

Background, Objectives, and Outcomes of the International Expert Meeting On Cultural Heritage and Disaster Resilient Communities

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1. Introduction

The International Expert Meeting on Cultural Heritage and Disaster Resilient Communities (hereinafter, “the CH-DRC meeting”), held 11–17 March 2015 in Japan—both in Tokyo’s Minato Ward and in the city of Sendai, Miyagi Prefecture—was organized by UNESCO, ICCROM, Japan’s Agency for Cultural Affairs (ACA) and Japan’s National Institutes for Cultural Properties (NICH) in close cooperation with ICOMOS-ICORP and ICOM-DRTF.

The CH-DRC meeting was held within the framework of the third United Nations World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (hereinafter, “WCDRR”) that was organized in Sendai, 14–18 March 2015.

This paper lays out the background and objectives of the CH-DRC meeting and summarizes its outcomes, both to give an overview of this official report and to serve as a reference for planning cultural heritage disaster risk reduction events at the next WCDRR.

2. About WCDRR

In recent years, there has been increased awareness of the relationship between cultural heritage and disaster risk reduction, and the issue has been dealt with in various meetings and training courses. What, then, is the significance of including heritage-related topics within the framework of WCDRR?

WCDRR is a conference organized by the United Nations to discuss international disaster risk reduction strategies. It has been held three times, each time in Japan. The first event was undertaken in the city of Yokohama, Kanagawa Prefecture, in 1994. This was the fifth year of the “International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction (IDNDR)” (1990–1999), which was aimed at reducing loss of life, property damage, and social and economic disruption caused by natural disasters through concerted international actions. The second event was held in 2005 in the city of Kobe, Hyogo Prefecture, as an event commemorating the tenth anniversary of the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake. The third event was, as mentioned before, in March 2015 in Sendai, which was one of the areas affected by the Great East Japan Earthquake of 2011.

The IDNDR secretariat served as the secretariat for the first conference in 1994, and UNISDR for the second and the third.

The main outcome of each conference were the following documents, which include strategy goals, actions to be taken and priorities for actions: the “Yokohama Strategy and Plan of Action for a Safer World” in 1994, the “Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the resilience of nations and communities to disasters” in 2005, and the “Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030” in 2015. Some of the key disaster risk reduction concepts coming out of these series of discussions held over twenty years might be summarized as follows:

- Every type of disaster, be it small-scale or large-scale, frequent or infrequent, sudden or slow-onset, exerts negative economic, social, health, cultural and environmental impacts in the short, medium, and long term. Sustainable development cannot be achieved without efforts toward ensuring disaster resilient communities. It is necessary to establish and strengthen the systems and structures for disaster risk reduction at all levels—local, national, regional and global involving international cooperation.
- To increase disaster resilience, it is important to develop strategies focusing on disaster prevention and mitigation, to overcome vulnerabilities based on experiences of past disasters, and to stress the idea of “Building Back Better” in post-disaster recovery and reconstruction.
- Disasters occur when hazards such as earthquakes or typhoons hit socially vulnerable places or people (e.g., those with poverty and inequality) or environments (e.g., unplanned rapid urbanization, climate change). Therefore, it is essential to assess appropriately the disaster risks caused by insufficient or non-existent prevention measures and as much as possible to develop plans for investing in disaster

damage mitigation.

- Local involvement is particularly necessary to understand who is actually exposed to these disaster risks, what causes the vulnerabilities, and what is to be achieved in terms of “resilience” or “building back better.”

Reflecting the development of the abovementioned concepts, the name “World Conference on Disaster Reduction (WCDR)” that was used in 1994 and 2005 was changed to “World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (WCDRR)” in 2015. Its Japanese translation “Kokuren Bosai Sekai Kaigi” has remained unchanged since 1994.

WCDR/WCDRR are typically divided into substantive sessions—which include the Intergovernmental Segment and the Multi-Stakeholder Segment, consisting of various thematic working sessions—and public forums. While the substantive sessions are open to only accredited conference participants, including representatives from Member States, UN organizations, intergovernmental organizations and accredited organizations (e.g., local governments or NGOs), the public forums are open to the general public.

The approximate number of participants in the substantive sessions has grown as follows: 147 countries and 2,400 people at the 1st WCDR (1995), 168 countries and 4,000 people at the 2nd WCDR (2005), and 187 countries and 6,500 people at the 3rd WCDRR. According to the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs website, the number of participating countries at the 3rd WCDRR was the highest for any UN related conference held in Japan.

