



Climate Heritage  
N E T W O R K

CLIMATE HERITAGE NETWORK  
REACTION TO OUTCOMES OF COP 28

*(This report was prepared for the CHN Culture at COP28 Working Group. The Secretariat for the Working Group is provided by the Europa Nostra European Heritage Hub)*

**UNPRECEDENTED INCLUSION OF CULTURE AT COP28 BUILDS  
MOMENTUM FOR PUTTING CULTURE AT THE HEART OF CLIMATE POLICY**

COP28 has delivered the most significant outcome for culture in COP history. The members of the Climate Heritage Network (CHN) commend countries including COP28 host the United Arab Emirates for their unprecedented political commitment to engaging with cultural heritage, the arts, and creative industries.

Current mitigation and adaptation planning often overlook the power of **culture-based climate action**. The result is a global climate response that struggles to fulfil the ambitions of the Paris Agreement. Members of the CHN [came to COP28 to shift this paradigm](#).

COP28 outcomes including 25+ nations joining the new [Group of Friends of Culture-Based Climate Action](#) (GFCBCA) co-chaired by Brazil and the UAE, the first ever multilateral [High-Level Ministerial Dialogue on Culture-based Climate Action](#), and strong references to cultural heritage and traditional knowledge in the newly-adopted [Global Goal on Adaptation](#) herald a new era of collaboration on culture and climate.

Unfortunately this collaboration came too late to influence COP28's premier decision, the **Global Stocktake**. While the CHN applauds the historic decision to **call out fossil fuels** in the GST, its silence on the socio-cultural enablers of climate action leaves a "[GST Culture Gap](#)" that will undermine its ability to effectively influence future climate action if not corrected.

Notwithstanding this setback, COP28 has opened wider the doors to a new era of climate action that embraces the power of culture and ancestral wisdom to help people imagine and realise low-carbon, just, climate resilient futures.

To complete the paradigm shift, CHN members will work through the [Global Call to Put Cultural Heritage, Arts and Creative Industries at the Heart of Climate Action](#) to secure a **Joint Work on Culture and Climate Action** decision (JWD) at COP29 next year in **Baku, Azerbaijan**, launching a one-year consultation on culture and climate designed to lead to the adoption of the first-ever **Work Plan on Culture for the UNFCCC** (the UN's climate agency) in 2025 at COP30 in **Belém, Brazil**.

The CHN pledges to partner with the Group of Friends; the UNFCCC; and the Presidencies of COP28, COP29 and COP30 to achieve these goals in order to permanently anchor attention to the socio-cultural dimension in the work of the UNFCCC while also, through the JWD process, helping to immediately fill the GST Culture Gap in order to leverage culture **to achieve more ambitious Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs)** due in 2025.

#### QUOTES:

*“COP28 has proved a landmark in the global advocacy efforts to integrate culture in the climate change agenda. With the launch of the Group of Friends of Culture-Based Climate Action, we see political momentum to address the threat that climate change poses to culture and heritage, and to harness culture’s power for a faster, fairer, transition to a low carbon, just climate resilient future. Now we must build on that momentum to secure a **joint work decision on culture** at COP29, leading to the adoption at COP30 in Brazil of a game-changing UNFCCC work plan on culture,”* said HRH Princess Dana Firas of Jordan, Co-Chair, Culture at COP28 Working Group, UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador

*“Logic tells us that the answers to human-caused climate change will be found in human creativity inspired by ancestral wisdom and our shared humanity. The strong recognition of these truths in the Global Goal on Adaptation points the way forward. Unfortunately, these lessons did not find their way into the Global Stocktake mitigation chapter. We will work with the Group of Friends of Culture-Based Climate Action to build on COP28’s successes, fill its gaps, and put culture at the core of climate action in order to give the new NDCs expected at COP30 the ‘soul’ needed for transformative impact,”* said Architect Moe Moe Lwin of Myanmar, Co-Chair, Culture at COP28 Working Group, The Siam Society/Southeast Asian Cultural Heritage Alliance

## **COP28 DECISIONS PRODUCE HIGHS AND LOWS FOR CULTURE AND HERITAGE ADVOCATES**

### **DETAILED REPORT ON COP DECISIONS**

The CHN’s [2022-24 Action Plan](#) sets out an ambitious goal — not just to include culture in climate policy but to “*transform climate policy*” by using culture and heritage to embed social imaginaries of low-carbon, just and fair, climate resilient living, while encouraging attention to climate justice, both to improve the efficacy of climate planning and action, and to support the work of local Cultural Voices.

Falling at the half-way point of the Action Plan’s term, COP28 provides an important moment to reflect on progress made towards that Goal and the work left to be done on the road to

COP29 (now schedule for **11-22 November in Baku Azerbaijan**) and COP30 (**10-21 November 2025 in Belém, Brazil**).

