ASEM LLL HUB CONFERENCE
Lifelong Learning and Resilience in Disaster Management

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Disaster risk management: sustaining cultural integrity – the key to societal resilience

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Some basic observations regarding culture and cultural heritage

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The destruction of culture is a <u>fundamental breach of the principle of intergenerational equity</u>, in that a culture destroyed or diminished within the time of the current generation will deprive members of future generations of their right to their cultural inheritance.

Victoria Declaration, clause 4

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"The opportunity to understand, celebrate and cherish one's culture is an inherent component of social stability of all nations, of all people –

the protection of cultural integrity is therefore a fundamental human right"

Victoria Declaration, clause 5

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Faro Convention of the Council of Europe

Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society.

[Faro, October 2005]

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Article 1 – Faro Convention

"(a) recognise that rights relating to cultural heritage are inherent in the right to participate in cultural life, as defined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights;

(b) recognise individual and collective responsibility towards cultural heritage;

(c) emphasis that the conservation of cultural heritage and its sustainable use **have human development and quality of life as their goal**;

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UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP).

<u>**Article 25**</u> prescribes that: "*Indigenous peoples have the **right to maintain and strengthen their distinctive spiritual relationship** with their traditionally owned or otherwise occupied and used lands, territories, waters and coastal seas and other resources and **to uphold their responsibilities to future generations in this regard***".

Within the language of heritage there is a wonderful phrase - "**a sense of place**" - which highlights its importance to society. It is a concept that combines all the elements of recognition, familiarity, comfort, identity and association - **inclusivity**

The intangible importance of cultural relationships, such as "a sense of place" of a people, is critical to their social identity, diversity and sustainability.

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Lessons from history

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Universal Declaration of Human Rights – 1948

"Disregard and contempt for human rights have resulted in barbarous acts which have outraged the conscience of mankind,

the advent of a world in which human beings shall enjoy freedom of speech and belief and freedom from fear and want has been proclaimed as the highest aspiration of the common people"

