

**REPORT ON THE THIRD CAPACITY BUILDING WORKSHOP
ON NATURE-CULTURE LINKAGES IN HERITAGE CONSERVATION
IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC – CBWNCL 2018
DISASTERS AND RESILIENCE**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The **Third Capacity Building Workshop on Nature-Culture Linkages in Heritage Conservation in Asia and the Pacific** (CBWNCL 2018) took place in Tsukuba, Japan, from September 21 to October 1, 2018. The workshop was organized by the UNESCO Chair on Nature-Culture Linkages in Heritage Conservation at the University of Tsukuba, with the collaboration of the UNESCO World Heritage Centre, the International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM), the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) and the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS).

This workshop, which theme was Disasters and Resilience, is the third of a series programmed for the period 2016-2019. The aim is to contribute to the World Heritage Capacity Building Programme in promoting and developing skills of mid-career heritage practitioners of the Asia and the Pacific region to deal with the interlinkages between nature and culture in heritage sites.

The workshop was divided in four modules:

- **Module 1:** International Symposium
- **Module 2:** Understanding Nature-Culture Linkages in the Context of Disasters and Resilience
- **Module 3:** Management, Implementation and Governance – Disasters and Resilience
- **Module 4:** Reflection on Theory and Practice

The CBWNCL 2018 was inaugurated with **Module 1** that consisted on the 3rd International Symposium on Nature-Culture Linkages in Heritage Conservation held on September 21, at the Tsukuba International Congress Centre in the framework of the Tsukuba Global Science Week 2018 organized by the University of Tsukuba under the theme 'Driving Sustainable Development'. In this thematic context, our symposium contributed with presentations and discussions focused on how to deal with natural and human-led hazards, in order to prevent and recover from disasters by integrating natural and cultural heritage to disaster risk prevention and recovery processes. The symposium gathered international experts,

three of them as representatives of our partner organizations: Ms. Radhika Murti from IUCN, Mr. Joseph King from ICCROM and Dr. Rohit Jigyasu from ICOMOS. We also received a video message from the Director of the UNESCO World Heritage Centre and Division of Heritage, Dr. Mechtild Rössler. Key promoters of the nature-culture approach in the World Heritage system and close collaborators of the CBWNCL joined the roundtable as discussants: Dr. Gamini Wijesuriya, former ICCROM staff, and Ms. Kristal Buckley, World Heritage Advisor for ICOMOS and lecturer at Deakin University. Representatives of the Japanese Government presented the situation in Japan. On the one hand, Mr. Naohisa Okuda from the Ministry of the Environment explained the initiatives and efforts for the recovery process in the Tohoku region affected by the Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami. On the other hand, Ms. Kumiko Shimotsuma from the Agency for Cultural Affairs talked about the integration of disaster risk management in the protection and conservation of Japan's cultural heritage. Fifteen participants of the CBWNCL 2018, heritage practitioners from the culture and nature sectors coming from Australia, Bangladesh, China, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Vietnam, Hawaii (USA), Kenya, Chile and Russia, attended the meeting and took part of the discussion. Four students of the University of Tsukuba coming from four different countries (DR Congo, Ethiopia, Jamaica and Sudan) took part of the process as observers.

During the panel discussion and roundtable, it was clarified by the speakers that nature and culture sectors work separately, and that chances to share ideas like in this symposium are rare. Even though any disaster-related project needs the involvement of different sectors, inter-sectorial collaboration is complex and the need of immediate response to disasters does not allow further efforts. Moreover, it was explained how during disaster response, the priority is placed on survivors, and therefore, heritage, both natural and cultural stay in a second place. Nevertheless, speakers reaffirmed the need to develop synergies and cooperation between sectors in the heritage conservation context in general, and particularly for the case of disasters prevention, mitigation, response and post-disasters recovery. The discussions clarified the relevance of integrating a nature-culture approach for disaster risk management, and for building resilience. Japan was acknowledged as a champion for this endeavor and a good example for Asia and the Pacific region, and beyond. Interdisciplinary and crossdisciplinarity need to be used for looking at disasters and resilience. It was pointed out the importance of natural ecosystems for the resilience of inhabited landscapes, and therefore, nature conservation efforts need to be integrated as part of planning. It was mentioned that landscape conservation and urban planning are essential instruments for building resilience and preventing disasters. Moreover, it was clarified that intangible cultural heritage plays a fundamental role in the post-disaster recovery as an instrument of resilience for communities. Identity and cultural heritage sustain the cohesion

of communities when facing disasters. The importance of capacity building and education was highlighted, especially when confronting challenges such as climate change and unpredictable natural hazards. It was mentioned that educational systems may be divorced from reality, therefore, changes need to start in education systems as well.