## **COP28 UAE Consensus Outcomes**

The delegates to COP28 agreed to refer to a package of key COP decisions as the “UAE Consensus.” This includes the Global Stocktake, the Global Goal on Adaptation (GGA), the plan to operationalize Loss and Damage; and a new decision to institutionalise the role of the Youth Climate Champion. This report summarises for CHN members some of the key culture and heritage outcomes, dimensions and next-steps regarding the UAE Consensus decisions.

### ***Global Stocktake (GST)***

**Global Stocktake:** Relevant paragraphs: The critical Mitigation chapter of the GST contains no references to socio-cultural enablers, culture, heritage, ancestral wisdom, traditional knowledge, values, or cosmovisions. Illustrative of this is GST Paragraph 8 which emphasises “that finance, capacity-building and technology transfer are critical enablers of climate action,” but excludes the socio-cultural enabler.

**Summary:** *The COP28 GST was meant to gauge progress against Paris goals and set the direction for future climate action. The CHN applauds the historic decision to call for transitioning away from fossil fuels in the GST. But if fossil fuels are a root cause of the climate crisis, those roots grow in the soil of particular socio-cultural systems. By ignoring these systems and their counterpoints, and erasing reference to the socio-cultural enablers of climate action, the GST perpetuates rather than corrects a failing of past climate policy. The resulting GST Culture Gap will severely undermine the effectiveness of the GST as a guide to more ambitious NDCs. This makes a new UNFCCC work plan on culture all the more urgent.*

### **CHN decries “Culture Gap” in COP28 Global Stocktake Outcomes**

The Global Stocktake (GST) is a five-yearly process established under the Paris Agreement, designed to check progress against the Paris goals and inform the next round of national climate pledges due in 2025, known as nationally-determined contributions (NDCs). In this way, the GST aims to set the direction for future work on climate action.

From the [first days after the gavel fell on COP27](#) to the [last days of COP28](#), CHN members raised the alarm that the design of the GST threatened that its end product would miss the crucial idea that shortfalls in achieving both the mitigation and the adaptation goals of the Paris

Agreement are attributable, in part, to the fact that current climate policy tends to exclude systemic, uncertain, or contested aspects—often those relating to cultural, historical, and ethical matters. Science confirms that attention to these dimensions alongside technological and financial approaches are needed to support transformative change.

To no one's surprise, the [GST synthesis report](#) released by the UNFCCC in September found that the world is not on track to meet the long-term goals of the Paris Agreement. To strengthen the global response, it made the cursory but crucial observation that governments need to support “systems transformations;” “whole-of-society approaches;” “and immediately strengthen “social” enabling conditions while “finding creative ways to overcome “social and capacity barriers.”

CHN members came to COP28 to build on the Technical Report's reference to social enabling conditions. Indigenous Peoples, local communities, and countless other advocates brought science including ancestral wisdom, knowledge, creativity, and case studies to COP28 to back up this request. Unfortunately, the final GST went in the opposite direction, deleting references to “social enablers” altogether and reducing the realms of culture, creativity, and worldviews to the narrow confines of “capacity building.”

The omission of the socio-cultural from the GST will severely undermine its effectiveness and the success of climate action based on its approach. CHN members will redouble their efforts to get culture-based climate action, ancestral wisdom, values and ethics into countries' upcoming NDCs and local and national climate action and policy, but without an anchor in the GST, this will be harder than it should be.

All of this underscores the urgent need for the adoption of a **Joint Work on Culture and Climate Action (JWD)** decision at COP29. The JWD seeks to create a legal, political and policy anchor in the UNFCCC for the socio-cultural dimension, helping to fill the current gap. Securing the JWD will thus be a top goal of the CHN at COP29, working via the [Global Call to Put Cultural Heritage, Arts and Creative Industries at the Heart of Climate Action](#) and alongside the newly launched national government advocacy block, the [Group of Friends of Culture-Based Climate Action](#).

## **CHN supports focus on culture-based climate action in the new *Roadmap to Mission 1.5°C* to help correct omission from GST**

The CHN welcomes GST Paragraph 191 which launches the “**Roadmap to Mission 1.5**” joint initiative of the COP28 (UAE), COP29 (Azerbaijan) and COP30 (Brazil) presidencies. The Initiative seeks to “*significantly enhance international cooperation ... to stimulate ambition in the next round of nationally determined contributions, with a view to enhancing action and implementation over this critical decade and keeping 1.5 °C within reach.*”

At COP28, 25+ nations pledged to join the **Group of Friends of Culture-Based Climate Action at the UNFCCC** (GFCBCA) in order to strengthen “*political momentum*” for culture and heritage-based climate action and create a path to future action for integrating culture into climate action, noting “*increased attention to the socio-cultural dimension of climate response as a recognised enabling condition for scaling-up systemic transitions that would limit global warming temperature increases while achieving sustainable development.*”

The omission of any reference to socio-cultural enablers, culture or heritage in the GST will severely undermine its effectiveness as a guide to more ambitious NDCs. Filling this gap, the CHN hopes, will ultimately be addressed by a new UNFCCC work plan on culture adopted in 2025 at COP30 following a joint work consultation kicked off at COP29. However, given the urgency of the climate crisis and the timings of new NDCs (which are to be **delivered** at COP30), action on the GST Culture Gap is required today.