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History has shown that the obliteration of a culture can lead to social annihilation, for instance where the connectivity between a people and their place and their history has been destroyed.
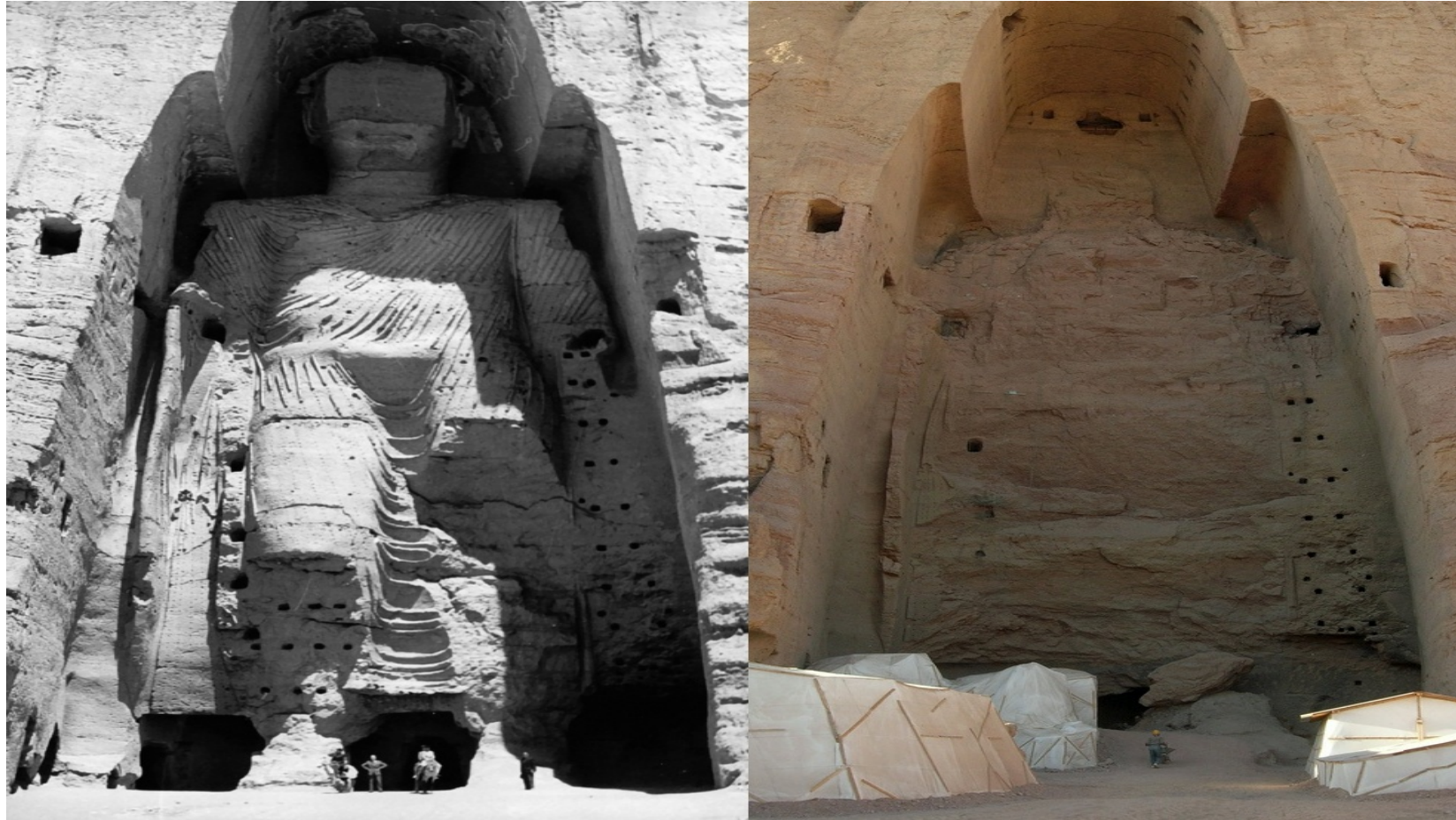
Such destruction can and does follow disasters – both natural and societal.

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History teaches us that by targeting and destroying culture, disharmony, instability and weakened societal structures result.

Consider the underlying psychological objective of aggression, such as in warfare or in terrorism, which seeks to destabilize a targeted enemy, by driving a stake through their cultural heart.

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6th Century Buddhist Statues – Bamiyan, Afghanistan

Kasubi Tombs of the Bugandan Kingdom - Uganda

Kasubi Tombs of the Bugandan Kingdom destroyed

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World Archaeological Congress of 9 July 2012:

"*Cultural Heritage is the target* – not collateral damage.

We condemn the destruction that took place in Timbuktu. It is a crime against humanity".

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International Criminal Court (ICC) judgment in the Timbuktu cultural destruction case , the presiding Judge Raul Pangalangan stated :

*"In June and July of 2012 ten of the most important and well-known sites in Timbuktu were attacked and destroyed ….. **A war activity** **aimed at breaking the soul of the people**. The chamber unanimously finds that the defendant is guilty of the crime of attacking protected sites as a war crime"*.   26 September 2016

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Umayyad Mosque – Damascus, Syria

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Umayyad Mosque – Aleppo, Syria - destroyed

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NATURAL DISASTERS
Earthquakes, cyclones, floods, bushfires, etc

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First responses to disaster inevitably are directed at subsistence: food, water, health, physical well-being and law and order

Understandable, but ……………..

Resilience to disaster will only be achieved if the cultural integrity of people is also sustained

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An unfortunate example:

Christchurch, New Zealand – post February 2011 earthquake

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- **The post natural disaster response by authorities and communities can be <u>as threatening to heritage, to culture, as the natural disaster itself.</u>**

- **Double disaster: natural disaster + insensitive response**

- **A calm, balanced, professional and sensitive response to the post-disaster reinstatement or rebuilt is essential**

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A better example:

Chengdu, Sichuan Province, China – post May 2008 earthquake

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- **Understanding the value and vulnerability of cultural heritage is essential. Gaining that understanding is an educational process – a <u>lifelong learning process</u> within families, within community customary processes and within educational institutions.** **Being conscious of irreplaceability – "once gone, gone forever" – is critical**

- Protective and management measures must be for the long-term, not compromised by decision-making compromised by short-term imperatives.

