

The Third WCDRR Working Session on “Resilient Cultural Heritage”

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[Moderator] Stefano De Caro

Stefano De Caro:

Good afternoon. I have the pleasure to introduce this conference on disaster risk reduction (DRR) underlining the position of heritage in this issue. I am honored to give the floor to the president of this session, who is Koichiro Matsuura, former Director-General of UNESCO. Thank you so much.

Koichiro Matsuura:

Thank you for the introduction. I am very pleased that you have all been able to come to Japan, and especially to Sendai. Sendai is one of the major cities in Japan, but a very large disaster occurred four years ago, in 2011, and it was seriously damaged, especially by the large tsunami.

The theme of this working session is the “Resilient Cultural Heritage.” We are going to discuss on how to develop a structure for cultural heritage to be strong against disasters. Speaking in a broader sense, what we are trying to do is to identify a conceptual and practical framework for building resilient societies by making cultural heritage resilient.

I am very pleased to welcome all of you here, especially the moderator and the panelists of this session, who are in the head seats. Please allow me to introduce first the two key persons in the heritage field, who represent two important international organizations involved in the heritage conservation. Next to me is Stefano De Caro. He serves as the Director-General of ICCROM. This is Giovanni Boccardi of UNESCO. He is my former colleague. I served as Director-General of UNESCO for 10 years between 1999 and 2009, and I was working in close cooperation with him at that time.

I would also like to thank the representatives from the five UN member states; South Africa, Japan, the United States of America, Russian Federation, and Italy. I firmly believe that an active participation of everyone here and the panelists at the head table will bring an in-depth discussion, and that we can achieve an important, beneficial, and fruitful conclusion.

Our moderator, Stefano De Caro, will talk you later about the outcomes of the important interna-

tional expert meeting that was held in Tokyo prior to this Sendai conference (11-13 March 2015). They will be the same in context, but I would also like to talk about forming structure for a society and cultural heritage, both of them should be strong against disasters.

I want to highlight three important elements that need to be practiced to make cultural heritage resilient against disasters. The first element is to understand disaster risks and to invest in reducing those risks. In this sense, this must include the need to enhance the disaster preparedness by local people.

The second element is how to deal with the disasters when they happen, what action to take in the event of disaster, and how to face these disasters. This is so-called crisis management with respect to human beings, and we can also apply this concept to the cultural heritage protection.

The third element is how to repair cultural heritage that is damaged or destroyed by the disaster.

I consider that we should discuss these three elements today, following the discussion that was made by experts at the international meeting in Tokyo.

Time is limited and I will omit the details, however, I need to talk about the Second UN World Conference on Disaster Reduction that was organized in 2005. This conference was held in Kobe City, Japan, 10 years after it was hit by the Great Hanshin Awaji Earthquake. I attended the conference as Director-General of UNESCO. One of the important issues of this 2005 conference was how to deal with tsunami. Just one month before the conference, over 200,000 people had been killed and a huge amount of properties had been damaged by the 2005 Indian Ocean tsunami.

This working session is not the place to deal with this problem. What I want to tell you is that UNESCO had already deployed a tsunami warning system in the Pacific Ocean by the time of the Second UN World Conference on Disaster Reduction. On the other hand, the Indian Ocean did not have this kind of warning system. As promised, UNESCO rapidly established it within just one and a half

years.

Let us go back to the original theme. At the right time, the moderator will invite your comments and questions. I hope that we have a fruitful discussion.

Stefano De Caro:

Thank you for the important and inspiring opening remarks. It gives me great pleasure to moderate this session on behalf of our partners; UNESCO, the Japanese Agency for Cultural Affairs (ACA) and the National Institutes for Cultural Heritage (NICH).

The genesis of this working session is placed at the thematic session that was organized ten years ago at the Second World Conference on Disaster Reduction in Kobe City. At that time, the role of cultural heritage within the larger field of DRR was little discussed and even less planned for. Since that time, I am happy to say much change has been brought; a World Heritage strategy on DRR has been developed, a number of courses have been developed to train professionals in both heritage and DRR fields, and programmes such as the UNISDR Making Cities Resilient have been developed to integrate heritage into the larger DRR. The framework has been formulated, and more importantly, programmes and activities are being carried out at all levels, particularly at the local level, involving international organizations, national and local governments, cities, NGOs, and communities.

Let me give you one example. ICCROM, for which I act as a Director-General, carries out several international courses, including the First Aid to Cultural Heritage in Times of Crisis that is organized in close cooperation with the Smithsonian Institution and the Netherlands National Commission for UNESCO as well as the International Training Course on Disaster Risk Management of Cultural Heritage that is held in Japan in partnership with Ritsumeikan University, UNESCO and ICOMOS-ICORP.

ICCROM has also worked at the more local level in partnership with the Smithsonian Institution to train professionals in the aftermath of the Haiti earthquake. These are only a few examples of the activities currently being undertaken.

The working session today was preceded by the International Expert Meeting on Cultural Heritage and Disaster Resilient Communities that was held in Tokyo. The purpose of this international expert meeting was to come together to take stock of where we are now and where we should be going in

future in much greater depth than possible discussion in a short meeting like this.

The international expert meeting came out with a series of recommendations which paralleled the structure of the post-2015 DRR framework in order to ensure that heritage remains relevant and integrated into larger DRR activities. While it is not possible to present all of the recommendations, it might be useful to highlight just a few of them.

Under Priority 1—Understanding Disaster Risk—the recommendations call for the implementation of measures to better understand how traditional building technologies can be used to promote DRR and to understand how cultural beliefs and behaviors can have both positive and negative effects on attitudes and practices of people in relation to disaster risk.

Under Priority 3—Investing in Disaster Risk Reduction for Resilience—the recommendations call for investment in long-term capacity-building programs for cultural heritage and DRR, taking advantage of appropriate technologies for learning and exchange.

Finally, under priority 4—Enhancing Disaster Preparedness for Effective Response, and to “Build Back Better” in Recovery, Rehabilitation and Reconstruction—the recommendations, among other things, call for culturally appropriate empowerment of local communities, including women, to take the lead in assessment in the post-disaster recovery, as well as in the effective use of Post-Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA) with a newly-developed integrated component on cultural heritage.