Out of the 187 countries, Heads of State or Prime Ministers from 12 countries, Vice Presidents or Deputy Prime Ministers from 13 countries, and ministerial-level attendees from 84 countries attended. In addition, a total of 156,000 people participated in the side events aside from the substantive sessions. As seen above, the WCDRR plays an important role in increasing political involvement and strengthening public understanding of disaster risk reduction through international cooperation.

3. Second WCDR (2005) and Cultural Heritage

At the second WCDR (2005), Prof. Kenzo Toki and Prof. Kanefusa Masuda of Ritsumeikan University strongly petitioned UNESCO, ICCROM and other related international organizations, as well as the domestic Cabinet Office and ACA in Japan, which enabled the realization of the meetings described below, with the cooperation of ICOMOS and the Hyogo Prefectural Board of Education among others.

- Main session thematic meeting, “Crisis Management of Cultural Heritage” (19 Jan 2005, organized by UNESCO, ICCROM and ACA), held at the Kobe conference venue. Its recommendation statement was adopted.



Fig.1: Representatives of the four host organizations (Photo by NICH)



Fig.2: Tokyo Strategy Meeting (Photo by NICH)



Fig.3: Tokyo Strategy Meeting - group discussion (Photo by NICH)



Fig.4: Tokyo Strategy Meeting - group discussion (Photo by NICH)



Fig.5: Tokyo Strategy Meeting - group discussion (Photo by NICH)



Fig.6: Tokyo Strategy Meeting - group discussion (Photo by Randolph Langenbach)



Fig.7: Tokyo Strategy Meeting - group discussion (Photo by NICH)



Fig.8: Tokyo Strategy Meeting - group discussion (Photo by Randolph Langenbach)

- Public forum, “To Protect Cultural Heritage from Disasters” (19–20 Jan 2005, organized by the Cultural Heritage Disaster Prevention Council and held at the Kobe venue).

Expenses for these meetings came primarily from Japan-UNESCO Trust Funds. UNESCO commissioned Ritsumeikan University to oversee their organization.

On January 16, just before the meetings, the Japan ICOMOS National Committee, with funding from the Japan Foundation, held a symposium entitled “How to Protect Cultural Heritage and Historic Cities from Disasters” in Kyoto, and adopted a conclusion paper “Kyoto Declaration 2005.”

This series of meetings is considered to have been the first time that the necessity of including cultural heritage within broader disaster prevention efforts was raised as an issue internationally. This was followed by the Hyogo Action Framework 2005–2015 which included in its "priority actions" the reinforcement of safety measures for culturally important structures and the need to consider cultural diversity or cultural factors in heritage properties to be protected.

Prof. Kenzo Toki is an earthquake engineering expert who made great efforts at the first WCDR (1994). Lamenting the divide between the fields of disaster prevention and cultural heritage, he expressed his strongly felt need to bridge this gap upon imagining what would happen had the great fires following the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake occurred instead in Kyoto. As evidenced by this example, he effectively spread awareness that the "protection of cultural heritage against disasters is the common responsibility of disaster prevention officials and heritage stakeholders" and called out the importance of continuously petitioning for cultural concerns at events such as the WCDRR.

4. Third WCDRR (2015) and International Expert Meeting on “Cultural Heritage and Disaster Resilient Communities” (the CH-DRC meeting)

The CH-DRC meeting held in March 2015 and organized by UNESCO, ICCROM, ACA and NICH builds on sections 2 and 3 above. The common objective of the four organizations was to have concerns for culture and cultural heritage included in the Sendai Framework and to state the objectives of cultural heritage disaster mitigation in accordance with this Sendai Framework.

In advance of this, a joint letter was addressed to the Commissioner of ACA, from the UNESCO Assistant Director-General for Culture and the ICCROM Director-General (dated 14 May 2014). This letter was to request the holding of side events related to the 3rd WCDRR. Following various consideration, this International Expert Meeting was held as an international conference planned under the auspices of NICH’s Japanese Cultural Heritage Disaster Risk Mitigation

Network Project (funded by an ACA grant). Therefore, one of the aims of the CH-DRC meeting for Japan was collecting knowledge and information useful for the promotion of domestic cultural heritage disaster mitigation, disseminating experience of the Great East Japan Earthquake, and establishing foundations for domestic and international networks.

