy for Reinforcing UNESCO's Action for the Protection of Culture and the Promotion of Cultural Pluralism in the Event of Armed Conflict, notably in relation to the inventorying and documentation of cultural heritage;
- consider that the UNESCO General Conference's forthcoming resolutions should include a specific appeal to all Member States to strengthen both technical and financial measures to foster inventory and documentation of cultural heritage at risk, with priority given to cultural heritage that is:
  - affected and threatened by conflicts and human-made disasters,
  - affected and threatened by natural disasters,
  - identified as being most vulnerable to the consequences of climate change, especially in coastal and insular areas due to the future increase in sea levels, as well as consequences of neglect and encroachment;

c. The Member States of ICCROM should consider at the next General Assembly the approval of a motion to:

- grant to the Secretariat the mandate and resources needed to define jointly the scientific methodologies appropriate for identifying and cataloguing cultural heritage in areas at risk;
- study and disseminate the best available documentation technologies according to the latest experiences;
- contribute to the technical-scientific comparison of the principles, criteria and modalities for future restoration, rehabilitation and reconstruction;

d. The European Parliament and the Council of Europe, which together proclaimed 2018 as the European Year of Cultural Heritage, should take the necessary measures and mobilize the

appropriate human and financial resources to lead an international initiative for the documentation of cultural heritage at risk worldwide.

This "Rome Appeal" is offered to the Italian Prime Minister, requesting his support to achieve its contents and objectives.

We will strive for the broadest acceptance of the "Rome Appeal" within the scientific community, institutions, and public opinion.

The Undersigned