It is important to emphasize that the cultural heritage is not just something that needs to be protected in times of disaster, but something that can play a very important role in assuring community resilience during the difficult period starting in the immediate aftermath of a disaster and during the long process of recovery. It is hoped that this working session today will take us a step further along the path of working together to ensure heritage-led community resilience.

While you are looking at the impressive lights that my colleague has prepared as a background of a general impression on this topic, I am honored to give now the floor to the speakers. I would like to introduce the first speaker, Giovanni Boccardi, the Chief of the Emergency Preparedness and the Response Unit within UNESCO Culture Sector. Through this assignment, he has a unique perspective on international policies and programmes to

protect cultural heritage from disasters and on the role that they can play to strengthen the resilience.

I would like to ask Giovanni Boccardi to help us framing the question that we are discussing today. Please tell us why cultural heritage should be relevant to DRR and what the main implications for both the heritage and DRR sectors are. The floor is up to you.

Giovanni Boccardi:

Thank you for giving me the floor.

First of all, I thought that it might be useful to briefly define what we mean by culture and cultural heritage. Of course, it is the great historic monuments of the past and the works of art which are kept in museums, but it is also the less iconic landscapes, historic cities, buildings and objects which have been constructed and maintained through the daily interaction between humans and their environment over centuries if not millennia. And then, there is also the intangible part, including the traditional knowledge, skills and practices that underpin the lives of communities, some of those are associated with the maintenance of the built heritage. All of these is what we call cultural heritage. Many of these things are valued because of the symbolic value they have acquired to societies, which transcends the original function for which they were created.

Since I have only a few minutes, I would like to go straight to the points. First of all, cultural heritage is symbolic of cultures in general, of the beliefs, values, attitudes, perceptions and behaviors of people, including in relation to disaster risk, so it is very important to include it in disaster risk planning and implementation.

I think the main point is precisely this, that for any DRR strategy to be effective, it has to take into account the cultural context and the cultures that affect the way people respond and react and even perceive risks. In some cases, we have seen through experience that there has been a disconnect, a gap, between the culture of the people and the culture of the organizations that intended to help them in preparing or recovering from disasters. And cultural heritage, because of its sort of symbolic power, is critical as an entry point to that.

The second point that I want to emphasize is that cultural heritage is not just a victim, a liability or a cost, when disaster strikes. It is not just an additional line in the sort of state budget of money that has to be disbursed to repair. It may be, on the contrary,

an asset or a resource that can make a positive contribution to the resilience of communities at every stage of the disaster risk management process; preparedness, response and recovery. This is really the main message that we would like to convey through this working session to you.

I would like to just give you some examples of the way in which the cultural heritage can contribute to building resilience.

First of all, cultural heritage is inherently risk sensitive. There has been a lot of talk about developing in a risk-sensitive way. Cultural heritage incorporates important lessons that derive from the fact that it is the product of a millennia of adaptation. We have seen photos of traditional buildings that withstood earthquakes, such as this one in the picture, much better than modern engineered structures that were built just a few meters away.

The second point is that cultural heritage is a catalyst for engaging with local communities to promote ownership and inclusiveness in the recovery process. It is easier for people to come together around a symbol of their identity and their shared memory and find strength and resilience. It provides psychological support to restore and protect heritage in a time of stress, and we have seen this every day. Moreover, I think we will be hearing from the rest of the speakers on their concrete experiences.

Most of all, cultural heritage may be a critical asset to support the social and economic recovery and the reconstruction processes, including, for example through tourism, which is often one of the sectors that sort of starts again rather quickly after a disaster, and tourism, as we know, is strongly associated with cultural resources.

And finally, I would like to mention armed conflict situations. In these weeks and months at UNESCO, we are dealing with the crisis in Syria and Iraq and we have seen clearly the link between the loss of heritage and cultural diversity on one hand, and violation of human rights and the lack of security for people on the other. When cultural heritage is lost through collateral damage or intentionally destroyed, it leads to sectarian violence, poverty, discrimination or ethnic cleansing, and eventually makes reconciliation and peace much more difficult in the future.

There is now a solid body of research that documents this experience on the ground. There are also models and tools which have been developed to help local governments, people or agencies pro-

tect heritage from disaster and draw on heritage to strengthen resilience in general.

What are the implications of all of this? The heritage sector has worked for too long in isolation. If we want to see the power of culture harnessed to build resilience and heritage better protected from disasters, we need to engage much more closely with the DRR sector, humanitarian security organizations, local government and the civil society.

UNESCO with UNISDR and other institutions, some of whom are here today, is forming a network to scale up these initiatives. We have come here to seek new innovative partnerships to translate these ideas into practice, building on the important references to culture and cultural heritage which are already included in the latest draft of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction. Thank you very much.

Stefano De Caro:

I would like now to introduce the second panelist, Masanori Aoyagi, Commissioner for the Japanese Agency for Cultural Affairs. Through the experiences of the Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami, please give us one or two concrete examples of the contributions of the Japanese government to the idea of building back better, and in particular the positive effect that cultural heritage can bring to a better recovery of communities. Thank you.

Masanori Aoyagi:

Thank you very much for that kind introduction. In offering my comments, I would like to start by discussing a situation that arose in the small township of Hirono in Fukushima Prefecture. Prior to the earthquake in 2011, the population of Hirono was approximately 5,000 people. Indeed, the place was so small that there wasn't a specialist employed by the township to handle cultural property issues. Anyway, after the disaster, it was planned to build some temporary housing on the top of a hill in the town to accommodate those residents displaced by events. However, before building commenced, a decision was made to carry out an archaeological survey so as to establish whether or not there were any important cultural properties buried in the vicinity. Since the town had no resident archaeologist, an expert on cultural properties who had been dispatched from Takatsuki City in Osaka Prefecture began a site investigation in cooperation with staff from Hirono Town Hall.

When this was done, fragments of pottery were

discovered that dated back to the 8th century CE. This discovery led to the belief that perhaps the location in question represented a significant archaeological site. Furthermore, as the dig progressed, the remains of an 8th century building were revealed. Moreover, the remains were not those of just a simple residential site. Rather, it seemed likely that what had been found was the site of a large and important government structure and official post station where horses were once exchanged. The location was felt to be situated on a major road that led further north.