The CHN considers that the “Roadmap to Mission 1.5” initiative could partner with the GFCBCA and non-Party actors to use the Initiative to start to fill the GST Culture Gap in order to better guide the preparation of new NDCs in the leadup to COP30.

## **CHN hails the GST’s call to transition away from fossil fuels but failure to acknowledge the socio-cultural systems that sustain the fossil fuel economy undermine its effectiveness**

Thirty years after the 1992 Rio Summit, the COP has finally named fossil fuels as a root cause of climate change. The GST’s call for parties to contribute to “*transitioning away from fossil fuels in energy systems, in a just, orderly and equitable manner, accelerating action in this critical decade,*” sends a powerful signal that the fossil fuel era is ending (GST Paragraph 28).

But if fossil fuels are a root cause of the climate crisis, those roots grow in the soil of particular socio-cultural systems. As the [CHN’s 2022-24 Action Plan states](#):

Historical and socio-economic forces like colonialism and globalism have spread ‘petrocultures’ and ‘carbonscapes’ across the earth. The heritage of the Anthropocene. The ideologies of extraction and exploitation of both people and nature have resulted in enduring inequity and injustice with consequences for lives and livelihoods both past and present. Culture-based approaches offer entry points to these critical questions, which must be addressed to avoid further conflict and damage.

On the other hand, traditional knowledge, heritage buildings, and landscapes that pre-date (or work independently of) the fossil fuel era can point the way to post-carbon living. The worldviews held by Indigenous Peoples and local communities never co-opted by modern take-make-waste approaches offer counterpoints to unsustainable paradigms of ‘progress.’ Artistic, creative, and imaginative tools support transformative

reinterpretation of today's carbonscapes and their accompanying mindsets. A new culture for the Novacene.

*By failing to discuss the socio-cultural enablers of climate action, the GST ignores the ultimate root causes of the climate crisis and, crucially, their counterpoints. This GST socio-cultural gap is at odds with the science of 1.5 pathways and undermines the effectiveness of the GST's historic call to transition away from fossil fuels – especially when coupled with the GST's numerous loopholes and implied reliance on unproven & expensive technologies.*

*CHN members are already making bold moves to address both those elements of culture that can help solve the climate crisis and those that have helped cause it. The CHN will work to fill the GST Culture Gap and ensure that the fossil fuel transition aligns with science and is fair, funded and fast.*

## **Global Goal on Adaptation Framework (GGA)**

**Global Goal on Adaptation:** Relevant paragraphs include Para 9 (Establishing a 2030 target on protecting cultural heritage from climate impacts); Para 14 (Adaptation should be guided by traditional knowledge, Indigenous Peoples' knowledge, local knowledge systems); Para 22 (Equitable engagement with Indigenous Peoples and local communities and application of traditional knowledge, the knowledge, wisdom and values of Indigenous Peoples, and local knowledge systems in implementing the framework)

**Summary:** *One of the most critical decisions to come out of COP28 was the adoption of the new Framework for the Global Goal on Adaptation, which is meant to guide nations in their efforts to protect their people and ecosystems from climate change. The inclusion of the protection of cultural heritage as one of seven GGA thematic targets as well as the valorisation of traditional knowledge marks the GGA as a landmark accomplishment. Weak provisions in the GGA on adaptation finance and means of implementation, however, leave much work to be done to capitalise on this policy victory, especially for vulnerable populations and developing countries.*

## **CHN hails groundbreaking focus on cultural heritage, traditional knowledge in the new Global Goal on Adaptation Framework**

COP28 has delivered what is arguably the most significant policy victory for culture in COP history: the express inclusion of cultural heritage as one of seven themes in the new Global Goal on Adaptation, alongside strong language on the need for adaptation to be guided by the application of traditional knowledge, the knowledge, wisdom and values of Indigenous Peoples, and local knowledge systems.

The decision last year to include “tangible cultural heritage” as a theme in the Glasgow-Sharm el-Sheikh work programme designed to elaborate a new global goal on adaptation framework

was one of the [most important advances at COP27](#). That same decision also established traditional knowledge, knowledge of indigenous peoples and local knowledge systems as a cross-cutting consideration. Going into COP28, however, the question loomed whether and how those references would be retained in the final framework to be adopted in Dubai. The CHN is thrilled to report that these references were not only retained but enhanced.

One of the political battles at COP28 centred on which “thematic” targets would be included in the GGA and how actionable and measurable those targets would be. The inclusion of cultural heritage as one of only seven thematic targets approved in the final GGA Framework fulfils the promise of COP27 and sends a critical signal about the cultural dimensions of reliance.

