
Opening Statement

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Respectful Professors

Ladies and Gentlemen

On my behalf and on behalf of UNESCO, I am pleased and honoured to salute the attendees of the Conference on the Future of African World Heritage, which coincides with the launch of the program of study for Master's degree in African World Heritage by the Institute.

The sponsors of the UNESCO Convention on the Protection of World Heritage in 1972 aimed to support and assist Member States of UNESCO for the implementation of the Convention through advocacy and facilitating accession to the Convention and the continued capacity building of institutions associated with the work of this Convention.
In this regard, UNESCO encourages and supports initiatives designed to enhance the academic courses that contribute to the strengthening of national capacities in the field of heritage preservation in the Member States of UNESCO.

The UNESCO strategy for capacity building in the field of World Heritage, approved in 2011, examined the current requirements concerning the protection of World Heritage and identified a range of issues to be addressed:

• reduce the risk of disasters
• sustainable tourism
• assessment of the impact of heritage
• management effectiveness
• integration of community and non-governmental organizations and other interested parties in the management process
• consolidate and strengthen legal and administrative frameworks at the national level
• Increase public awareness about the Convention of Protection of World Heritage
• Improve the integration of World Heritage in planning mechanisms that are in place

It is understood that you cannot address any of the issues mentioned above without carrying out adequate academic research and the development of academic educational programmes at both national and regional levels.

And so UNESCO would like to congratulate Cairo University and the Institute of African Research and Studies for the preparation and launch of the online Master's program in African World Heritage which will contribute to capacity building related to World Heritage in general.

UNESCO Office in Cairo also congratulates the Egyptian National Commission for UNESCO for their support of this initiative through the UNESCO Participation Program.

At the end of this opening speech I would like to suggest to Cairo University to consider establishing a UNESCO World Heritage Chair at the Institute of African Research and Studies, Cairo University, which will contribute to the connectivity and networking with similar academic programs in the rest of the world, through the UNESCO Universities Twinning Program.

Sincere wishes for success of this initiative and thanks for your kind attention.