As a result of consultations held with staff from the Agency for Cultural Affairs, Hirono Town decided to undertake a full-scale excavation of the site. The outcome of all this has been that Hirono now boasts an 8th century archaeological site, a location that was previously unknown to the local community and also to the larger national and international community of archaeologists and scholars.

The experiences of Hirono and other municipalities impacted by the earthquake and tsunami have served to highlight a set of organic relationships existing among local, national and international communities. These relationships have also been displayed with respect to the social and material processes of recovery.

These next two slides will show you represent an attempt to summarize these relationships in a graphic form.

This slide, whose title is "Dynamic Restoration of Local Culture and Natural Environment," seeks to display the impact of disasters upon regional communities. This slide indicates that, the impacted communities themselves are reborn courtesy of three inputs defined as recovery efforts, the mechanisms of independent natural environmental recovery, and that subsequent behavior which is in accordance with the environment.

And this next slide is also the same kind of diagram. It displays the regional community relationships that existed before the disaster, those that existed immediately after the disaster, and also those that have come into existence after the recovery efforts. Of particular note is the impact that the recovery processes have had upon the new regional communities.

Through the experience that has been gained from both the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake of 1995 and the Great East Japan Earthquake of 2011, we are consciously aware as to the importance of conducting emergency measures with respect to

cultural properties when and wherever disasters should occur. Accordingly, irrespective of whether such items are tangible or intangible, the Agency for Cultural Affairs is working to quickly establish a Cultural Properties Headquarters. It is also working to construct a reliable network that will tie it to a variety of local municipalities and other institutions such as non-profit organizations and non-government organizations. To achieve this, we are engaging in the financial support of projects in order to push forward with the Cultural Heritage Disaster Risk Mitigation Network that is to be undertaken by the National Institutes for Cultural Heritage from 2017.

Concurrently, with respect to cities, towns and villages, since 2007 we have encouraged them to undertake work so that they grasp the broad range of cultural properties which they possess within their municipalities. We are also encouraging them to create master plans with respect to the incorporation of history and culture into urban planning. This will allow those cultural properties held by the respective municipalities to be comprehensively beneficial. By such master plans including comprehensive cultural property lists, the hope is that, during times of disaster such information shall allow for the speedy initiation of surveys into damaged cultural properties. Meanwhile, during post-disaster recovery, the hope is that such lists of cultural properties shall allow for the rebirth of regional communities considering both history and culture.

As an intangible cultural property, I believe that language represents a very important example. Currently, there are perhaps some 5,000 to 6,000 languages in the world. However, it is said that each year around 30 to 40 of them become extinct. Faced with such a situation, UNESCO established information centers in a number of countries about 20 years ago. I would like to bring this issue up, as it may also be considered as a case that is applicable to disasters.

Stefano De Caro:

I thank Masanori Aoyagi for helping us understand the Japanese response and how he is turning these lessons learned into valuable knowledge to help better protect the heritage in the future.

Our next speaker is Corine Wegener, Cultural Heritage Preservation Officer for the Smithsonian Institution. Many people know the Smithsonian Institution as one of the world's finest and largest museum systems, with 19 museums and galleries, a

national zoo and 9 research facilities. But, few know its work in regard to safeguarding cultural heritage in times of emergencies. Towards this end, it will shortly be opening a Cultural Crisis Response Center that will aim to provide help in response to cultural emergencies.

Please tell us why the Smithsonian Institution has moved so strongly in the field of cultural heritage emergency, and describe your planned activities for the near future in this area.

Corine Wegener:

Thank you very much. First I'd like to offer my thanks to the National Institutes for Cultural Heritage and the organizers of this conference for their kind invitation for us to participate. We had a good meeting in Tokyo and a wonderful tour of cultural heritage resources recovery under way in Kesenuma City yesterday, and I was incredibly inspired by what I saw there.

In that same spirit of resilience in the face of disaster, I'd like to begin with a quote from Patrick Vialre, a Haitian sculptor, artist, architect, and unofficial first responder for cultural heritage after the 2010 Haitian earthquake. When asked by reporters why he rushed from site to site immediately after the earthquake gathering teams to help salvage collections of rare books, archives, and paintings, he replied with this quote: "The dead are dead. We know that. But if you don't have the memory of the past, the rest of us can't continue living."

Cultural heritage, the legacy that's left behind for future generations, is the thread of continuity that people search for when the rhythm of everyday life has been shattered. War, genocide, civil unrest, terrorism, earthquakes, floods, and hurricanes all take a toll on human life and livelihoods. They also put cultural heritage in danger, damaging houses of worship and historic buildings, devastating museum and library collections, despoiling ancient archaeological sites, and disrupting everyday practices of communities, living cultural heritage and expressive life.

Looting and loss of precious and irreplaceable works of art, cultural artifacts, and historical archives, and even intentional destruction during armed conflicts, and the persecution of artists and cultural heritage professionals may follow.

People obviously come first in these situations, but we must do more to help communities save their heritage as well. It is a precious resource for education and creative inspiration for future genera-

tions. Culture provides the sites and attractions, the songs and costumes of performers, the tools and workshops of artisans; all are necessary for robust tourism and related activities that stimulate the economy. The loss of cultural heritage in disasters means significant costs to a nation's or a community's civic, economic, and spiritual life, or even sometimes its very identity.

Thankfully the cultural heritage community has taken significant steps in recent years to join the cause of disaster risk reduction. My own organization, the Smithsonian Institution, has followed suit. While we have always worked to preserve the safety of our own collections, which are held in trust for the American people, it was only in 2010 that we joined with our Haitian colleagues and used our resources and staff to help Haiti stabilize and save its collections. The subsequent Haiti Cultural Recovery Project received money from both US government and private philanthropic sources, and participation from more than a dozen public and private partners, including USAID and others.

At the end of the 18-month project, more than 30,000 objects of Haitian cultural heritage and history had been stabilized and rehoused, and more than 150 Haitian colleagues received training in follow-up workshops to increase their resilience and capacity to take on the inevitable future hazards that Haiti is vulnerable to.