Paragraph 9(g) of the GGA reads as follows:

Urges Parties and invites non-Party stakeholders to pursue the objectives outlined in paragraph 8 above and to increase ambition and enhance adaptation action and support, in order to accelerate swift action at scale and at all levels, from local to global, in alignment with other global frameworks, towards the achievement of, inter alia, the following targets by 2030, and progressively beyond ... :

(g) Protecting cultural heritage from the impacts of climate-related risks by developing adaptive strategies for preserving cultural practices and heritage sites and by designing climate-resilient infrastructure, guided by traditional knowledge, Indigenous Peoples’ knowledge and local knowledge systems;

While not perfect, the replacement of the COP27 decision’s “tangible cultural heritage” phrasing with the final GGA’s “cultural practices and heritage sites” language provides a broad basis for engagement by all culture advocates. The linkage of protecting cultural heritage to “climate-resilient infrastructure” provides a solid rooting for these efforts in adaptation finance and broader local, regional and national adaptation planning.

Overall, GGA Paragraph 9(g) provides a powerful tool for CHN members to press national (as well as local and regional) governments to accelerate work on adaptation planning for cultural heritage, as well as a strong basis in climate policy for the resourcing of climate adaptation work by cultural heritage advocates, institutions, researchers, NGOs, and public bodies.

While Paragraph 9(g) focuses on protecting cultural heritage, two more critical GGA provisions focus on the role of cultural heritage in broader societal adaptation.

In Paragraph 14, the COP:

Emphasizes that adaptation action should be continuous, iterative and progressive and be based on and guided by the best available science, including through use of science-based indicators, metrics and targets, as appropriate, traditional knowledge, Indigenous Peoples’ knowledge, local knowledge systems, ecosystem-based adaptation, nature-based solutions, locally led and community-based adaptation, disaster risk

reduction, intersectional approaches, private sector engagement, maladaptation avoidance, recognition of adaptation co-benefits and sustainable development;

Reference here to maladaptation, which especially affects marginalised and vulnerable groups adversely, provides an important link to the break-through conclusion from IPCC Working Group II its 2022 report "[Climate Change 2022: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability](#)" that *"inclusive planning initiatives informed by cultural values, Indigenous knowledge, local knowledge, and scientific knowledge can help prevent maladaptation."*

Equally importantly, GGA Paragraph 22

Recognizes the leadership of Indigenous Peoples and local communities as stewards of nature and encourages the ethical and equitable engagement with Indigenous Peoples and local communities and application of traditional knowledge, the knowledge, wisdom and values of Indigenous Peoples, and local knowledge systems in implementing the framework for the global goal on adaptation;

The crucial reference to "ethical and equitable engagement" in the GGA recalls the [CHN 2022-24 Action Plan](#) which include a goal of *"strengthen frameworks in which cultural actors and operators work as accomplices with Indigenous Peoples and local communities and build common cause with intersectional interests such as racial and gender equality, linking culture to climate justice in ways that bolster climate action and climate resilient sustainable development."*

## **The CHN stands ready to cooperate in the elaboration of the Global Goal on Adaptation Framework adopted at COP28**

The adoption of the GGA Framework represents an important step forward in parity for work on adaptation and in collective efforts to build resilience. It is a testament to the diplomatic efforts of the COP28 President Sultan Ahmed Al Jaber. The Framework breaks new ground for the UNFCCC by embedding cultural heritage across efforts to set overarching objective, qualitative, and time-bound dimensional and thematic adaptation targets.

Beyond these achievements, this first iteration of the GGA Framework is relatively weak on means of implementation and finance. Accordingly, much work remains to be done to realise its full potential, especially for vulnerable populations and developing countries. CHN members stand ready to take these matters forward.

Groundbreaking work on this topic has already been done by the [Race to Resilience: Culture](#), an official partner of the Race to Resilience campaign, which sits under COP28 Presidency High Level Champion, H.E. Razan al Mubarak. RTR:Culture emphasises the contribution of culture to resilience including through diverse knowledge and support systems, local self-sufficiency and inter-cultural understanding, equity, and adaptive learning. The need to resource and operationalise this campaign is thus greater than ever.

Cultural Voices will need to engage with the GGA' new **two-year work programme on indicators** which looks at measuring progress on the GGA's thematic targets (including on cultural heritage), as well as GGA Paragraph 10 on the iterative adaptation cycle (covering vulnerability and risk assessment; planning; implementation; and monitoring, evaluation and learning). COP28 set a deadline of 8 by March 2024 for the submission of views on these matters. (See GGA paragraphs 39-41).

## COP28 Loss and Damage Fund

[Decision on the operationalization of the new funding arrangements, including the fund, for responding to loss and damage](#): Relevant paragraphs include Paras 3, 8 and 9 which confirm that the Fund will provide support for responding to non-economic loss and damage.

**Summary:** While [COP27 made history](#) by reaching an agreement to set up a Loss and Damage Fund, the task of operationalizing it was left to COP28. The CHN is proud to report that the historic decision reached at COP28 setting up the Fund makes clear that attention to Non-economic Loss (which includes loss and damage to culture and heritage) will be a core component of its work. There is now a critical need for Cultural Voices to join other advocates for Non-Economic Loss in engaging with the further elaboration of the Fund and its related funding arrangements.

