



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization



## 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 including over 30 experts from various countries, and the representatives of UN Agencies (UNESCO, FAO, UNCCD, UNEP), international intergovernmental bodies, centres and associations (ICCROM, EUI, UNU, ICOMOS, IFLA, ICQHS, ITKI, IPSI, EHP), together with national and non-governmental organizations, universities and local administrators:

**thanking** the organizers for having convened a meeting on the International Protection of Landscapes and, in particular, His Royal Highness, The Prince of Wales for his most thought-provoking video message;

**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 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 and the right to the landscape is a human necessity;

**being 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 for 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 Development 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:

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

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

**further call** upon these bodies together with the pertinent UNESCO Centres and Chairs to create a Working Group in order to foster the coordination between the existing international instruments and programmes 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 including educational and awareness programmes and utilizing traditional knowledge;

**request** the creation in 2013 of an International Forum for the safeguarding 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 initiate the process for the creation of relevant international mechanisms.