After that experience, the Smithsonian realized that this type of work was a natural extension of the work in partnerships we maintain for cultural heritage and for scientific research in more than 130 countries around the world. It was also clear that disaster risk management should play a part in everything that we do at the Smithsonian and even our own strategic plan, from understanding the American experience to valuing world cultures, to our biggest endeavor, unlocking the secrets of the universe.

It was here that the idea for the Smithsonian Cultural Crisis Recovery Center was born. Planning for the center is now under way, supported by a generous grant from the Andrew Mellon Foundation. Over the next three years we have some big plans. We'll continue to build our network of public and private partnerships with organizations such as ICROM, ICOMOS, ICOM and the Blue Shield, as well as a number of academic institutions and disaster-related organizations like FEMA, USAID and many others.

We are also creating a multidisciplinary research

community with funding from sources like the National Science Foundation, dedicated to a better understanding of disaster risks, such as armed conflict, global climate change, and natural disasters, and to try to find better ways to mitigate their impact on cultural heritage. Using the information derived from this research, we'll work with our partners to provide improved capacity-building programs and training as well as direct assistance to colleagues around the world whose collections are at risk or impacted by disasters.

One of the programs already under way, which has been operating since 2013, is called SHOSI, the Safeguarding the Heritage of Syria and Iraq Project. This is a partnership among a number of institutions, including the University of Pennsylvania, the US Institute of Peace, the Syrian NGO The Day After, and we're working with Syrian colleagues who are living and working in opposition-controlled parts of Syria. Our most recent accomplishment was the emergency stabilization of the Ma'arra Mosaics Museum in Syria.

One of our partners in this effort, Dr. Amr Al-Azm, a Syrian archaeologist now teaching at Shawnee State University in the United States, probably sums it up best. He says:

Once the current violence ends, the people of Syria will need to find ways to reconnect with the symbols that once united them across religious and political lines. The country's ancient past as represented in this rich cultural heritage will be a key to this process. Protecting and preserving Syria's history and heritage, therefore, is about safeguarding its future too.

Stefano De Caro:

It was a very interesting presentation. We will much look forward to seeing the progress of the new center as it continues to develop. We are very hopeful about this.

The next speaker is Webber Ndoro. He is an archaeologist and a former Project Manager at ICROM, so he is my colleague. For the past eight years, he has been the Director of the African World Heritage Fund (AWHF), a UNESCO Category II Centre, that is located in South Africa. AWHF is an inter-governmental organization launched in 2006 with the mission to support the effective conservation and protection of natural and cultural heritage of outstanding universal values in Africa.

My questions to him is how AWHF envisions the issues of DRR at World Heritage Sites in Africa, and which partners it intends to work with to make sites more resilient to both natural and manmade disasters that include conflicts. The floor is up to you.

Webber Ndoro:

Good afternoon. As we all know, Africa is a vulnerable continent. Given the levels of poverty and the many hazards the continent faces, any calamity has a far devastating impact on this continent and its people.

Africa, as you know, has experienced many disasters ranging from devastating droughts, which have led to perennial famines. Floods too have caused havoc. But by far the biggest disasters in Africa have been man-made, particularly through internal conflicts and strife.

Also, diseases such as HIV and Ebola have had their impact on the resilience of nations and communities, as well as on individuals and families.

The impact of all these has had an equally devastating effect on the continent's cultural and natural heritage. As indicated earlier on by Mr. Giovanni Boccardi, this in turn affects the issues of identity, resilience, and the ability to cope at the national, local, and individual level.

The impact of disaster on heritage also has an economic downturn, as well as has a militating, and also curtails the ability to recover.

It was for these reasons that the Africa Union together with UNESCO in 2006 decided to establish the African World Heritage Fund as a means to strengthen the capacity of African state parties' ability to protect and conserve its heritage. I must add that the AWHF is largely funded by the African governments themselves, and of course there are also well-wishers who have come to assist.

Ladies and gentlemen, we all know the situation in Mali. Here the political conflict has impacted on the heritage of Mali, particularly Timbuktu. Let's not forget that in Mali there are also World Heritage Sites which are affected, like Gao; it's not just Timbuktu.

Conflicts have also affected World Heritage Sites in the Democratic Republic of the Congo for the past ten years or so. The five World Heritage Sites in that country have experience relentless attack on the natural heritage of the world.

Equally devastating have been the new conflicts in Nigeria. In the last week we received information on the attack on the Suka Cultural landscape in Ni-

geria. Recently, fires have also caused havoc at places like the Palace of Abomey in Benin and Kasubi as well in Uganda.

What has AWHF been doing or what do they intend to do? There are two basic things which we have started to address.

Since 2014 we have, in collaboration with IUCN, ICCROM, and UNESCO, introduced a series of capacity-building courses on risk preparedness to ensure that the state parties and heritage professionals anticipate and plan for disaster risk reduction. The objective here is to ensure that management plans of existing and planned World Heritage Sites have a risk preparedness component. The emphasis is on ensuring that heritage professionals work together with other civil emergency planners and incorporate heritage in the mix of the planning.

Just recently we have concluded one such course in Cabo Verde where participants, not only heritage professionals were taking part, but half of the participants were also from the community. And this has been repeated in other countries, such as Mauritius, Mozambique, and Senegal.

In these risk preparedness courses we have also realized that the private sector, particularly mining companies, also contribute to the vulnerability of heritage sites, and therefore we have sought to partner them and to ensure that they also take part in these heritage courses.

The private sector is also critical, given that for some reason, I'm not so sure why, the most successful ones seem to work in conflict areas, and that's where the mining takes place and they affect World Heritage Sites.

The second issue is the fact that we would also want the risk preparedness plans to be relevant to the cultural and social political context and to make sure that they also provide ownership of the process to the community. So even if we have all these partners, the community must be central to this.

As a result, the AWHF has started, in collaboration with a number of universities in Africa, this university, Cape Town University, the University in Benin and also universities in Egypt, we have started investigating the role of traditional heritage management systems. The idea here is to try and see how societies or different communities react to different crises or different situations. We would want to see how traditional management systems can also be adopted into disaster risk reduction actions and understand how societies work.

