

Venice Declaration on Building Resilience at the Local Level towards Protected Cultural Heritage and Climate Change Adaptation Strategies

We, Local and National Government Officials, together with representatives of the Council of Europe, European Union, the Private Sector, UNESCO, UNHABITAT and UNISDR,

1. Having participated in the event “*Building Cities Resilience to Disasters: Protecting Cultural Heritage and Adapting to Climate Change*” organized by the City of Venice and UNISDR,

2. Recognizing that:

- a) More than half of the world’s population now lives in cities or urban centres, which serve as the economic engines of nations, and where around 100 cities are in control of 30 per cent of the world economy;
- b) Cities, including over 200 World Heritage urban properties, are living evidence, and a physical store, of cultural heritage that represent a source of cultural identity and a non-renewable human asset, and that urban disaster risks are one of the most significant threats to the preservation of such assets;
- c) A well-conserved historic environment, supported by living traditional knowledge and skills, considerably reduces underlying disaster risks’ factors, strengthens the resilience of urban communities and saves lives.
- d) Sustainable development must integrate disaster risk reduction and resilience building at all levels through planning across sectors to increase urban resilience to disaster;
- e) Disaster risk is driven higher by climate change particularly in urban areas due to the increased incidence of extreme weather events, such as flooding, flash floods, tropical cyclones, drought, wildfires and heat waves, which affects the growing populations of cities;

3. Recalling:

- a) The World Disaster Reduction Campaign 2010-2015 Making Cities Resilient: "My city is getting ready!" which is aimed at achieving resilient sustainable urban communities based on the principles of the Hyogo Framework for Action;
- b) The Mayor’s Statement on Resilient Cities at the Third Session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, which calls on UNISDR to work with city networks, UN entities and civil society organizations to sustain local preparations for disaster risk reduction and local resilience-building;
- c) The Strategy for Disaster Risks Reduction at World Heritage Properties, which was adopted by the World Heritage Committee at its 31st Session in 2007.

Resolve to:

- a. Ensure the continuation of exchanges of experiences and good practices within communities, cities and local governments on achievements related to disaster risk reduction at the local level;

- b. Actively encourage exchanges between cities facing challenges posed by the protection of cultural heritage in a changing climate;
- c. Further the engagement of European local level city networks in embracing resilience to disasters with a particular focus on cultural heritage protection and climate change adaptation by promoting and embracing the objectives of Making Cities Resilient Campaign;
- d. Support the integration of heritage concerns into national and local disaster risk reduction policies and plans and, at the same time, ensure that disaster risks are taken into consideration within management plans and systems for heritage properties in their territories, notably for World Heritage Cities;
- e. Ensure that sustainable development strategies reflect disaster risk reduction measures at the local level for urban sustainability and resilient growth;
Encourage communities, cities and local governments to take advantage of existing sources of information such as the Making Cities Resilient website, national databases and other available information related to the activities of participating cities to ensure that achievements and obstacles in addressing vulnerabilities to disasters are shared and built upon;
- f. Integrate the Ten Essentials of the Making Cities Resilient Campaign into local risk reduction plans as a way to accelerate efforts to make cities safer and to prevent the loss of lives and assets;
- g. Foster partnerships for disaster risk reduction with the private sector to analyze the root causes of continued non-resilient activity in the urban built environment, related infrastructure and cultural heritage, and to enhance collaborative exchanges regarding dissemination of risk data;
- h. Encourage the use of the Local Government Self Assessment Tool as a channel for sharing advances and challenges in reducing risks at the local level towards building cities resilience.

Adopted on 20 March 2012.