



## Declaration of Commitments

by the organizing members of

### “Water and Heritage: Connecting Past, Present and Future”

contributing to the UN 2023 Water Conference in New York

We, the organizing members and partners of “Water and Heritage, Connecting Past, Present and Future, working in the field of water and heritage, gathered in New York on 20-21 March, express the deep conviction that our respective practices, traditions, beliefs, and religions, share a **common commitment to Valuing Water, Culture and Heritage as intrinsically connected parts of our past, present and future.** Therefore, water, culture and heritage should be perceived as mutually reinforcing spheres as they are common roots of our society. The future can benefit from our deeply rooted ethical and spiritual foundations in culture and heritage through water.

The present Declaration of Commitments reaches out to the UN 2023 Water Conference, UNESCO and the UN system as a whole and its partners; cultural heritage and water organizations and authorities around the world; governments and decision-makers at all levels; water education, scientists, technical specialists as well as young professionals; to civil society widely, including youth, Indigenous people and spiritual groups; and to all relevant stakeholders.

Having met in New York from 20 to 24 March 2023, contributing to the UN 2023 Water conference, we aim at enhancing cohesive, peaceful and respectful dialogues connecting water, culture and heritage, agreed by all concerned and open to all actors that share its objectives.

The United Nations acknowledges the importance of coherently implementing water-related goals and achieving targets outlined in the 2030 Agenda. The Dushanbe Declaration (2022) emphasizes the need to accelerate efforts and strengthen political and technical dialogue on water at the highest level. The International Symposium on Water and Cultural Heritage in Tokyo in 2020, is one point of departure for our commitments. They built upon the Chair's statement highlighting the importance of multi-disciplinary dialogues to develop narratives on the significance of harnessing water-related heritage. Through such collaboration we enhance our movement towards achieving the water-related targets outlined in the 2030 Agenda, ensuring the sustainable future of our most valuable resource, water.

To give concrete effect to the above recommendations, which has repeatedly been positively invoked by States, organization, and other stakeholders, we formulate the following commitments on “Water and Heritage: Connecting Past, Present and Future” contributing in our different roles, responsibilities, and capacities.



**I. PROVIDING a platform for the exchange of ideas and the dissemination of information on the significance and management of water and heritage:**

1. ESTABLISHING a meeting place for international, national and regional dialogues for professionals, researchers, policy makers, other stakeholders in the water, culture and heritage sector;
2. GATHERING and SHARING research, professional experience and knowledge from diverse actors and publics in open access publication platforms;
3. ENGAGING and INCLUDING the knowledge, experience and interests of local communities, Indigenous people and minority groups.

**II. PROMOTING knowledge, understanding and stewardship of the global fields of water, culture and heritage and their potential to sustainably address concerns of the present and future:**

4. INITIATING and DISSEMINATING thematic studies and research on water, culture and heritage and its material, conceptual, political, economic, legal, and spiritual aspects;
5. SUPPORTING capacity building and water management and practices, educational centres and programs, aimed at connecting, water, culture and heritage;
6. EXPLORING historical water practices, traditions, rituals and governance for awareness, common language, engagement and continuation.

**III. PROVIDING technical advice on the identification, protection and promotion of water heritage as well as scientific evidence of its significance, to inform climate change mitigation and adaptation, and improve current and future water management, practices and planning:**

7. DEVELOPING guidance on methodologies, training, definitions, policies, sound design processes, to facilitate INCORPORATING traditional wisdom from diverse actors and publics, into policy;
8. PROMOTING the study of historical water systems, including water management systems, and of water-related construction, materials, and techniques, developing inventories and comprehensive comparative studies;
9. PREPARING open access online courses and professional courses, FACILITATING the use of open data and contemporary media, DEVELOPING serious games and other new methodologies.