Apart from the training courses, as well as this

research effort, we have also taken part, and we will continue taking part, in the situation, in post-recovery situations in Mali, in Uganda, Kasubi Tombs, as well as in Suka in Nigeria because we feel that we can learn more and we can help societies develop better ways of responding to crisis.

For us, the main partner is the local community, individuals and families who live with the heritage or live near the heritage places. For a long time they have been excluded from making decisions and responses to their heritage. This at least will make sure that it increases their resilience to disasters in future. Thank you.

Stefano De Caro:

Thank you for the explanation of the AWHF activities and the presentation of your interesting work on DRR.

The next speaker is Galina Angarova, the New York representative of TEBTEBBA, the Indigenous Peoples' International Centre for Policy Research and Education. This organization is dedicated to the protection of and respect for the rights of indigenous peoples as embedded in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

I would like to ask her to explain us some of the special considerations that are necessary when protecting indigenous cultures in times of disaster. What type of work is TEBTEBBA carrying out to promote the full protection of indigenous culture, especially in emergency situations? Please, you have the floor.

Galina Angarova:

Thank you. As an indigenous person myself, I relate to the topic and would like to thank the organizers for providing the opportunity for the contribution from the point of view of indigenous peoples.

So who are indigenous peoples? And why we are important in this conversation?

Indigenous peoples represent over 370,000,000 million people in 90 countries in the world. Indigenous peoples' territories span over 24% of the planet's land surface and are a home to 80% of the remaining biodiversity. However, in the last 100 years indigenous peoples have been facing multitudes of issues, including some of the main ones that are poverty and marginalization that actually increase the impacts of disasters on indigenous peoples.

Recent studies show that in low income countries while the economic loss is relatively low the loss of human lives is very high. Given the fact that

the majority of indigenous peoples are concentrated in low income countries, and the fact that indigenous peoples constitute 15% of the most poor while being only 5% of the world population, these numbers show disproportionate pressure on indigenous peoples in terms of impacts of natural and human-induced disasters.

Climate change is increasingly becoming the number one risk for indigenous peoples. Indigenous peoples are among the first to face the direct consequences of climate change, owing to their dependence upon and close relationship with the environment and its resources.

A couple of years ago I was lucky to have been invited to a dinner with an Eskimo family in Nome, Alaska. That evening I not only tried my first walrus, whale and caribou, but I learned a lot about the lives and history of Eskimo people. The Arctic region is the most hostile and extreme place in the world, yet they manage to live and thrive in this environment. However, it is becoming increasingly difficult to survive due to increasing storms and thinning ice. The Eskimo hunters usually rely on the multiyear ice that is thick enough to walk on in order to hunt for walrus and other animals. For several years, hunters have been reporting that the multiyear ice has receded and the weather has become unpredictable making Eskimo families risk their lives. They told me that every year families lose their husbands and sons to harsh hunting conditions that have worsened over the past decade due to climate change.

What is traditional knowledge of indigenous peoples and why is it relevant?

Traditional knowledge of indigenous peoples is millennial experiential knowledge based on the intimate relationship with their environment. It can be found in hunting and agricultural practices, land management, sustainable water use, and agriculture related engineering and architecture, medicinal uses of native plants, et cetera. Indigenous peoples inhabit some of the most fragile ecosystems on the planet and have developed unique strategies to cope with extreme weather conditions. These unique strategies include altering land use and settlement patterns, crop diversification, changes in the hunting and gathering periods, food and seed banking, creation of networks within and among communities, et cetera.

Some of the best examples of the application of indigenous knowledge in the modern world are in architecture and construction, when some of the

methods employed by indigenous peoples for centuries are applied to build the most energy efficient and disaster- and hazard-proof constructions. Specific to disaster risk reduction, I would have to say that every community has its own practices and ways to interpret natural phenomena. These practices vary depending on their location, their way of life, and how long they have inhabited that area.

First of all, are traditional early warning systems, which include observation of animal behavior. Other practices include reading the signs in the sea, the rain, the wind, clouds, and vegetation. In some cultures, recurrent dreams or events can be considered valid ways to predict natural occurrences.

Secondly, the most important traditional practices are indigenous coping mechanisms that include assistance within and among communities especially during post disaster rehabilitation and recovery. Here, we are talking about little monetary donations within communities, which are crucial in rebuilding communities. National governments should really pay attention to these. For example, official development aid when invested in DRR plans can achieve certain results. However, if funds are directly invested in communities, a dollar can stretch very far, and communities can be rebuilt for a fraction of the cost.

Finally, I would like to emphasize the role of rituals and religion, which are extremely important components of indigenous lives. Here we are talking about preventative rituals, cleansing and healing rituals and, finally, thanksgiving rituals. Of course, these methods will not be supported by Western science, neither will they be included in official plans, but this is one of the coping mechanisms that builds resilience, alleviates peoples' suffering and restore personal strength and optimism.

I would like to quickly mention how traditional knowledge is supported by the international legal framework. First of all, it is the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Article 31, which specifically talks about traditional knowledge; Article 8 (j) of the Convention on Biological Diversity, and; Article 4 ILO Convention No. 169. I also want to quickly touch upon the HFA 2 in its current version where we have a number of references to indigenous peoples and there is a very strong emphasis on traditional knowledge. We hope that the final version of the outcome document retains suggested references and includes effective approaches to reduce risk to disasters through engaging indigenous leaders and their communities.

Lastly I want to talk about recommendations.

First of all, as some of my colleagues mentioned, is the importance of training. During the opening ceremony, the Prime Minister of Japan pledged to conduct DRR trainings for 40,000 government employees. I believe many countries around the world will be providing such trainings, and I think it will be vitally important to include community leaders and practitioners, especially some leaders from indigenous communities who would not only participate in the trainings but would be an important source of traditional knowledge and coordination on the local levels.

Japan is on the forefront of developing technologies for DRR; again the Prime Minister also mentioned that Japan will be implementing the SNS sending systems from disaster prone areas. I think the systems should be replicated and shared with the rest of the world and especially with the indigenous communities living in such areas. In many cases such partnerships with indigenous communities who can predict disasters through signs of nature well in advance of the occurrence, can save lives. The indigenous "early warning" mechanisms should be well incorporated in the national, regional and local early warning systems.