In order to achieve multiple goals from different perspectives, the CH-DRC meeting was structured into four main initiatives.

- Tokyo Strategy Meeting (March 11–13, Shinagawa Prince Hotel): To discuss how to contribute to the protection of cultural heritage from disasters in line with the Sendai Framework in the next 15 years.
- Tokyo Symposium (March 13, Shinagawa Prince Hotel): To share the experiences of the relief and recovery of cultural heritage during the Great East Japan Earthquake disaster with overseas experts etc.
- Third WCDRR main session thematic meeting "Resistant Cultural Heritage" (March 15, Sendai International Center): To discuss about real implementation of the Sendai Framework in the field of cultural heritage.
- Sendai Symposium (March 16, Sendai City Information & Industry Plaza): To make public the outcomes of the above at the Third WCDRR public forum.

In advance of the CH-DRC meeting, ACA and NICH created a 6-minute video entitled "Cultural Heritage: A Cornerstone of Resilient Communities" (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0KeqR-uyHM5>) and presented it to UNISDR. The video introduced exemplary cases in which tangible and intangible cultural heritage actually contributed to raising people's desire to rebuild their lives after the Great East Japan Earthquake and other disasters around the world, emphasizing the importance of protecting cultural heritage together with the local community.

In addition, with the cooperation of organizations such as ICCROM and ICOMOS-ICORP, 29 didactic panels were created to present domestic and international cultural heritage disaster mitigation initiatives. During the third WCDRR, panel exhibitions were held at four sites in the cities of Sendai, Miyagi Prefecture; Kesennuma, Miyagi Prefecture; Ichinoseki, Iwate Prefecture and Shirakawa, Fukushima Prefecture. Also, participants made on-site visits to architectural cultural heritage restoration projects in Kesennuma and observed a fire drill held at Chuson-ji Temple, included in the World Heritage Site "Hiraizumi—Temples, Gardens and Archaeological Sites Representing the Buddhist Pure Land," among other visits.

At the Tokyo Strategy Meeting, which had the most attendees, 34 overseas experts, 21 national experts and many other observers participated.



Fig.9: Tokyo Symposium (Photo by NICH)



Fig.10: Poster Exhibition during the Tokyo Symposium (Photo by NICH)



Fig.11: Field Trip on March 14, Lunch at a heritage building of Sekino-ichi Sake Brewery (Photo by ACA)



Fig.12: Field Trip on March 14, Lunch at a heritage building of Sekino-ichi Sake Brewery (Photo by ACA)



Fig.13: Field Trip on March 14, Exhibition on "Documentary of the Great East Earthquake and History of the Tsunami" at Rias Ark Museum of Art in Kesennuma city (Photo by NICH)



Fig.14: Field Trip on March 14, Traditional performance of "Namiita Toramai" by its preservation association (Photo by ACA)



Fig.15: Field Trip on March 14, a damaged heritage building in Kesennuma city (Photo by ACA)



Fig.16: Field Trip on March 14, a damaged heritage building in Kesennuma city (Photo by Randolph Langenbach)

5. Meeting Outcomes: Sendai Framework

The primary outcome of the CH-DRC meeting was a declaration of consideration for culture throughout the Sendai Framework. In particular, the fact that the word "cultural" was raised in the expected outcome (paragraph 16) and goal to pursue (paragraph 17), as seen below, as well as in paragraphs on priority actions, can be considered a major step forward from the Hyogo Framework.

- Expected outcome: The substantial reduction of disaster risk and losses in lives, livelihoods and health and in the economic, physical, social, cultural and environmental assets of persons, businesses, communities and countries.
- Goal to pursue: Prevent new and reduce existing disaster risk through the implementation of integrated and inclusive economic, structural, legal, social, health, cultural, educational, environmental, technological, political and institutional measures that prevent and reduce hazard exposure and vulnerability to disaster, increase preparedness for response and recovery, and thus strengthen resilience.

The development of the Sendai Framework can be summarized as follows: (1) The Secretariat Meeting Co-chairs created a draft (pre-zero draft) by proactively consulting with the third WCDRR Intergovernmental Preparatory Committee Secretariat; (2) The Secretariat Meeting Co-chairs created a revised version (zero draft), taking into account opinions of Member States, several United Nations agencies and stakeholders acquired through informal discussions; (3) The Intergovernmental Preparatory Committee deliberated and created a final draft (draft); (4) The final draft was discussed at the WCDRR, and adopted.

