



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Third Capacity Building Workshop on Nature-Culture Linkages in Heritage Conservation in Asia and the Pacific (CBWNCL 2018) took place in Tsukuba, Japan, from September 21 to October 1, 2018. The workshop was organized by the UNESCO Chair on Nature-Culture Linkages in Heritage Conservation at the University of Tsukuba, in collaboration with the UNESCO World Heritage Centre, the International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM), the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN), and the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS).

This workshop, themed Disasters and Resilience, was the third in a series programmed for the period of 2016-2019. The aim is to contribute to the World Heritage Capacity Building Programme in promoting and developing skills of young and mid-career heritage practitioners of the Asia and the Pacific region, enabling them to deal with the interlinkages between nature and culture in heritage sites.

The workshop was divided into four modules:

- **Module 1:** International Symposium
- **Module 2:** Understanding Nature-Culture Linkages in the Context of Disasters and Resilience
- **Module 3:** Management, Implementation and Governance in Disasters and Resilience
- **Module 4:** Reflection on Theory and Practice

CBWNCL 2018 was inaugurated with **Module 1**, which consisted of the 3rd International Symposium on Nature-Culture Linkages in Heritage Conservation held on September 21, at the Tsukuba International Congress Centre and in the framework of the Tsukuba Global Science Week 2018, which was organized by the University of Tsukuba with the overall theme of 'Driving Sustainable Development.' In this thematic context, the CBWNCL 2018 symposium contributed with presentations and discussions focused on how to deal with natural and human-led hazards, in order to prevent and recover from disasters by integrating natural and cultural heritage into disaster risk prevention and recovery processes. The symposium gathered international experts, three of whom represented partner organizations: Ms. Radhika Murti from IUCN, Mr. Joseph King from ICCROM, and Dr. Rohit Jigyasu from ICOMOS. A video message was sent from the Director of the UNESCO World Heritage Centre and Division of Heritage, Dr. Mechtild Rössler. Key promoters of the nature-culture approach in the World Heritage system, and close collaborators of the CBWNCL, joined the roundtable as discussants: Dr. Gamini Wijesuriya, former staff at ICCROM, and Ms. Kristal Buckley, a World Heritage Advisor for ICOMOS and lecturer at Deakin University. Representatives of the Japanese Government presented the situation in Japan. First, Mr. Naohisa Okuda, from the Ministry of the Environment, explained the current initiatives and efforts in the recovery process in the Tohoku region, which was affected by the Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami. Following, Ms. Kumiko Shimotsuma, from the Agency for Cultural Affairs, talked about the integration of disaster risk management in the protection and conservation of Japan's cultural heritage. Fifteen participants of the CBWNCL 2018, who attended the meeting and took part in the discussion, were heritage practitioners from the culture and nature sectors, coming from Australia, Bangladesh, China, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Vietnam, Hawaii (USA), Kenya, Chile, and Russia. Four students of the University of Tsukuba, from four different countries (DR Congo, Ethiopia, Jamaica, and Sudan), took part in the process as observers.

During the panel discussion and roundtable, speakers agreed that nature and culture sectors tend to work separately. Some of them highlighted the need to change the mindset in order to develop comprehensive approaches to heritage conservation and more intersectoral collaboration. It was pointed out that chances

to share ideas, like in the current symposium, have increased and that awareness raising on nature-culture linkages has been effective throughout the last years, with the UNESCO Chair and the CBNCL as one of its vectors. However, the current challenge lies in finding a way to implement this approach, which methodologies, strategies, and concrete proposals which can make the concept more operational.

The participants also reaffirmed the need to develop synergies and cooperation between sectors, in the heritage conservation context in general, and particularly in the case of disasters prevention, mitigation, response, and post-disasters recovery. It was pointed out that any disaster-related project needs the involvement of different sectors, yet, intersectoral collaboration is complex and the need of immediate response to disasters does not allow further efforts. Moreover, it was explained how during a disaster response, the priority is placed on survivors, and therefore, heritage, both natural and cultural, come in second place. Nevertheless, the discussions clarified the relevance of integrating a nature-culture approach for disaster risk management and for building resilience.

Japan was acknowledged as a champion in this endeavor and as a good example for Asia, the Pacific region, and beyond. The representatives of the Japanese governmental institutions showed how disaster risk management has been integrated into the cultural heritage conservation system as well as how nature is being used as a solution for disaster risk prevention, post-disaster recovery, and building resilience to future disasters. They asserted that working at the local level with municipalities and communities, in context-specific situations, enables collaboration.

It was emphasized that interdisciplinary and crossdisciplinarity partnerships need to be used when looking at disasters and resilience. Additionally, it was pointed out that the importance of natural ecosystems for the resilience of inhabited landscapes, and therefore nature conservation efforts, needs to be integrated as part of urban planning. Landscape conservation and urban planning are essential instruments in the building of resilience and preventing disasters.

Moreover, it was clarified that intangible cultural heritage is also impacted by disasters and that it plays a fundamental role in the post-disaster recovery as an instrument of resilience for communities, since identity and cultural heritage sustain the cohesion of communities when facing disasters. The importance of capacity building and education was highlighted, especially when confronting challenges such as climate change and unpredictable natural hazards. It was mentioned that educational systems may be divorced from reality; therefore, changes need to start in early education systems, as well, to build up awareness and openness to the relationships between nature, culture, and people.

