

Youth Statement

On behalf of youth around the world, we the participants of the 2012 UNESCO World Heritage Youth Programme in Kyoto, Japan, believe we have an important responsibility to conserve and protect our World Heritage passed down by our ancestors, and to pass it on to future generations.

We are a significant segment of the community and can contribute to local development and prosperity. We bridge local and global youth, tradition and modernity. The generations that came before inspire us to conserve the world's most outstanding heritage.

We have a lot of energy and passion to address issues and concerns, such as heritage management, sustainable tourism, local development and community involvement. We want to consider a new relationship between society and our World Heritage.

We ask that States Parties put in place mechanisms encouraging the local community and youth involvement in the decision making process of managing World Heritage sites and the tourism industry. They should be involved in the entire World Heritage inscription and conservation process.

We propose that more educational programmes and tools on tourism be created to promote sustainable tourism practices. We believe that best practice of responsible tourism will convey the values to conserve our natural and cultural World Heritage.

We advise to promote not only the sites but also their cultural contexts and history by involving the local community. By promoting the local living heritage we will recognize the

contribution of the local community to the value of World Heritage.

Management plans should include creating job opportunities for youth and local workers. Capacity building is vital to empower the youth to endorse those positions.

We call upon the States Parties to recognize World Heritage Volunteers as one of the ways to engage young people in the promotion and conservation of World Heritage through international voluntary work.

We ask States Parties to facilitate communication between young people and stakeholders in the promotion and conservation of World Heritage.

We, the participants of the 2012 UNESCO World Heritage Youth Programme, call on the international community to support youth initiatives and involvement in World Heritage conservation. The future of the Convention is with us, the youth!

Youth Programme, 2-5 November 2012
at Ritsumeikan University, Kyoto