Climate change is the current generation's most fearsome threat most likely to undermine or impact upon all people's cultures thus threatening the integrity and continuity of those cultures.

The cultural connectivity between a living people and their historical roots engenders pride of place and a spirit to defend it at all costs. With climate change, it is beyond the capacity of individual communities to effectively respond in isolation.

For the sake of future generations, **we must collectively tackle climate change** not just because of changes in the physical environment, not just for reasons of sustaining human health and welfare, but to recognise that the core strength and connectivity of all the socio-economic systems of humankind, is <u>maintaining cultural sustainability</u>.

Victoria Declaration, clause 8

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With climate change the global community is experiencing and is likely to experience natural disasters at exponential rates

The incremental and accumulative effect of climate change is predicted to lead to consequential social disasters due to societal disruption, dislocation and threats to the capacity of communities to maintain traditional modes of existence, or at worst, to even subsist.

Social tensions will give rise to responses such as warfare, border conflict and potential climate change refugee crisis in many regions.

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So communities which are to be inclusive, resilient and sustainable must respect and retain cultural elements that provide the means of ensuring there is social stability, which engenders an emotional response of belonging - belonging that flows from cultural respect – which reinforces connectivity.

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Studies of sociology, philosophy and comparative religions all identify a common thread across nearly all cultures:

Intergenerational equity

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Education should inspire interest in culture. The principles of intergenerational equity are furthered by programmes which convey cultural understanding and respect to all generations, but particularly the younger generations.

Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage

Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage

National Trust of Korea

National Trust of Korea

The Gelderland Trust

Engendering respect for culture, conserving heritage and stimulating creativity - are all potential educational outcomes which are essential elements to sustaining communities within nations

It is the <u>culture</u> of each individual and groups of individuals which provide a <u>sense of belonging</u>. Culture is the glue that binds groups of people together. **Culture provides resilience.**

The alternative is instability, disorientation, a sense of loss.

BPPI - Indonesian Heritage Trust – use of dance & music connects communities

Guangyuan District, China – expression through traditional dance

Governments must allow and encourage citizens to respect and retain cultural elements that provide the means of ensuring there is social stability, which engenders an emotional response of belonging - belonging that flows from recognition and familiarity.

A sustaining community is one that harmonizes its past with its future. It is one where its villages and cities resonate with its citizens, creates and sustains lasting memories, and provides recognition, identity and retains the Individuality of each place.

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Disasters will be so much more comprehensive and devastating if risk management strategies do not pre-disaster address the means to retain cultural integrity and, post-disaster address the means to reinforce the importance of people staying true to their value systems, providing the means to sustain in a changed and disrupted world their identity, their connectedness and their beliefs which are at the heart of their culture.

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An example of Life Long Learning:

Broken Hill, NSW, Australia

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Lifelong learning needs to connect with traditions, local communities, people in <u>their</u> places, reinforcing values systems.

Aim should be to foster **<u>passion</u>** about the potential loss of <u>their</u> cherished heritage – so as to build resilience in the event of disasters

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SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS 2030

Goal 11 : Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable

Goal 11 Targets:

11.4 strengthen efforts to protect and safeguard the world's cultural and natural heritage

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Goal 11 Targets

11.b   By 2020 substantially increase the number of cities and human settlements adopting and implementing integrated policies and plans toward **inclusion,** resource efficiency**, mitigation and adaptation to climate change,** resilience to disasters and develop and implement….. holistic disaster risk management at all levels.

Protecting culture and heritage is essential to creating and sustaining cities and human settlements which are both resilient and inclusive
- the key to societal resilience