Thirdly, it's important to invest in aspects of indigenous lives, including culturally appropriate education, access to health services as well as traditional health practices. Having integrity of our lands and territories, having the right to participate in decision-making and live in healthy and peaceful environments, only then we can achieve true resilience, including resilience to disasters.

Finally, we recommend inclusion of indigenous peoples in appropriate studies; documentation and sharing of indigenous knowledge and practices for DRR; and inclusion of traditional knowledge and coping mechanisms in national, regional and local disaster preparedness and post-disaster plans, with a goal of reducing their vulnerability and increasing their resilience to these events. Thank you.

Stefano De Caro:

It is very important that all of us are sensitized to the specific needs of protecting indigenous cultures, and in particular ensuring that the necessary tools are in the hands of those communities to allow them to maintain the control of their cultures in difficult situations.

Now I give the floor to our final speaker, Pierpaolo Campostrini, Managing Director of CORILA. CO-

RILA means the Consortium for Coordination of Research Activities Concerning the Venice Lagoon System that is located in Italy. It is a non-profit organization to promote economic and social research on the natural and cultural environments of Venice and its lagoon. Venice, which is particularly subject to the effects of climate change and natural disasters, must protect itself by developing innovative and new protection methods which must also somehow respect this very important heritage of all humanity.

So, my question to him is what the biggest challenges for Venice in the next 20 years are. Please, you have the floor.

Pierpaolo Campostrini:

Thank you. I am very honored to be here in this conference to represent my city, Venice, which is a role model for cultural heritage protection in the UNISDR campaign “Making Cities Resilient.” We had a conference two years ago in Venice, organized by the Municipality and the European office of UNISDR, on “Protecting Cultural Heritage and Adapting to Climate Change,” which concluded with a Declaration signed by the participating mayors and other authorities. The Venice Declaration, whose text is available on the UNISDR website, says simply that a specific consideration to Cultural Heritage should be included in any disaster risk reduction policy and strategy, and also that all the conservation policies for cultural heritage should include a specific disaster risk consideration.

I would like also to start with good news. The good news is that the photo, showing Venice flooded by the high tide, will belong definitively to the past in a few years. In 2017 we will conclude the huge operation of securing the lagoon of Venice from any flooding event. In fact, the realization of the MOSE system, made of mobile barriers able to close the sea entrances in the lagoon when needed, is going to be concluded in 2017.

Venice will be safe from flooding, then. However, our main challenge for the future is to understand how to operate in the best way the system which regulates the tide in the lagoon. In fact, in Venice we have to secure not only the culture, but also the natural environment and the ecosystem services it is able to provide. In the next years, operating the tide barriers, we will start also a “learning phase” on how to cope with these two needs, to safeguard the culture, but also the living context where this culture developed along many centuries,

i.e., the lagoon landscape.

The other message I wish to give is to underline the following. During this long period of almost 50 years after the big flooding occurred in 1966, while Venice was preparing the infrastructure for its defence, something occurred to reduce the risk of disaster. The city resilience also increased thanks to the active participation of citizens. This was related not only to the flooding risk, with the raising of the public pavements and the installation of local defences building by building, but also to other risks. Concerning the valuable cultural patrimony of the city, some troops of volunteers are trained to safeguard the most delicate and precious cultural assets during a dangerous event, like a fire or a flooding. These “normal people” (school teachers, university students, etc.) are able to intervene together with the fire brigade, providing information for protecting the tangible cultural assets.

In a city like Venice, to close down a fire asap in a building is not enough: it’s also important to protect in a particular way the cultural assets that might be contained in that building. The civil protection plan of the city of Venice is quite comprehensive and considers properly the safeguard of the immense cultural patrimony, too.

We have been speaking during this conference often about the need to have a multi-risk approach, able to consider the different hazards which we face in an urban environment. This applies also for cultural heritage protection. The evident need to protect cultural heritage motivates and gives more strength to the general disaster risk reduction policy, as it is able to explain without too many words why it is necessary to have a comprehensive strategy in this field. Therefore the presence of the City of Venice in the UNISDR campaign “Making Cities Resilient” as a “role model” for cultural heritage protection is helping the general scope of the campaign. I hope, on the other side, that cultural heritage protection will be embedded in all the plan of the cities supporting this campaign.

We need to continue protecting cultural patrimony. I usually prefer to use the word “patrimony” instead of “heritage,” because it’s something more vivid, referring to something which is really “alive” also today. We need international and national strategies, but we also need specific laws. For instance, the European Flood Directive was issued in 2007. It’s the first example ever where cultural heritage assets were asked to be considered explicitly in the flood risk management plans.

Cultural heritage is one of the four targets of this important directive, which intend in general to provide concrete actions to reduce the risks associated with floods and to make the community more resilient to flooding hazards. It was an Italian comment, which came from Venice's experience, on the provisional text of the directive in 2006, suggesting to include cultural heritage protection at the same level as the other three objectives of the Directive, which are saving lives, the environment and economies from the consequences of any possible flooding event.

Let me resume. The local commitment is the key for both the assessment and the reduction of the risks. It's possible to map the different tangible cultural assets in a city, and a proper evaluation of various positions to the hazards is necessary. Just as for flooding, it can be done also for other kinds of risks. We do need innovative methods and technologies in order to conserve our historical cities. Also city maintenance means protection and disaster risk reduction. We have the picture of Dubrovnik, of Venice, and of what occurred in Florence after the flooding more than 40 years ago.

Finally, I would like to say something that is very close to our experience these days. Voluntary destruction of cultural and artistic heritage is currently occurring in some zones of the world. These acts should be prosecuted as war crimes and as crimes against humanity. In fact, this is really a crime against all of us. And this was included a few days ago in a declaration of the European Parliament, and I am proud that the European Parliament took this declaration in order to underline how culture is a human right to protect and valorize.

Thank you very much for your attention.

Stefano De Caro:

Thank you. The last slide is just indicating the disaster in the human soul, I would say, or in humanity. Your presentation concludes the formal presentations from the session. We have heard from a variety of persons representing institutions, cities, and communities who all share the common goal of reducing the vulnerability of our cultural heritage to disasters, while at the same time using heritage as a means of strengthening community resilience.

