Cultural Heritage and Indigenous Knowledge
CONCEPT NOTE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Schedule</th>
<th>Friday, 26 May 2017, 11:15 – 12:45</th>
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<td>Room and Venue</td>
<td>Arena E</td>
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<tr>
<td>Focal Points</td>
<td>Glenn Dolcemascolo (<a href="mailto:dolcemascolo@un.org">dolcemascolo@un.org</a>)</td>
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At the Third World Conference for Disaster Risk Reduction, governments and stakeholders provided a vision for the protection and safeguarding of cultural heritage and promoted its recognition as an important element of community resilience and economic development locally and nationally.

The Sendai Framework affirmed the aim of achieving a substantial reduction of disaster risk and losses including in the cultural assets of persons, businesses, communities and countries.

Moreover, implementation of the Sendai Framework called for integrated and inclusive cultural measures, drawing also on indigenous leadership and knowledge that can help to reduce hazard exposure and vulnerability to disaster, increase preparedness for response and recovery, and strengthen resilience.

Protection of cultural heritage is widely regarded as important from various perspectives, including personal, communal, spiritual and financial. Local and indigenous knowledge developed by societies with long histories of interaction with their natural surroundings is integral to the world's diversity and resilience. Consider:

a) Cultural heritage often contributes significantly to GDP, including through tourism and associated cultural industries; in Nepal, for instance, the total contribution of Travel and Tourism generates approximately 9% of GDP, 7.5% of total employment and visitor exports generate over 25% of total exports with growth continuing annually.

b) Sacred sites, museums, libraries, collections, and archives including those that can hold local, national and global artifacts, legal deposits and vital records on governance and land tenure are part of crucial infrastructure that are often destroyed in the event of a disaster.

c) Traditional knowledge systems ranging from the forestry and wise use of natural resources to building techniques and coping mechanisms help build resilience but are under increased threat of being lost due to climate change and a range of other pressures.

Many practical tools and practices have been developed over time to reduce disaster losses to cultural heritage and related assets, including sacred sites, museums, libraries, archives, and collections. Likewise, many initiatives have sought to build on indigenous and traditional local knowledge and the importance of cultural measures for building resilience to disasters are increasingly acknowledged. Nevertheless, the application of these tools and approaches remains inconsistent and means for actively engaging indigenous peoples in disaster risk reduction remain limited.
**Session Objectives**  
The working session will:
- Promote the need to mainstream cultural heritage considerations in national and local policies and strategies and the fuller engagement of local communities and indigenous peoples in disaster risk reduction.
- Identify practical measures to catalyze actions that build capacities of the concerned authorities, local communities and indigenous peoples, to reduce disaster risks for cultural assets and to draw on heritage for resilience, including by linking cultural and natural heritage.

**Discussion agenda and structure**  
- Introduction and welcoming remarks by the co-chairs
- Panel discussion
- Interactive discussion
- Wrap up and conclusion

**Expected outcomes**  
- Identification of practical measures to build political commitment and capacities of local government, indigenous leaders and heritage managers to reduce disaster risk.
- Shared vision, new commitments and partnership

**Commitment / special announcement in support of the Sendai Framework**  
- Plan to identify the scope of disaster risks in indigenous communities and in sites of cultural and natural heritage and how to address these in the context of broader disaster risk reduction plans.
- Commitment to build on the disaster risk reduction capacities of indigenous peoples, local communities, emergency responders and managers of cultural assets and natural heritage.

**Background documents**
- [Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030](#)
- [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#)
- [Paris Agreement on Climate Change](#)
- [Report of the open-ended intergovernmental expert working group on indicators and terminology relating to disaster risk reduction](#)
- [Heritage and resilience: issues and opportunities for reducing disaster risks](#)
- [UNESCO Resource Manual on Managing Disaster Risks for World Cultural Heritage](#)
- [Indigenous Knowledge for Disaster Risk Reduction- UNISDR Policy Note](#)
- [Local Knowledge for Disaster Preparedness Literature Review, Julie Dekens, 2007](#)
- [Indigenous knowledge for disaster risk reduction: An African perspective](#)