



WORLD MONUMENTS FUND JOINS CLIMATE HERITAGE NETWORK

March 9, 2021, New York, NY – World Monuments Fund (WMF) is proud to announce its membership with the Climate Heritage Network (CHN), a group of arts, cultural, and heritage organizations dedicated to aiding communities in tackling climate change and achieving the ambitions of the 2015 Paris Agreement. Building on this commitment, WMF will use its global platform to drive climate action and establish best practices that unleash the potential of heritage to help communities mitigate, adapt, and strengthen resilience against the effects of a warming planet. An expanded portfolio of projects that respond to the urgency of the climate crisis and other global challenges—including imbalanced tourism and the need to amplify underrepresented voices and cultural narratives—will be defined as part of the 2022 World Monuments Watch. Nominations are now open through May 1, 2021. [wmf.org/nominate](https://www.wmf.org/nominate)

“We are honored to join this remarkable coalition of organizations across the cultural spectrum to advance the role of heritage as an agent for change.” said Bénédicte de Montlaur, President and CEO of WMF. “Only by joining together in this global effort can we respond in equal measure to the enormity of this crisis, which will continue to have staggering impacts on communities and the places they love.”

Sea level rise and coastal flooding, drought and extreme heat, and more intense and frequent weather events will not spare the world’s cultural heritage. The damage and disappearance of universally beloved sites is a reality that should open eyes to what’s at stake for communities around the globe. Through its work, WMF will advocate for climate progress and develop locally specific adaptation strategies to safeguard cultural sites. Where the loss of heritage is inevitable, WMF will explore ways of recording and commemorating what once existed.

At the same time, investigation into how the historic built environment can support decarbonization will reveal important lessons to be shared with communities around the world. Globally, building operations account for 28% of energy-related carbon emissions with an additional 11% arising from material production and the construction process. These need to be drastically reduced to achieve the Paris Agreement’s goal of limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius, compared to pre-industrial levels. Heritage interventions such as the reuse and retrofit of buildings can be a solution for decreasing energy usage and avoiding emissions caused by new construction. WMF will also continue to explore the potential for reviving historic building practices that demonstrate how humans have sustainably inhabited the environment throughout history.

Over the years, WMF has engaged with the effects of climate change at a range of cultural heritage sites, responding with local solutions to this global challenge. Recent projects have addressed sea level rise at historic sites in Kilwa, Tanzania and the coral stone mosques of the Maldives; responded to the water crisis in India by reviving the historic water systems of the Deccan Plateau; and reinvigorated the teak farmhouse vernacular in central Myanmar as a low-carbon building typology.

About the World Monuments Watch

The World Monuments Watch seeks to discover, spotlight, and catalyze action to safeguard cultural sites under threat with the opportunity for contemporary social impact. Announced every two years, the Watch brings visibility to 25 heritage places nominated by residents and community-based organizations from around the world and selected by an outside panel of experts. Together, they represent a cross section of issues confronting heritage conservation globally. Through the Watch, WMF contributes thought leadership on pressing challenges and collaborates with local partners on targeted conservation programs—including advocacy, planning, education, and physical interventions in the historic built environment.

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About Climate Heritage Network

The Climate Heritage Network connects organisations around the world that share a common commitment to strengthening the use of arts, culture, and heritage to help communities tackle climate change and achieve the ambitions of the Paris Agreement. CHN Members include government boards, offices, ministries at all levels, site management agencies, Indigenous People’s Organisations, as well as NGOs, universities, businesses, and other organizations. Entities may join at <http://climateheritage.org/join/>.

About World Monuments Fund

World Monuments Fund is the leading independent organization devoted to safeguarding the world’s significant cultural places to enrich lives and build mutual understanding. For more than 55 years, working at more than 700 sites in 112 countries, its highly skilled experts have applied proven and effective techniques to the preservation of important architectural and cultural heritage sites around the globe. Through the World Monuments Watch—a biennial, nomination-based program—WMF uses cultural heritage conservation to empower communities and improve human well-being. In partnership with local communities, funders, and governments, WMF seeks to inspire an enduring commitment to stewardship for future generations. Headquartered in New York City, the organization has offices and affiliates worldwide. wmf.org

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