## CHN welcomes historic Loss and Damage Fund with a focus on “Non-Economic Loss”

In an unprecedented and highly symbolic move, the opening plenary of COP 28 on 30 November saw the historic adoption of the decision on setting up a new loss and damage fund.

The term “loss and damage” broadly refers to harm associated with the adverse effects of climate change, particularly where adaptation is no longer an option. Many scenarios now suggest that global warming will pass the 1.5°C threshold within the next 10 years, raising the dark prospect of an “overshoot” period. The IPCC has said that during overshoot, “risks to human systems will increase, including those to ... cultural and spiritual values.” (WGII AR6 SPM.B.6.1 at SPM-20). Some impacts are essentially irreversible, even if temperatures decline again later – which they may not.

As a result, cultural voices have [focused strongly on loss and damage](#), elevating it as an [independent pillar of climate action alongside mitigation and adaptation](#). International policy distinguishes between economic and non-economic loss. **Non-economic losses and damages** (“NELs”) [as defined by the UN](#) includes losses of cultural heritage, indigenous/local knowledge, biodiversity and ecosystem services.

The close linkage between cultural heritage and loss and damage was signalled last year at COP27 with the first ever reference to “cultural heritage” in a COP cover decision (preceded by

a reference to “culture” in the COP26 cover decision) coming in the context of loss and damage. The [Sharm el-Sheikh Implementation Plan](#) noted “with grave concern” the

growing gravity, scope and frequency in all regions of loss and damage associated with the adverse effects of climate change, resulting in devastating economic and non-economic losses, **including forced displacement and impacts on cultural heritage, human mobility and the lives and livelihoods of local communities**, and underlines the importance of an adequate and effective response to loss and damage. (emphasis added)

Importantly, the COP28 decision operationalizing the new loss and damage fund makes clear that attention to Non-economic Loss will be a core component of the fund’s work. For example, its governing provisions state that

The Fund will provide support for responding to economic and non-economic loss and damage associated with the adverse effects of climate change. This support may include funding that is complementary to humanitarian actions taken immediately after an extreme weather event; funding for intermediate or long-term recovery, reconstruction or rehabilitation; and funding for actions that address slow onset events.

The COP28 decision specifies (not without controversy) that the World Bank will be the initial host of the Fund. It directs the Bank to enable direct access to resources by all developing countries, including via subnational, national, and regional entities, as well as small grants funding for communities. According to the decision, in providing funding for responding to loss and damage, the Fund should also promote “*environmental, social, economic and development co-benefits; and take a culturally sensitive and gender-responsive approach.*”

The operationalization of the Loss and Damage Fund was accompanied by funding commitments from France, Italy, Germany, UAE, the EU, Japan, and others. However, [as Carbon Brief reported](#),

the pledges made are, at best, an initial down payment. Loss and damage pledges made at COP28 totalled 770.6 million USD of which 115.3 million USD are identified for funding arrangements, not the Loss and Damage Fund itself. These pledges make up only 0.2% of the loss and damage needs of developing countries which are more than 400 billion USD a year.

The [other major decision on loss and damage](#) to emerge from COP28 concerned the hosting of the secretariat for the [Santiago network for averting, minimizing and addressing loss and damage associated with the adverse effects of climate change](#), which was agreed to in 2019 as a way to link countries with the technical know-how to deal with loss and damage. In selecting the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) as co-host, the COP noted UNDRR’s work to “*substantially reduce the risk and losses in ... social, cultural and environmental assets.*” The selection of UNDRR should facilitate inclusion of technical assistance on culture and heritage in the Santiago Network, building on UNDRR’s work to implement culture-related provisions of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030.

## As COP28 Votes to Expand Youth Engagement in Future COPs; Youth Cultural Voices Take Centre Stage

### [Presidency Youth Climate Champion Decision](#)

**Summary:** *Acting on climate is acting on intergenerational equity. The decision taken at COP28 to enhance the meaningful participation and representation of youth in future COPs by institutionalising the role of the Presidency Youth Climate Champion parallels work done at COP28 and around the world to unlock the power of youth-led care for culture as a driver of transformational climate action.*

Parties at COP28 agreed to institutionalise the role of the Presidency Youth Climate Champion (YCC) within the UNFCCC process, to “enhance the meaningful participation and representation of youth in future COPs.”

This action by COP Parties was matched by robust engagement by young cultural voices in and around COP28. In the spirit of the Asia-Pacific COP, with support from the **Siam Society/Southeast Asian Heritage Alliance** that included a crowdfunding campaign and sourcing “blue zone” passes across the CHN network, five young cultural voices from ASEAN countries Thailand, Vietnam, Philippines, and Laos were able to attend COP28 in person. **These youth called for attention to the value of cultural heritage and ancestral wisdom as a basis for climate change action.**

SEACHA delegates showed how Southeast Asia has enormous traditional knowledge and ways of living in harmony with nature that need to be incorporated into COP climate change agendas. And, most importantly, these young people clearly recognize the **importance of climate justice** by highlighting indigenous communities and marginalised groups and their challenges, language barriers and how climate change policy should focus on it.