Now I will open the floor to questions and comments from the audience. You may ask for more information, clarification on the issues raised. In addition, we would be interested to hear if any of the institutions represented in the room have any con-

crete commitments to better protect cultural heritage in times of disaster or using heritage to strengthen resilience.

Please be short because we have only a very short time, so if you are short we can let more people speak.

Floor:

I'm chargé d'affaires of the Syrian Arab Republic. I want to thank everybody about the good information provided to us. I want to speak about this very important subject and thank you for raising this concern here.

With regard to Syria, everybody knows that Syria is a very old city. The age of Syria is almost more than 7,000 years and Syria holds so many important civilizations that give Syria a very rich archaeological heritage. What we are facing right now, it is really a disaster for our heritage. It is not only for Syria; it is for the whole world because it is international world heritage. Most of our important sites are on the UNESCO list, so this is why the whole world should be concerned about what we are facing.

What we are facing, actually it is acknowledged even in the Security Council Resolution 2199, adopted only in the last two months, in February. So this resolution acknowledges that we are facing international terrorism. We are facing a big problem with our neighboring countries. So the trafficking illegally in our cultural properties, this puts us in a very difficult situation.

Another issue, also allowing such antiquity gangs coming to Syria and doing such destruction to our cultural heritage, this is another issue. And this is the Security Council resolution actually with regard to this issue. So the main idea is not only waiting for the local government to preserve its cultural heritage, but we need the international community to be also committed to their responsibilities in line with the Security Council resolution or other resolutions.

For example, this resolution speaks in its paragraph 17, it asks the member states in order to prevent the trading in cultural properties with regard to the Syria and Iraq situation, and also including by prohibiting cross-border trade in such items. And also called on the international communities and UNESCO and other international organizations, like Interpol, dealing with this issue in order to assist in helping and implementing such important resolutions.

So the idea is not only on local people and it is not internal issues; we kept preserving such important heritage for more than 7,000 years as a people and as a government. According to our internal law, it is prohibited to change all the sites or anything of these archaeological sites, even if it is owned by private persons. This is why what we are facing from the international community, that they are not committed to their responsibilities.

We ask also to raise this concern to work together against this international terrorism, and also committing to our commitment, controlling the border, not allowing illegal trafficking in cultural heritage. Thank you.

Stefano De Caro:

Thank you so much. Many of the organizations represented on this floor and in previous meetings are committed to doing more than something for the serious Syrian situation. UNESCO is very committed to these issues. But we have to cover more issues so I ask the lady who advanced.

Floor:

I'm with Earthsavers, UNESCO Artists for Peace, Cecile Guidote-Alvarez. We deeply appreciate your strong presentation of the panel that really focuses on the importance of heritage defense against climate change and other violent assaults on what we call truly an assault on the memory and identity of nations. And so we are really grateful for the European resolution and wonder whether this can be not just applicable to the EU but adopted as a UN action or however that would make it really effective for all other countries.

For instance, we are grateful also because of the leadership of UNESCO, and Mr. Matsuura and even now have really pushed on the value of heritage and has popularized really the concept of protecting. It's actually like if we could make it clear to the people that we are actually inflicting amnesia and, maybe worse, Alzheimer's disease, on a nation if we allow the destruction of all this heritage and patrimony that is really precious to a nation's identity.

So the resilience, we would like to also focus on something besides the training, the need for effective cultural communications, for people to understand what are the data about the heritage, what is supposed to be known about the heritage in every country.

For instance, our own heritage site has been assaulted by the boats of three countries. You had the

USA, you had China, and of all people, an environmentally friendly boat like Greenpeace. What are we going to do? In Lima there was also perhaps the lack of knowledge or orientation that Greenpeace also in a sense assaulted a sacred place. Is it because they don't know what are these heritage sites? And we have to provide a stronger orientation and basis of information that they must really be protected.

There is also the issue of resilience. For instance in the Philippines, when in Bohol a dual affliction happened, the earthquake and the super typhoon in the Visayas, most of those that were ruined, besides of course homes, were cultural treasures like the churches, and it was necessary, we being a majority Christian country, that it was able to rebuild through a community spirit to bring back the place of worship.

There is a problem, like for instance we are trying to connect, which is great. There are all these issues. There is just one question about the cooperation that has been undertaken. We are grateful to the Spanish government, the Italian government, for connectivity for the protection. There is one that is in deep danger, Cartagena, which fears to be another Venice. Is it possible for instance that the expertise of Venice can be shared for the defense of Cartagena?

And another just issue, with the importance that you have laid out, can insurance cover? Can governments and private partnership work out so that there is some sort of insurance on heritage sites? Can the concept of insurance be expanded to cover the defense or protection or reconstruction assistance for these heritage sites?

Stefano De Caro:

Maybe Mr. Campostrini can give a short answer and probably also Giovanni could add something from the side of UNESCO, but very short because we have to move to other questions.

Pierpaolo Campostrini:

The answer is, yes, of course. We can share our experience not only through our government or maybe the European institution, but also the experience can be shared also city to city. We have the opportunity to have all the relations, it's many-to-many relationships that can be held. Both in terms of technology, which is important, but also in terms of organization. I mean, also the kind of governance which is behind. It's important in this case, where

climate change is causing huge problems, that all the levels of the administration react in a coordinated way. So, we can also transfer some experiences how to deal the dialogue between local and national administration. The dialogue is absolutely important; otherwise, any action in the territory simply does not work.

Giovanni Boccardi:

On the most important point, one of raising awareness, promoting mutual understanding, I think UNESCO is fully committed to this through the various conventions that it implements, notably the one on cultural diversity.

On the specific questions of is it possible to insure cultural heritage, it has been done but there is still work to be done because insurance companies usually accept to insure something if they know exactly how much it will cost to replace it. And the cost of replacing heritage is ambiguous and insurers cannot understand. In some cases they believe it's irreplaceable completely, which may be true in some instances, but not always. So we need to work with them closely to find common ground.

Stefano De Caro:

We have ten minutes more and I would leave some minutes for a conclusion by Mr. Matsuura, so please be brief.

Floor:

When the panelists were presenting, I got an idea that I would like to share.