It was concluded that disaster-prevention strategies and reconstruction and recovery efforts need to be elaborated after examining individual cases and national legal systems. Moreover, efforts to involve all stakeholders and especially local communities should be continued. Community-based conservation and management needs to be promoted. Traditional knowledge and indigenous peoples need to be respected and integrated in disaster-prevention strategies. Main challenges noted are climate change and rapid and unplanned urbanization, and hence, the importance of adaptation and mitigation were stressed. It was highlighted that World Heritage sites serve as models and should continue their role as laboratories of sustainable development.

Module 2 consisted of three days of intensive lectures, group discussions and participants' case studies' presentations. The first day's lecture dealt with the evolution of the conservation practice, from the nature-culture divide, towards a more integrated perspective considering nature-culture linkages and people-centered approaches to conservation, as well as a landscape approach to heritage. The second lecture focused on the World Heritage Convention and its processes of implementation. The second day focused on disaster prevention and post-disaster recovery with lectures from the natural and cultural sectors perspectives, covering Ecosystems-Based Approach to Disaster Risk Reduction and Disaster Risk Management for Cultural Heritage. During the third day, the focus was on the Japanese experience on disaster risk management and post-disaster recovery, as well as an introduction to the field visit. During the three afternoon sessions, fifteen case studies were presented. Eight World Heritage sites, two in the tentative list of their respective countries, one Biosphere Reserve and one UNESCO Geopark, four landscapes protected at national level were examined and discussed. Case studies reflected a diversity of overlapping legal systems and designations, vulnerabilities to a variety of hazards, mostly natural, and in all it was clarified that the nature-culture linkages are present and need to be acknowledged for a better conservation and disaster risk management.

Module 3 lasted four days where the participants visited three sites in the Tohoku Region affected by the Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami of March 2011: Hiraizumi – Temples, Gardens and Archeaeological sites Representing the Buddhist Pure Land, World Heritage since 2011, the Sanriku Fukko Reconstruction National Park, basically, the area of

Minami-Sanriku Town, and Matsushima, Place of Scenic Beauty. In Hiraizumi, participants learned about the conservation of important Japanese cultural heritage properties, such as temples and gardens, as well as how they are prepared for hazards and how reconstruction is undertaken – with the example of a garden rock. In Minami-Sanriku Town, participants learned about the concept and implementation of the Reconstruction National Park, and how the municipality is working with the Ministry of Environment for developing strategies for the recovery of natural ecosystems – with the inscription of the Shizugawa Bay as a Ramsar site as an example – and the development of eco-tourism. They also had the chance to listen to testimonies of local inhabitants who experienced the tsunami and lead initiatives for the recovery of the town using natural and cultural heritage. Finally, in Matsushima, participants learned how the area was affected by the tsunami and how it is recovering. From the archaeological perspective, participants learned about the pre-historical occupation of this area, and how pre-historic people living in Japan settled in safer places. Moreover, they learned about the problem of relocation of fishermen villages and the conservation of the landscape views, as well as the issues entailed by the construction of walls, as an immediate reaction to tsunami. From all these visits, participants understood the importance of the local community involvement for preparation and also for recovery processes after disasters. Through the testimonies, they recognized the resilience of communities affected by these experiences.

Module 4 comprised two days of reflection on the theory and practice gained during the workshop. Participants worked in groups with the task to map the values and interrelations between nature and culture in the sites visited, and to assess the management of the sites, by identifying the lessons learned and elaborating recommendations. Besides, participants were asked to reflect on their own case studies and present one lesson learned that they take and would like to apply in their home country. Participants prepared group presentations and interesting discussions arose regarding their different understandings over the same sites. Participants highlighted the role of locals in the recovery process and agreed that the Japanese experience was exemplary for their own countries.

As concluding remarks, participants acknowledged the importance to share and work with practitioners from different disciplines and sectors of the heritage practice, which led them to think beyond their knowledge and in a more holistic manner. They recognized that the work in interdisciplinary groups enriched their perspective over heritage and allowed them to learn from other sectors involved in the conservation practice. Most importantly, they understood the need of involving all stakeholders in decision-making processes, and they learned from Japanese local communities that nature and culture are not divided in the moment of facing disasters such as

earthquakes or tsunami. The experience of Japan clarified that conserving heritage successfully requires a coordination beyond sectors and at different levels of governance. It became evident that heritage conservation needs to be integrated with other areas involved in disaster prevention, post-disaster recovery and reconstruction efforts, and it needs to be enforced by local management agendas. Moreover, participants understood that nature-culture linkages are necessary for a comprehensive conservation of heritage sites.