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international council on monuments and sites

Preserving Legacies Adds Eleven New Heritage Sites to Global Climate Adaptation Programme

Press Release
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Preserving Legacies: A Future for our Past welcomes a new cohort of heritage sites and custodians across the world to work together to ensure their places of cultural significance are protected from climate change impacts and allowing us to continue to learn from our past and inspire our future.

With climate change as their fastest growing threat, not only is their physical integrity at risk of erosion, but so are the values, knowledge and sense of community imbued in these places.

The site custodians in this new cohort will participate in an interactive training, assessment and adaptation implementation program that equips them and their communities with the capability to understand and visualize climate change impacts on a local scale, map the vulnerability of their sites and the community values they hold and act to minimize the adverse consequences of climate change.

The new heritage sites, representing 6 continents, in the 2024 cohort are:

- Kherlen River Basin, Mongolia
- Shenkeng District, Chinese Taipei
- Nelson's Dockyard National Park, Antigua and Barbuda
- Champagne Hillside, Houses, and Cellars, France
- Kerkennah Island, Tunisia
- Rideau Canal, Canada
- Guató Barra do São Lourenço Indigenous community, Brazil
- Bahia's Candomblé Terreiro, Brazil
- Mapoon Mission and Burial Mounds, Australia
- La Vieille Ville Historique d'Agadez, Niger
- Rock of Cashel, Ireland

These sites represent diverse types of heritage places and communities, including physical structures, landscapes, customs and traditions. They are also all experiencing different climate hazards, from coastal flooding and erosion, to wildfires and changes to traditional agricultural practices. This new cohort builds on an already diverse range of heritage places from the first founding year of the project.

By combining local knowledge, cutting-edge science, community capacity building, and interactive networking, Preserving Legacies is increasing access to heritage adaptation and transforming conservation as a field to meet the challenges of the climate crisis.

"Preserving Legacies has been a wonderful experience which has equipped us to respond to climate change at the Mosque City of Bagerhat. It has been amazing to meet so many incredible people from around the world dedicated to responding to climate change and I look forward to continuing our journey together," said **Khandoker Mahfuz ud Darain**, Preserving Legacies partner and custodian of Bagerhat World Heritage Site in Bangladesh

"Preserving Legacies has been a wonderful space for the exchange of experiences from different countries that has allowed us to implement new methodologies to understand, from the local context, the impact of climate change on the cultural heritage of Cartagena de Indias Colombia. It is encouraging to know that the Preserving Legacies Project connects people around the world who propose strategies to find solutions to the impacts of climate change on cultural heritage." **Carlos del Cairo**, Colombia

"I'm thrilled to welcome the newest cohort of eleven heritage sites to Preserving Legacies! By fostering connections across continents and demonstrating a courageous commitment to climate action, this new cohort of climate custodians will lead transformative change for their communities and build a sustainable future together," said **Victoria Herrmann**, National Geographic Explorer and Preserving Legacies Executive Director

"With the increasing negative impacts of climate change, projects like Preserving Legacies support communities around the world to protect their cultural heritage in a proactive, sustainable, locally-led way, which is ultimately what leads to success in heritage preservation in the long run. The National Geographic Society recognizes the importance of community-led adaptation approaches in order to illuminate and protect the wonder of our world.," said **Ian Miller**, National Geographic Society Chief Science and Innovation Officer

"I am excited to use my training to protect the area's cultural heritage and gain new experiences. Despite frequent droughts and severe winters, we are confident in preserving our nomadic farming, cultural heritage and historical monuments," said **Erdenesuvd Bayaraa**, Cultural Heritage Expert at the National Center for Cultural Heritage of Mongolia and Executive Director of the Gate of Kherlen Serven Khaalga

"It was an incredible opportunity to work at the intersection of cultural heritage, climate science, and indigenous knowledge systems at the Ifugao Rice Terraces. Many of their indigenous practices are sustainable, adaptive solutions that provide the advantage of resilience to our changing climate. However, communities are still ill-equipped for strong weather variabilities, and the prospect of these occurrences becoming a regular phenomenon warrants more robust infrastructure development, funding and technical capacity building," said **Tina Paterno**, ICOMOS Philippines

"ICOMOS is excited to welcome the new 2024 Preserving Legacies site custodians! As an organization, we are committed to preparing heritage professionals to respond to the current and emerging challenges caused by climate change. We are proud of the impact already made and excited for the year ahead," said **Dr. Will Megarry**, Focal Point for Climate Change at the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) and Senior Lecturer at Queen's University Belfast

"The Climate Heritage Network is inspired by the efforts of local communities to value and steward their cultural heritage, these special places where they live, work and celebrate. Building upon the excellent framework set in the inaugural year of Preserving Legacies, this new cohort will share, collaborate, and learn skills to develop climate action tools to protect their sites well into the future, giving hope to and putting power into the hands of the next generation," said **Shanon Shea Miller**, Climate Heritage Network North America Co-Chair

Led by National Geographic Explorer Victoria Herrmann, Preserving Legacies is funded by the National Geographic Society. Preserving Legacies is made possible by our partners, the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), Climate Heritage Network and the National Geographic Society, who share our vision to enable cultural heritage sites big and small to access the tools needed to address the existential threat of climate change. By partnering with leading organizations in cultural heritage, climate change, and community empowerment, we can transform conservation as a field to meet the challenges of an ever-changing world.

The International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) is a non-governmental, not for profit international organisation, committed to furthering the conservation, protection, use and enhancement of the world's cultural heritage. With over 11,000 members, 110+ National Committees, 31 International Scientific Committees and several Working Groups, ICOMOS has built a solid philosophical, doctrinal and managerial framework for the sustainable conservation of heritage around the world. As an official Advisory Body to the World Heritage Committee for the implementation of the UNESCO World Heritage Convention, ICOMOS evaluates nominations and advises on the state of conservation of properties inscribed on the World Heritage List.

www.icomos.org

Preserving Legacies safeguards the world's natural and cultural heritage against the impacts of climate change. As the bridge between heritage site custodians, climate scientists, and communities, they've created a scalable framework for scientific, values-based capacity-building, risk assessment, and adaptation implementation. From iconic places like Petra in Jordan to more locally-renowned ones like Sceilg Mhichil in Ireland, they have trained 30 site custodians in just one year and are on a mission to save every site. Their partners include National Geographic Society, International Council on Monuments and Sites, and the Climate Heritage Network. Learn more about their #ClimateCustodian work and movement at www.heritageadapts.org/

The Climate Heritage Network (CHN) is a voluntary, mutual support network of government agencies, NGOs, universities, businesses, and other organizations committed to tackling climate change and achieving the ambitions of the Paris Agreement. Mobilized in 2018 during the Global Climate Action Summit and launched in 2019, the Climate Heritage Network works to re-orient climate policy, planning, and action at all levels to account for dimensions of culture - from arts to heritage.

www.climateheritage.org/

The **National Geographic Society** is a global nonprofit organization that uses the power of science, exploration, education and storytelling to illuminate and protect the wonder of our world. Since 1888, National Geographic has pushed the boundaries of exploration, investing in bold people and transformative ideas, providing more than 15,000 grants for work across all seven continents, reaching 3 million students each year through education offerings, and engaging audiences around the globe through signature experiences, stories and content.

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