The earlier draft of the Sendai Framework mentioned little about the consideration of culture and was a regression from the Hyogo Framework for Action. Giovanni Boccardi, Chief of Emergency Preparedness and Response in the Culture Sector of UNESCO, proposed a modification through informal consultations, but because his intentions were not fully understood, further appeals had to be made to the Secretariat Meeting Co-chairs, Thailand and Finland, the host country Japan and other related countries.

In response to this approach, ACA proposed an amendment. In Japan, the Cabinet Office consulted with ministries regarding the drafts and amendments, so the ACA made revisions in line with this process. We heard from personnel of the Foreign Affairs Ministry that adding the word "cultural" in paragraphs 16 and 17 was received favorably by many countries.

At the second WCDR (2005), many universities, NPOs and NGOs supported the UN and government agencies while preparing for meetings related to cultural heritage. On the other hand, at the third WCDRR (2015), because UNE-

SCO provided coordination as the window for international organizations and ACA as the window for government organizations, it could be said that it was easier to participate in the formal process for establishing the Sendai Framework.

In the future, when an opportunity arises to revise the Sendai Framework and we wish to further increase emphasis on the consideration of culture, the author believes that it would be effective to gain the involvement of the WCDRR Intergovernmental Preparatory Committee Secretariat from an early stage, together with the participation of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee and Intangible Cultural Heritage Committee, or ICCROM Member States. For this reason, it is necessary to constantly increase the number of countries in which their cultural heritage authorities have basic knowledge of "UNISDR" and "WCDRR," and have connections with the ministry sections in charge for exchanging information and making arrangements.

Paragraph 25(g) of the Sendai Framework declares the importance of enhancing "the scientific and technical work on disaster risk reduction and its mobilization through the coordination of existing networks and scientific research institutions at all levels and in all regions, with the support of the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction Scientific and Technical Advisory Group." For this reason, UNISDR set up a new framework called the Science and Technology Partnership. Using this type of framework, it would be effective to strategically promote various studies and research related to cultural heritage disaster mitigation as part of the Sendai Action Framework implementation outcomes.

Although holding a thematic meeting such as described below requires budget planning, procedures to maximize effects of the Framework relying on strategy and coordination is something that can be done without any additional costs.

6. Meeting Outcomes: Thematic Meeting on "Resilient Cultural Heritage"

The secondary outcome of the CH-DRC meeting is that a thematic meeting on "Resilient Cultural Heritage" was held in the main session of the third WCDRR. There was great demand for individual thematic meetings that UNISDR proposed at first, dealing with tourism and cultural heritage in one session. Finally, as requested by Japan, it became possible to hold a separate meeting on this theme. As part of this process, UNESCO sent a letter to the World Heritage Committee countries asking for support towards the realization of independent thematic meetings (September 12, 2014). In Japan, Prof. Kenzo Toki called for support from various fields. Also, IFRC has taken up "culture and risk" as a theme of its World Disasters Report 2014. This demonstrates that the recognition that disaster risk reduction cannot be achieved without understanding the culture of the region has begun to be



Fig.17: WCDRR Thematic Meeting on "Resilient Cultural Heritage" (Photo by NICH)



Fig.18: Field Trip on March 16, National Treasure buildings of Osaki-Hachimangu Shrine in Sendai (Photo by NICH)



Fig.19: Field Trip on March 16, Sendai City "Revival of the World of the Glacial Period" Museum (Photo by NICH)



Fig.20: Sendai Symposium (Photo by NICH)



Fig.21: Poster Exhibition during the Sendai Symposium (Photo by NICH)



Fig.22: Field Trip on March 17, Garden of Motsu-ji Temple nationally designated as Special Place of Scenic Beauty (Photo by ACA)



Fig.23: Field Trip on March 17, Chuson-ji Temple (Photo by Randolph Langenbach)



Fig.24: Field Trip on March 17, Welcome performance by Fire Prevention Club at Nakajima Elementary School in Hiraizumi town (Photo by Randolph Langenbach)

shared on a global level, and we feel that there is growing acceptance overall.

