

POSITION PAPER



COUNTRY- Armenia

COMMITTEE- UNESCO

AGENDA- impact of climate change on world heritage sites

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Armenia believes that preserving the World Heritage Sites should be on a state's priority since these heritage sites harbour options for society to mitigate and adapt to climate change through the ecosystem benefits while the cultural sites convey knowledge that builds resilience for change and to a more sustainable future. Climate change acts fast and is not sparing the finest treasures of our planet. Its pace underlines the need for urgent and ambitious national commitments and actions.

World heritage sites serve as climate change observatories to gather and share information on applied and tested monitoring and adaptation practices which help raise awareness on its impacts on cultural and biodiversity and ecosystem services. Climate change threats on 46 heritage sites currently. It leads to coral bleaching and glacier loss due to increase in the sea levels and are the most threatened ecosystems. Aldabra Atoll (coral reefs) in the Indian ocean and the Belize Barrier Reef in the Atlantic have been affected by mass coral bleaching events due to the rising sea temperatures. Similarly, Kilimanjaro national park in Africa and Swiss alps Jungfrau- Aletsch are also threatened. Heritage sites destruction can have devastating consequences that go beyond their exceptional beauty and natural value, just like in Peru's Huascaran national park. It was found that 29% of the World heritage sites face significant concerns and two thirds for the sites are assessed as likely to be well conserved in the near future.

To combat this issue serious steps need to be undertaken at both national and international level. Policies regarding conservation of these heritage sites must be made with intergovernmental co-operation. Climate change can amplify and accelerate major existing management problems and threats affecting the integrity of these properties. A lot of natural world heritage sites show high natural sensitivity and low capacity to cope with these social and environmental impacts which increasingly require the use of innovative adaptive management mechanisms. The countries need to comply to their respective targets under various climate deals like the Paris agreement and Kyoto protocol and collectively work on the conservation of the World heritage sites with UNFCCC and IUCN. Armenia supports and commit to these polices to preserve the world heritage and collectively work on improving the management strategies with other countries.