Generally people feel obliged to move from their area because of disaster, and once they move from those areas, sometimes they lose their culture, the way they live, the way they practice, but I notice that all the communication will focus on material or infrastructure heritage. So I would like to raise that aspect of things, reminding people that sometimes people, because of disasters or conflicts, lose a very important part of their life in their culture. Thanks.

Stefano De Caro:

The next one. There was somebody. Yes.

Floor:

My name is Peter Abraham Fukuda Loewi. I am an architect with the Major Group for Children and Youth. Thank you for seeing all of these. Thank you for seeing that the preservation of traditional knowledge and the conflict are so intimately connected to

these. At the end, I'm sorry, Mr. Campostrini said at the end that culture is a human right, but we will not inherit, the youth will not inherit this right unless you preserve it. One thing that was not brought up was the role of children and youth in this, but one of the slides said that our past is our future, but your past is our future. And for those reasons, it must stay. Thank you.

Floor:

My name is Denis Ricard. I am secretary general of the organization of World Heritage Cities and the organization of World Heritage Cities reaches 260 cities around the world, and I just want to say how important such a conference is.

If there is one example of resilience, World Heritage Cities certainly are. Through years they went through wars, they went through negative human impacts, and now climate change, and through all of this, they were there, they are there, and they will be there, and this conference, I just want to mention that, as a conclusion, has been very inspiring, inspiring globally with such a theme, and especially this workshop has been very inspiring for people like us. As a matter of fact, our next world congress, which will be in Arequipa, Peru, in November, has exactly the same title. And this world congress, one of the organizations of World Heritage Cities, unites mayors with political power and specialists at the local level in terms of heritage. So in a very concrete way we try to implement what you have inspired us. Thank you.

Stefano De Caro:

So two more statements or questions and after I will leave the floor to Mr. Matsuura.

Floor:

Thank you. My name is Terrence. I'm coming from Singapore and I would like to speak on behalf of our experiences in Southeast Asia where we go around using culture to help the children and the youth.

Southeast Asia is a very transient place, and because of this I feel that we need culture that is a lot more mobile, and I would like to ask the panel about how is it keeping culture mobile? And I feel this is important for three reasons.

Number one, people are moving. They are shifting away to different places and they will take their culture with them and they try to assimilate it or preserve. There is a need to help them have a dialogue with the new environment that they have.

Secondly, the patterns are changing as well, as we can see how the typhoon moves from north to south, the Philippines for example, and there are ideas from the northern Philippines that need to be brought down to the southern Philippines. Therefore it's very important as well.

And third of all, of course after destruction, how can we rebuild our cultures again? So I feel that there needs to be the ability to assimilate or adapt or adopt cultures. I think it's a very important thing. We are also becoming a much more globalized and mobile society anyway; therefore, we need to consider how we use, how we make traditions and heritage cool and fun, put it into films, music, games, dance, songs. We need to make it something whereby the young people and the youth feel eager to take on ideas from the past. Thank you.

Stefano De Caro:

The last one, yes.

Floor:

Thank you. My name is Peter Burgess. I'm a professor at the Peace Research Institute in Oslo. I want to start with a comment of Mr. Boccardi in order to make a strategic suggestion.

I hold in the highest esteem the point of view of the panel and many of the audience here that our cultural heritage is precious and should be protected at significant cost. But then at the same time when I go in the other rooms at this conference I see that we're competing, we who believe that we are competing with different discourses, hard science, quantitative science, finance, economics, for the same reasons. And in comparison, we appear almost as passive, almost as victims asking for help to preserve what we hold dear.

What Mr. Boccardi's comment inspires is a strategy which starts with the added value of cultural heritage for resilience. And I see also on the panel that Mr. Boccardi is quite in the minority in that regard. There's a very strong function that culture and cultural heritage can provide in giving resilience and bringing continuity, in binding people together, in stabilizing values that are shared, cultural values, and being a catalyst, as he said himself. So I welcome this very much.

And from a strategic point of view I would really recommend that we focus some of our efforts on showing how culture can contribute to resilience and not only benefit from it.

Stefano De Caro:

Thank you so much. I will close now. Unfortunately we have not so many minutes remaining, so I will ask Mr. Matsuura to summarize and give us his impressions as the most experienced man in this field.

Koichiro Matsuura:

Well, Dr. De Caro, you are giving me a very, very difficult task to summarize a very rich discussion during the remaining two or three minutes, but I'd like to mention if possible five points very quickly.

I think everybody agrees that cultural heritage—how important it is not only for the local community, for the nation concerned, for the entire world—is vulnerable to disaster. Therefore, we have to make very serious efforts, make much more serious efforts to establish a more resilient society which will pay more attention to protecting and safeguarding cultural heritage in case of disaster. That's the first point.

The second point is, in that context I think, everybody agrees with the point raised by Giovanni that cultural heritage plays a very important role in creating a more resilient society. It is a positive role of cultural heritage that must be strengthened as well. That's the second point.

The third point is, when we talk about disasters, we tend to focus on natural disasters, but many of you have mentioned human-created disasters, and looking back, in my judgment, in particular in the last 25 years, more damage, more destruction has been created by human-created disasters—wars, regional wars, civil wars, unilateral action, based on particular beliefs which are contrary to the commonly held value. That is what we are witnessing in some parts of the world, in particular in the Middle East right now. Very unfortunate.

Therefore, the third point is we have to pay more attention in establishing disaster risk reduction policy, to how to protect cultural heritage in case of disaster, in case of natural disasters, but also in the case of human-created disasters. It is crucial that these elements are included in our disaster risk reduction policy.

The next point is, in that context the role of the local community is crucial but we have to emphasize the local governments, central governments, and for that matter the entire human society or the entire world has a very, very important responsibility to promote the consciousness of the importance of protecting cultural heritage, but also promoting cooperation, regional cooperation, national cooper-

ation, and international cooperation to protect cultural heritage.

I guess these are the major points that have emerged out of the hour-and-a-half discussion.

Stefano De Caro:

Thank you very much. We could as the topic be more and more and more hours here but we have to

close this session. I want to thank you all for the attention. I want to thank the speakers for their interventions. And I want to thank the organizers of this United Nations World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction for allowing the heritage sectors to participate and to raise the issue of heritage conservation into the practice of disaster risk reduction. Thank you so much.