

FLORENCE DECLARATION ON LANDSCAPE, 2012

Final Declaration of the UNESCO International Meeting on "The International Protection of Landscapes" held in Florence on September 19-21, 2012 on the occasion of the 40th Anniversary of the World Heritage Convention

The participants to the meeting that has reunited over 30 experts of all countries, the representatives of UN Agency (UNESCO, FAO, UNCCD, UNEP), relevant international intergovernmental bodies, centres and international associations (ICCROM, EUI, UNU, ICOMOS, IFLA, ICQHS, ITKI, IPSI, EHP), national and non-governmental organizations, universities, local administrators:

thanking the organizers for having convened a meeting on the International Protection of Landscapes;
having examined and discussed the challenges of today;
expressing their deep concern for the degradation of landscapes worldwide due to industrialization, rapid urbanization, intensification of agricultural processes and other threats and risks caused by the global change;
acknowledging landscape as the expression of the relationship between people and environment, which, over time, has created and still creates harmonic life conditions and wealth;
recognizing the importance of the landscape as an educational tool to promote knowledge and raise awareness of cultural diversity, identity and responsibility);
considering that the landscape is a common good, the right to the landscape is a human necessity;
aware that it is impossible to protect landscapes ignoring the local and traditional knowledge that have generated them and whose loss destroys a heritage of know-how usable for appropriate and innovative solutions;
acknowledging that international resolutions recognize intrinsic aspects of the landscape, such as adaptive management and a holistic approach between social, economic and aesthetic elements as possible answers to the global challenges;
taking into account the request of local communities and administrative representatives to preserve the landscape for better living conditions based on global sharing opportunities and common goals;
recalling the Rio+20 outcome document "*The future we want*" and the upcoming revision of the Millennium Developments Goals;
taking note of numerous initiatives at the international, national and local levels, addressing landscape management in the context of sustainable development within the United Nations system;
affirming the importance of safeguarding and improving landscapes for:

1. the quality of daily life and cultural identity
2. enhancing wellbeing
3. reacting in an adaptive and participatory way to risk and catastrophes
4. combating desertification, land degradation and draught, preserving biological diversity and mitigating the effects of climate change;
5. promoting work opportunities, food security, environmental protection and community resilience
6. promote social and economic sustainable development by extending the spatial boundaries and conceptual frontiers of the landscape
7. recognizing the value of traditional knowledge and practices as the basis for balanced technological and innovative development programmes
8. promoting participatory and bottom-up programmes together with activities based on local knowledge
9. empowering communities and institutions in decision-making processes;
10. fostering the respect for human rights, including the rights of communities to ensure their livelihood and preserve their resources, identity and beliefs
11. encouraging the respect of the sites, and decisional processes that safeguard communities and people
12. preserving diversity, tangible and intangible heritage assets;

13. ensuring the ecosystems' continuity in providing services to communities;

call upon intergovernmental agencies and secretariats responsible for United Nations programmes and international conventions together with non-governmental organizations concerned to:

14. strengthen the global awareness on the need to safeguard and improve landscapes as an integral element of sustainable development processes;
15. share information and make expertise available;
16. establish effective partnerships;

further call upon the Intergovernmental Agencies and Programmes, including the pertinent UNESCO Centres and Chairs to create a Working Group to foster the coordination between the existing international instruments and programmes in order to promote international, national and local policies aimed at linking the safeguarding and improvement of landscapes;

support immediate national and local government initiatives for the protection of landscapes;

request the creation of an International Forum on 2013 for the safeguard of landscapes as a tool for sustainable development, with the aim of advancing proposals for the reflection on the Post-2015 International Development Agenda and to start a relevant international mechanism.