The top-down nature of the implementation processes of the World Heritage Convention was pointed out as a constraint to the implementation of people-centered approaches and sustainable development perspectives. In response to this concern, the need to explore resilience from the bottom-up was highlighted. Speakers agreed that efforts to involve all stakeholders, especially local communities, should be continued. Community-based conservation and management need to be promoted. Traditional knowledge and indigenous peoples need to be respected and integrated into the disaster-prevention strategies.

Main challenges that were noted are climate change and rapid and unplanned urbanization; hence, the importance of adaptation and mitigation were stressed. It was highlighted that World Heritage sites serve as models and should continue their role as test grounds for sustainable development. It was suggested that disaster risk management should be included in management plans, as part of daily maintenance and monitoring. It was noted that more work needs to be done in the collaboration and sharing of experiences between different Conventions and Programs that work with the conservation of natural and cultural heritage, such as the UNESCO Man and the Biosphere Programme, the UNESCO Convention on the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage, the Convention on Biological Diversity, and the UNESCO Geoparks network, among others.

Yet, some questions remained open, in particular those regarding the implementation of a cultural perspective cross-cutting the Sustainable Development Goals of the UN Agenda 2030. The need to explore on qualitative data and qualitative indicators for culture was stressed.

Module 2 consisted of three days of intensive lectures, group discussions, and participants' case study presentations. The first day's lecture dealt with the evolution of the conservation practice, from the nature-culture divide towards a more integrated perspective, considering nature-culture linkages, and people-centered approaches to conservation, as well as a landscape approach to heritage. The second lecture focused on the World Heritage Convention and its processes of implementation. The second day focused on disaster prevention and post-disaster recovery, with lectures from the natural and cultural sectors perspectives, covering the Ecosystems-Based Approach to Disaster Risk Reduction and Disaster Risk Management for Cultural Heritage. During the third day, the focus was on the Japanese experience on disaster risk management and post-disaster recovery, as well as an introduction to the field visit. During the three afternoon sessions, fifteen case studies were presented: Eight World Heritage sites, two sites on the tentative list in their respective countries, one Biosphere Reserve, one UNESCO Geopark, and four landscapes protected at the national level were examined and discussed. The case studies reflected the diversity of overlapping legal systems and designations, landscapes' vulnerabilities to a variety of hazards, mostly natural, and clarified that nature-culture linkages are present and need to be acknowledged for better conservation and disaster risk management.

Module 3 lasted for four days and the participants visited three sites in the Tohoku Region which were affected by the Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami in March 2011: Hiraizumi – Temples, Gardens, and Archaeological sites Representing the Buddhist Pure Land, a World Heritage since 2011, the Sanriku Fukko Reconstruction National Park, the area of Minami-Sanriku Town, and Matsushima, Place of Scenic Beauty. In Hiraizumi participants learned about the conservation of important Japanese cultural heritage properties, such as temples and gardens, as well as how they are prepared for hazards and how reconstruction is undertaken – with an example of a garden rock. In Minami-Sanriku Town, participants learned about the concept and implementation of the Sanriku Fukko Reconstruction National Park and how the municipality is working with the Ministry of Environment to develop strategies for the recovery of natural ecosystems – with the inscription of the Shizugawa Bay as a Ramsar site, as an example – and the development of eco-tourism. The participants also had the chance to listen to testimonies from the local inhabitants who experienced the tsunami and lead initiatives for the recovery of the town using natural and cultural heritage. Finally, in Matsushima, participants learned how the area was affected by the tsunami and how it is recovering. From an archaeological perspective, participants learned about the prehistoric occupation of this area and how prehistoric people living in Japan settled in safer places. Moreover, they learned about the problems of relocating fishermen villages and the conservation of the landscape views, as well as the issues entailed by the construction of concrete walls along the sea side, as an immediate reaction to tsunami. From all these visits, participants were able to have a better understanding of the importance of the local community's involvement in preparation for, and the recovery processes after, disasters. Through the testimonies, workshop participants recognized the role of natural and cultural heritage in the resilience of communities affected by these experiences.

Module 4 comprised of two days of reflection on the theory and practice gained during the workshop. Workshop participants worked in groups, tasked with mapping the values and interrelations between nature and culture in the sites visited as well as assess the management of the sites, by identifying the lessons learned and elaborating on recommendations. Additionally, participants were asked to reflect on their own case studies and present one lesson learned that they would like to apply in their home country. Participants prepared group presentations from which many interesting discussions arose regarding their different understandings of the same sites. Participants highlighted the role of locals in the recovery process and agreed that the Japanese experience was exemplary for their own countries.

As concluding remarks, participants acknowledged the importance of sharing and working with practitioners from different disciplines and sectors of the heritage practice, which led them to think beyond their knowledge and in a more holistic manner. They recognized that the work in interdisciplinary groups enriched their perspective of heritage and allowed them to learn from other sectors involved in the conservation practice. Most importantly, they understood the need of involving all stakeholders in the decision-making processes, having learned from the Japanese local communities that nature and culture are not divided when facing disasters, such as earthquakes or tsunami. The experiences in Japan clarified that conserving heritage successfully requires coordination beyond sectors and at different levels of governance. It became evident that heritage conservation needs to be integrated with other areas involved in disaster

prevention, post-disaster recovery, and reconstruction efforts, as well as the need for it to be enforced by local management agendas. Moreover, participants came to understand that nature-culture linkages are necessary for a comprehensive conservation of heritage sites.