At the thematic meeting, Koichiro Matsuura, former Director-General of UNESCO, made opening remarks, and Stefano De Caro, Director-General of ICCROM, served as facilitator. In addition, the following six speakers (in order of presentation) made remarks about the possibilities embodied in cultural heritage to enhance disaster response capabilities of local communities and the required implementation of the Sendai Framework.

- Giovanni Boccardi (Chief, Emergency Preparedness and Response, Culture Sector, UNESCO)
- Masanori Aoyagi (Commissioner, Agency for Cultural Affairs)
- Pierpaolo Campostrini (Managing Director CORILA)
- Webber Nodoro (Director, African World Heritage Fund)
- Corine Wegener (Cultural Heritage Preservation Officer, Smithsonian Institution)
- Galina Angarova, (Indigenous Peoples' International Centre for Policy Research and Education)

The author believes that the participants ably expressed the concept that cultural heritage inherently plays an active role in contributing to societies' capacity building for disaster response.

The list of thematic meetings was finalized in mid-November 2014, four months before the third WCDRR. Processes for conference preparation and consensus building, and information on registration procedures for participants had not yet been made clear. Even under such conditions, the fact that these thematic meetings were able to be planned as an integral part of the Tokyo Strategy Meeting owes much to the devoted cooperation of the staff of ICCROM, namely Aparna Tandon of the Collection Unit, and Joseph King and Akiko Umezu of the Sites Unit. We also received a variety of advice from Jerry Velasquez of UNISDR.

7. Meeting Outcomes: Recommendation Statement

The third outcome of the CH-DRC meeting is that the Recommendation Statement that was put together by agreement of all attendees of the Tokyo Strategy Meeting. Joseph King, Sites Unit Director of ICCROM, served as the supervisor of the meeting. The author believes that experts in a wide range of fields, for tangible and intangible as well as immovable and movable cultural heritage, were able to come together and reach an agreement because we shared a common philosophy in the following basic ideas: What is resilience in disaster response ability? What is the "better" state that should be aimed for in better reconstruction (Build Back Better)? How can cultural heritage relate to these steps?

Terry Cannon (Institute of Development Studies, Univer-

sity of Sussex, UK), the executive editor of the above-mentioned World Disasters Report 2014, pointed out that people are struggling to maintain their day-to-day lives rather than preparing for disasters that might or might not take place; also, topography that is susceptible to disasters is something people are used to dealing with as a part of their daily lives, creating a gap between the disaster awareness of the people and of disaster management organizations. He also pointed out that faith, values, ways of thinking and behavior influence each other, and to close the gap between the people and disaster management agencies and to develop cooperative relationships, it is important to understand accurately the indigenous/local culture. Therefore, Cannon asserted that rather than symbols of wealth and power, such as palaces or cathedrals, cultural heritage familiar to the people should be focused on from a wider point of view.

Yasmeen Lari, a Pakistani architect, stated that it is important to plan disaster reconstruction in such a way as to prevent residents from losing self-confidence and self-esteem, for example by using traditional building materials and techniques to rebuild an environment that people can continue to manage themselves.

Takamasa Saito, Councillor for Cultural Properties of the Agency for Cultural Affairs, explained that the people were encouraged by the restoration of folk cultural property during the recovery process after the Great East Japan Earthquake. This brought an opportunity for revitalizing affected communities. Also, by sharing the results of preventive archeological excavations with local residents prior to the undertaking of reconstruction projects, the excavated ruins sometimes became a symbol of recovery, and there are cases where the main parts of the ruins were preserved within the premises of the disaster relief public housing area.

The author found it very meaningful that we were able to confirm specific methods for integrating culture into disaster prevention systems through discussions that effectively developed out of these keynote speeches at the start of the meeting. Personally, the author would like to note that in the recommendation statement, the following points were pinpointed as basic ideas for disaster prevention, and we plan to take advantage of them in our day-to-day operations:

- Cultural heritage can become the driving force for strengthening community resilience and is a useful tool in helping local communities deal with disasters at all phases (e.g., planning, mitigation, response, recovery).
- Cultural heritage should be defined broadly to include immovable, movable, urban areas and landscapes, archives and libraries, intangible (e.g., know-how, traditions, festivals, languages, traditional techniques and skills), etc.
- While there are many stakeholders, the main stakeholder in disaster risk management is the local community.
- It is important to gain a good understanding of indigenous knowledge and styles of thinking through cultural heritage and to establish means of cooperation and coordination while recognizing what motivates the actions of the people and who plays what role in building collaboration.