Youth were also engaged in the runup to COP28, including extensive youth leadership in the event [Cultural Wisdom for Climate Action: The Southeast Asian Contribution](#) organised by SEACHA/Siam Society in January, 2023. Youth leadership came from Myanmar, Malaysia, Thailand, Vietnam, Philippines, Indonesia, Laos and Singapore. Other CHN members also stepped up, including the **National Trust for the Cayman Islands** which helped bring half a dozen young Caymanians to listen, learn and speak up at the COP28.

COP28 has raised the bar on youth-led engagement in climate policy. CHN members are committed to supporting this needed improvement and working to unlock the power of youth-led care for culture as a driver of climate action.

## Other Key COP28 Outcomes

### CHN supports COP28 Coalition for High Ambition Multilevel Partnership (CHAMP) for Climate Action

At COP28, [more than 70 countries pledged to join the new Coalition for High Ambition Multilevel Partnership \(CHAMP\)](#) for Climate Action in order to enhance cooperation with their local, regional and other subnational governments - including cities, towns, states and regions.

Local and regional governments (LRGs), in partnership with civil society, are uniquely positioned to help drive culture-based climate action. Most of the world's population now lives in cities, putting LRGs on the front lines of delivering adaptation and mitigation solutions. Many LRGs are cultural actors themselves, operating and funding schools, the arts, libraries, museums, and heritage sites, and helping to lead on the promotion of [cultural rights as fundamental human rights for climate action](#).

One of culture's [2022 COP success stories](#) was the launch by the COP27 Presidency of the [Sustainable Urban Resilience for the Next Generation](#) (SURGe) Initiative. The Initiative, which focuses on climate action in rapidly developing cities, recognises that culture and heritage are both an asset to be protected from climate impacts and a resource to strengthen communities' transformative change.

The CHN is proud to support CHAMP to bolster multilevel action; activate SURGE to help deliver customised, culture-positive approaches to urban climate action; and produce more ambitious and inclusive NDCs with countries working with their subnational governments including arts, culture and heritage public bodies.

### CHN Welcomes Strengthened Climate and Nature Synergies at COP28

Tackling the climate crisis requires tackling the biodiversity crisis – and responses to both are improved by taking account of their common socio-economic root causes and through integrated nature-culture solutions.

COP28 showed progress in this direction with a [Joint Statement on Climate, Nature and People](#) and the launch of relevant initiatives to support joined-up action. The Statement emphasises common objectives of the UN Convention on Biodiversity (CBD)'s **Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF)** and the UNFCCC's Paris Agreement, including ensuring the full, equitable participation of indigenous peoples and local communities "*respecting rights, enhancing land tenure security, and utilizing traditional knowledge.*"

Innovative work at the CBD on cultural heritage, including the CBD's **Article 8(j) work plans** on "Indigenous Peoples and local communities" and on "Nature and Culture" provide valuable reference points for the integration of culture into the work of the UNFCCC and for the design of the proposed COP29 Joint Work on Culture and Climate Action decision. These linkages were explored by speakers including **Dr Lucy Mulenkei**, Co-Chair, International Indigenous Forum on Biodiversity, at a [COP28 side event](#) organised by CHN members and partners. Read more about [culture and heritage in the work of the CBD](#).

## Meet Culture's Group of Friends and Learn More About its Collaboration With the CHN

The launch of the Group of Friends of Culture-Based Climate Action at the UNFCCC (GFCBCA) co-chaired by Brazil and the UAE along with the convening of the first ever multilateral COP High-Level Ministerial Dialogue on Culture-based Climate Action and the adoption of the Emirates Declaration on Cultural-based Climate Action will forever mark COP28 as a milestone in the history of the climate response.

The Climate Heritage Network hails the political commitment of the visionary UNFCCC Member States that supported these outcomes and urges other nations to join the GFCBCA. Working through the global call campaign, the CHN pledges close collaboration with the GFCBCA to secure a **Joint Work on Culture and Climate Action** at COP29 as a critical positive step towards filling the **Global Stocktake Culture Gap**; leveraging culture-based climate action for **more ambitious NDCs**; and, ultimately, firmly anchoring cultural heritage, arts, and creative industries in the UNFCCC and its subsidiary processes through the adoption at COP30 in Brazil of the first-ever **UNFCCC Work Plan on Culture**.

## CHN commends the leadership of the UAE on the inclusion of cultural voices in the COP28 Programme

The CHN recognizes and commends the leadership of the UAE Minister of Culture, **H.E. Salem bin Khalid Al Qassimi**, and **the entire UAE Ministry of Culture team**, supported by the COP Presidency team, for their work to include and make visible in the COP programme non-Party cultural voices and their contributions to climate action and ambition.

The kind invitation to COP28 [issued at COP27 in 2022](#) to cultural voices by then UAE culture minister H.E. Noura Al Kaabi was more than fulfilled by Minister Al Qassimi, growing into a warm collaboration between the UAE Ministry of Culture team and the CHN's **Culture at COP28 Working Group** under the leadership of HRH Princess **Dana Firas of Jordan** and Arch. **Moe Moe Lwin of Myanmar**. This collaboration was supported and facilitated by the **ALIPH**

**Foundation** (International Alliance for the Protection of Heritage in Conflict Areas) along with **Europa Nostra/European Heritage Hub**, which hosted the Working Group's secretariat.

