***POSITION PAPER***

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**Committee:** United Nations Educational,

Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO)

**Country:** Iran

**Agenda:** The Impact of Climate Change on World Heritage Sites

 

World Heritage properties are affected by the impacts of climate change at present and in the future. Their continued preservation requires understanding these impacts to their Outstanding Universal Value and responding to them effectively. World Heritage properties serve as climate change observatories to gather and share information on applied and tested monitoring, mitigation and adaptation practices. 24 heritage sites in Iran have already been registered in the UNESCO’s list of World Heritage: Armenian Monastic Ensembles of Iran, Bam and its Cultural Landscape, Bisotun, Cultural Landscape of Maymand, Golestan Palace, Gonbad-e Qabus, Masjed-e Jame of Isfahan, Meidan-e Emam, Pasargadae , Persepolis , Shahr-i Sokhta, Sheikh Safi al-din Khanegah and Shrine Ensemble in Ardabil, and others. A number of direct impacts of Climate Change can be expected to play a role on:

a) Archaeological evidence is preserved in the ground because it has reached a balance with the hydrological, chemical and biological processes of the soil. Short and long cycles of change to these parameters may result in a poorer level of survival of some sensitive classes of material.

b) Historic buildings have a greater intimacy with the ground than modern ones. They are more porous and draw water from the ground into their structure and lose it to the environment by surface evaporation. Their wall surfaces and floors are the point of exchange for these reactions. Increases in soil moisture might result in greater salt mobilisation and consequent damaging crystallisation on decorated surfaces through drying.

c) Flooding may damage building materials not designed to withstand prolonged immersion, and post flooding drying may encourage the growth of damaging micro-organisms such as moulds . Archaeological sites and monuments may be at risk from flooding, particularly the eroding effect of rapid flowing water.

d) Increases in storminess and wind gusts can lead to structural damage.

e) Moveable heritage may be at risk from higher levels of humidity, higher temperatures and increased UV levels.