All the debates during the preparation and conduction of the CH-DRM meeting started from the draft concept note that Giovanni Boccardi, UNESCO Chief Emergency Preparedness and Response, had developed in September 2014.

8. Conclusion

For the entire country of Japan, the CH-DRC meeting brought a significant opportunity to deepen the debate between international and Japanese experts, to review and recognize the challenges that were faced during the rescue and recovery of cultural properties after the Great East Japan Earthquake, and consequently to reconsider concepts and strategies for cultural heritage disaster risk reduction in Japan.

There has been a great deal of interest in topics such as the development of a network for cultural heritage DRR, training of heritage managers, coordination between excavations and reconstruction projects, and the recovery of intangible folk cultural properties. While some of these items have been taken up by the recommendation statement, we now have a clear view of the challenges that must be tackled, such as cooperation between different types of cultural property, division of roles between the national and local governments, enhancement of regional cultural asset inventories and means of sharing information, and inter-agency cooperation for the integral protection of cultural properties and their respective surrounding areas.

Disaster risk reduction is a challenge that spans all fields of society. The disaster risk reduction perspective should be incorporated into and strengthen the development of policies and planning in each of these fields,

enhancing mutual cooperation among them, in order to deal effectively with complex social issues such as sustainable development and climate change. The field of cultural heritage disaster mitigation is part of this larger picture and needs to be proactively addressed while maintaining awareness of its relevance to society as a whole. The author hopes that the results of this CH-DRC meeting will provide a guide for the future development of cultural heritage disaster risk reduction through the continued efforts of many people.

Lastly, while there were a variety of unexpected incidents, the fact that we were able to successfully close this large-scale meeting owes much to the cooperation of the participants and everyone involved. I would like to sincerely thank them all, particularly Rinne Melissa, Akiko Umezu and Namiko Yamauchi. In addition, I would like to dedicate the outcomes of this meeting to my two former supervisors, both sadly passed away, who led the field in developing cultural heritage disaster risk reduction: Herb Stovel (former Site Unit Director of ICCROM) and Satoshi Yamato (former Councillor for Cultural Properties at ACA).

Notes

- i) Made up of the following organizations: NPO Forum for Wood Architecture, NPO Kyomachiya Rehabilitation Institute, Kyomachiya Construction Group, Kinki Prefecture Board of Education, Kobe University COE (Safety and Urban Space Design Strategy), NPO for Protection of Cultural Heritages from Disaster, Japan ICOMOS National Committee, Architectural Institute of Japan Cultural Heritage Disaster Measures Subcommittee, Committee of Infrastructure Planning and Management, Committee on Historical Studies in Civil Engineering, JSSSPC, Association of Japanese Geographers Disaster Response Committee, Hyogo Heritage Institute, Cultural Institute for Disaster Prevention Facilities, NPO Japan Conservation Project, Japan Society for the Conservation of Cultural Property, History Network, Ritsumeikan University COE program (Institute of Disaster Mitigation for Urban Cultural Heritage). (Organizations are listed with their names at the time.)
- ii) It was jointly organized by the Japan ICOMOS National Committee, Committee for "World Heritage Registration 10th Anniversary Commemorative Projects," Ritsumeikan University COE program (Institute of Disaster Mitigation for Urban Cultural Heritage), Committee for Protection of Cultural Properties from Earthquakes, NPO for Protection of Cultural Heritages from Disaster.
- iii) The exhibition sites were Osaki Hachimangu Shrine in Sendai City, Miyagi (where the main hall, connecting sanctuary and worship hall are designated as National Treasures, and the Nagatoko is an Important Cultural Property); Chida House in Kesennuma City, Miyagi (a Nationally Registered Tangible Cultural Property); Bellino Hotel Ichinoseki in Ichinoseki City, Iwate (venue for the Iwate "Cultural Properties and Disaster Mitigation" Symposium); and Fukushima Cultural Property Centre, in Shirakawa City, Fukushima.
- iv) Consisting of 11 countries—the UN Member States regional representatives (5 regions × 2 countries) and the host country (Japan). The regional representatives were: Africa (Egypt, South Sudan), Asia (Thailand, Bangladesh), Eastern Europe (Russia, Czech Republic), Latin America (Ecuador, Jamaica), Europe (Switzerland, Finland). Thailand and Finland served as co-chairs.

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