The announcement that Brazil would Co-Chair the new Group of Friends of Culture-based Climate Action and the Ministerial alongside Minister Al Qassimi quickly expanded this collaboration to include colleagues from Brazil's Ministry of Culture under the leadership of **H.E. Margareth Menezes**, Minister of Culture of Brazil.

This culminated in the prominent opportunity given to Princess Dana in her capacity as CHN Special Envoy to make opening remarks to the Ministerial. In her comments, Princess Dana emphasised the importance of the voices of non-Party stakeholders, with many leaders of cultural organisations from around the world in the room as guests of the Ministerial Co-Chairs helping to underscore the point. The UAE Ministry of Culture also collaborated with multiple CHN member organisations and partners on programming in both the COP28 blue and green zones including the event “[Ancestral Wisdom Driving Low Carbon Climate Resilient Futures: Asia-Pacific and Global Lessons](#).”

The level of inclusion offered by the UAE working with Brazil for diverse cultural voices at COP28 has set the bar for future COP proceedings. The CHN is committed to fulfilling the promise of this collaboration.

## **CHN supports first-ever High-Level Ministerial on Culture-Based Climate Action and urges UNFCCC to make this meeting a mandated Ministerial within the COP agenda**

The first event-ever, multilateral meeting of ministers on culture-based climate action at a COP was held at COP28 on 8 December. The event convened nearly 40 ministers, political leaders, and intergovernmental organisations, as well as numerous cultural leaders and non-government stakeholders. Participation of diverse ministers from across the globe underscored the enormous value that co-creation and cooperation can bring in support of culture-based climate action, particularly through North-South and South-South knowledge exchange. Watch the COP28 Ministerial [here](#).

This Dubai event built on the bi-lateral [High Level Ministerial Dialogue on Cultural Heritage-Based Climate Solutions](#) convened by Egypt and Jordan at COP27.

The COP28 Ministerial resulted in the unanimous adoption of the [Emirates Declaration on Culture-Based Climate Action](#). In this visionary Declaration, Ministers declared their intention to work collaboratively and expeditiously to:

- Scale-up culture and heritage-based strategies for adaptation and mitigation;

- Give increased attention to the cultural dimensions of the causes of anthropogenic climate change and to reducing the carbon footprint of the cultural sector, including cultural tourism;
- Increase efforts to support vulnerable people by valuing diverse knowledge systems and cultural expressions; focusing on the needs of women, children and youth, Indigenous Peoples, traditional knowledge holders, local communities and persons with disabilities, among others;
- Support a just transition for artists, creatives, indigenous knowledge holders, and culture and heritage workers and those working in cultural tourism;
- Maximize co-benefits from culture and heritage in adaptation and mitigation activities in sectors like the built and natural environment, agriculture, cities, and energy.

The Ministerial was chaired by the Ministers of Culture of the UAE and Brazil: **H.E. Sheikh Salem bin Khalid Al Qassimi** and **H.E. Margareth Menezes**, with CHN Special Envoy **HRH Princess Dana Firas** making opening remarks.

It was also attended by representatives of leading cultural organisations (mentioned in alphabetical order), all of whom are founding signatories of the Global Call to Action and most of whom are active members of the Climate Heritage Network: **ALIPH Foundation (International Alliance for the Protection of Heritage in Conflict Areas)**, **Brazil Climate Action Hub**, **British Council**, **Europa Nostra/European Heritage Hub**, **International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM)**, **International Council of Museums, (ICOM)**, **International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS)**, **International Peace Institute**, **Julie's Bicycle**, **People's Palace Projects**, **Petra National Trust**, **Southeast Asian Cultural Heritage Alliance (SEACHA)/Siam Society**, and the **World Monuments Fund**.

The CHN encourages the UNFCCC to make the meeting of Ministers on culture-based climate action a mandated meeting at every COP, so that these productive exchanges continue to build on each other in the coming years.

## **CHN strongly supports new Group of Friends of Culture-Based Climate Action**

In a breakthrough moment in COP history, approximately 30 countries have pledged to join the new **Group of Friends of Culture-Based Climate Action at the UNFCCC (GFCBCA)**. The GFCBCA was launched on 8 December at the first ever multilateral ministerial on culture-based climate action to be held at a COP. The GFCBCA is an international coalition of UNFCCC Member States aimed at building political momentum for the recognition of culture as a uniquely powerful force and positive resource for a more effective climate change policy.

The initial Co-Chairs of the GFCBCA will be **H.E. Sheikh Salem bin Khalid Al Qassimi, Minister of Culture of the UAE** and **Brazil's culture minister, H.E. Margareth Menezes**. Unofficial data

collected by the CHN indicate that founding members of the GFCBCA include, in addition to Brazil and the UAE: **Bahrain, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Democratic Republic of Congo, Egypt, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Iraq, Italy, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Mali, Malta, Pakistan, Serbia, Senegal, Seychelles, Spain, Syria and Uganda.** (Please note, this is the unofficial list and we invite additions and corrections).

