

AUGUST 2013

Towards an International Landscape Convention

Why a convention

At IFLA we believe an international convention is necessary because it will encourage a much more strategic approach to the landscape. This is very important in addressing the major global challenges created by industrialization, urbanization, energy, demographic shifts, as well as climate change, the depletion of natural resources, deforestation, biodiversity, heritage, issues relating to the quality of life and other aspects of land use development. It will help communities deal with the many threats to their everyday landscape.

A convention from UNESCO will influence government bodies. Providing excellent leadership and expertise, leveraging the support of other agencies, it will help those seeking to champion the landscape to articulate arguments convincingly and persuasively. It will challenge preconceptions and reward good practice, empower and provide support for communities and organizations across the world, concerned with the health and sustainability of their landscapes. Establishing the landscape as the tool for planning sustainable development, it will help unlock greater value for people and the economy, for now and in the future.

Our proposal builds on a new way of thinking about landscape. Focusing on the relationship between people and their physical environment, it considers the landscape as a cultural and natural concept, a physical and abstract entity, having economic and social value. Integrating at every point, nature and culture, dealing with issues of expertise and public aspirations, with conservation and design, it deals with protection of the past as well as the shaping of the future. So this is not simply about landscape as bio diversity or ecology. It's not only concerned with the countryside or matters of heritage. It addresses the entire package, including the urban and suburban, the cities and the towns. Recognising that different cultures have different ideas about the landscape and these ideas can be so varied that there is little or no point in trying to find a common definition. Comprehensive, flexible and overarching this allows national, regional and local interpretation and application.

Rather than simply producing standards and rules, it is a framework agreement that contains principles and guidelines. By its nature it encourages a way of working across disciplines and established institutional, geographical and disciplinary boundaries, and recognises the vital connections between governance, culture, health and economics.

It reflects a changing discourse about the landscape. This is not about discovering a new language as such, but fusing, overlaying and cutting across concepts that have up till now, been compartmentalised and segregated.

Recognising landscape as a resource that is environmental, economic and social makes for a more dynamic, as well as democratic concept, not holding it up to be an elitist, scientific, or intellectual concern, only there for those who can afford it. It deals with both remarkable and degraded landscapes, the special and the everyday, all territories from rural to urban. All areas, from the most treasured to the most nondescript and unloved, the places and spaces in desperate need of regeneration.

Progress: Ratified by the IFLA World Council in Cape Town, Sept 2012, this proposal has received support from Rio+20, RECEPT ENELC, WUF6 Naples, UNESCO, ITKI, IPOGEA, ICOMOS, many United Nations Agencies, as well as NGOs, partners of IFLA and government institutions. It underpins the Florence Declaration on Landscape signed in September 2012 which aims to set up a partnership to deliver an international convention.

Please sign and return this document to demonstrate your support.



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I/we the undersigned support the development of an international landscape convention:

Name (please print) _____

Address (including country) _____

Name of organisation _____

Representing (please tick) 0-100 100-500 500-1000 1000+ members or individual support

Date _____

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On completion please send to: IFLA headquarters, 63, avenue d'Auderghem1040, Brussels - Belgium.

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