The Group of Friends is a much needed platform for centring culture-based climate action – a task that has become more urgent by the failure of the COP28 Global Stocktake to address the cultural, historical, and ethical origins of anthropogenic climate change, and the socio-cultural enablers and social barriers to climate action.

According to [a statement issued by the Co-Chairs](#), the GFCBA will:

- Promote international consensus on the urgency of including culture in climate change policy for unprecedented inclusivity in global climate action.
- Confront the threat climate change poses to cultural sites, traditional practices, and indigenous knowledge systems.
- Advocate for culture-based solutions to the climate crisis at COP28 and provide a voice in climate discussions for behaviour change.

The launch of the Group of Friends under the co-chairmanship of the UAE and Brazil, hosts of COP28 and COP30 respectively, is a key step towards realising the ambitions of artists, culture and heritage advocates, professionals and volunteers, scientists, and other cultural voices from across the world who have united around the [Global Call to Put Cultural Heritage, Arts and Creative Sectors at the Heart of Climate Action](#), which asks the UN's climate agency (the UNFCCC) to include cultural heritage, the arts and creative sectors in climate policy.

In a [statement issued in advance of the launch of the GFCBCA](#), leaders of the Global Call said:

The next important step is to connect all the dots on culture-based climate action through the tabling and adoption of the Joint Work Decision at COP29 leading to a new UNFCCC workplan on culture at COP30.

The CHN strongly supports the basis for the Group of Friend's approach and firmly believes that by unlocking the power of culture from arts to heritage to help people imagine and realise low carbon, just, climate resilient futures, national governments can achieve more ambitious Nationally Determined Contributions by 2025. Working through the [Global Call](#) campaign, the CHN will work actively **to support the GFCBCA on the road from Dubai to Baku (COP29) to Belém (COP30)** to deliver on these objectives within the framework of a UNFCCC Joint Work on Culture and Climate decision.

## CHN Mobilises Global Call Campaign to Anchor Cultural Heritage, Arts and Creative Industries in Climate Policy

A decade of campaigning for the arts, heritage and creative industries to be at the heart of climate action has led to breakthrough accomplishments at COP28, including the launch of the new [Group of Friends of Culture-Based Climate Action at the UNFCCC](#) co-chaired by Brazil and the UAE.

The Climate Heritage Network is proud to have organised the advocacy campaign that helped achieve these accomplishments: the [Global Call to Put Cultural Heritage, Arts and Creative Sectors at the Heart of Climate Action](#) which asks the UN's climate agency (the UNFCCC) to include culture in climate policy. Launched only in September under the direction of campaign lead **Julie's Bicycle**, Global Call signatories swelled to over 1,500 organisations and leaders in a matter of weeks.

The next months will be crucial to achieving the Global Call's immediate aim. Preview plans to secure the adoption of a **Joint Work on Culture and Climate Action** decision at COP29, leading to adoption at COP30 in Brazil of the first-ever UNFCCC Work Plan on Culture.

## Preview the Global Call Strategy for 2024-25 to Build on COP28 and Put Culture at the Heart of Climate Action and Policy

The Global Call offers a practical, concrete, and progressive path to achieving its goal. The current version of this plan foresees:

- **COP28** (December 2023): Support the **launch of a new Group of Friends of Culture-Based Climate Action at the UNFCCC**, an international coalition of UNFCCC Member States aimed at building political momentum for culture-based climate action.
- **2024**: Work with the GFCBCA and other allies to **build the case** for the tabling by the COP of a Joint Work on Culture and Climate Action decision (JWD),
- **COP29: Adoption of the JWD** by COP29 (scheduled for 11-22 November 2024 in Baku Azerbaijan).
- **2025: One-year UNFCCC consultation on culture and climate action** launched by the JWD, engaging both national governments and non-State parties, leading to the drafting of a UNFCCC Work Plan on Culture while working in real time to leverage culture-based climate action to achieve **more ambitious NDCs** then under preparation by most nations.
- **COP30**: Adoption of a historic, first-ever **UNFCCC Work Plan on Culture** by COP30 (scheduled for 10-21 November 2025 in Belém, Brazil); submission by nations of **new NDCs bolstered by culture-based climate action** strategies (a first for many nations!).

The Global Call is notable not only for the clarity of its strategic aims but for the breadth of the coalition it has mobilised. The campaign is directed at anyone who recognises that addressing

the cultural dimensions of the climate crisis are critical to getting the world back on track to meeting Paris Agreement targets. Signatories are drawn from every continent and the full breadth of culture, arts, entertainment and creative industries, as well as environment and climate scientists, activists and sectoral leaders. 2024 will witness significant efforts to further diversity, decentralise, and enhance this coalition ahead of COP29 and COP30.

[Sign on to the Global Call today](#)