

Democratic People's Republic of Korea

Position for the General Assembly Plenary

I. Protection of Cultural Heritage Sites in Conflict Zones

As the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK)'s supreme leader and First Chairman Kim Jong-un wisely said, "National heritage work is a patriotic business designed to lift up the nation. It is one of the ways in which we can preserve the longstanding tradition and history of our country."¹ Based on the principles of identity and history crucial to the establishment of any sovereign Member State, it is the DPRK's strong belief that the protection of cultural national heritage sites is not only a necessity, but the duty of all Member States in possession of such important historical relics. The DPRK is no stranger to the destruction of cultural heritage sites, as one of its most important Buddhist centers, the Yongmyongsa Temple, was needlessly destroyed by U.S. airstrikes during the Korean War. For this reason, it is the responsibility of all Member States to partner with international organizations such as the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)'s World Heritage Centre and the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) along with other pertinent agencies to protect these sites from interstate conflict, but more importantly from Western Dadaism, an abhorrent practice known to wage war against the supremacy of their governments and in turn revels in the destruction of these culturally valuable relics and sites.² It is the strong will of the DPRK to spare all Member States in this important committee the devastating loss of cultural heritage sites and property.

As sole possessor of two recognized World Heritage sites, the Complex of Koguryo Tombs and the Historic Monuments and Sites in Kaesong, the DPRK has worked tirelessly both domestically and through international platforms to ensure that these scenic spots become a tool of inspiration to its people, especially the newer generations, and believes they are an excellent way to promote the growth of national identity. The DPRK has proven its commitment to the preservations of these sites by ratifying the Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property in 1983 and accepting the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage in 1998. Since then, the Korean Cultural Preservation Center (KCPC) under the guidance of the National Bureau for Cultural Property Conservation (NBCPC), submitted the 'first tentative list of seven cultural and natural properties of national significance'³ to the UNESCO World Heritage Center. With over 100 experts including conservation scientists and archeologists, the KCPC performs extensive archeological research, utilizes conservation technology to preserve these sites, provides scheduled maintenance of natural monuments and scenic areas, and publishes knowledge acquired on the conservation of heritage sites. As stipulated in the *Periodic Reporting on the Application of the World Heritage Convention* of 2003, "the government of the DPRK has always paid great attention to developing international cooperation and collaboration in the conservation field."⁴ An example of this commitment is the visit by the UNESCO World Heritage Center in 2000, where both international and national specialists shared their experiences regarding the technology utilized for the conservation of heritage sites. National experts also benefited from visiting World Heritage sites in France, Thailand, and the United Kingdom. The funding that ensures the implementation of the World Heritage Convention is proudly provided by the government and as of 2015, the DPRK has not missed a single contribution to the World Heritage Fund.

The DPRK considers the protection of these invaluable national treasures from all forms of conflict to be crucial for the conservation of Member State's cultural identities. The government believes in the active promotion of awareness of both the local population residing near the heritage sites and decision-makers on the proper procedures to follow in times of conflict as stipulated in the World Heritage Convention and general state policy through both local and regionally acknowledged Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and Civil Society groups. Additionally, the DPRK encourages the use of education through partnerships between national programs and UNESCO, especially directed to the younger generations so that they too may learn to appreciate the value of their national heritage and the importance of their preservation. Accountability is also an important factor when addressing the protection of cultural heritage sites and it is the DPRK's strongest conviction that all perpetrators and destroyers of cultural heritage sites be prosecuted to the fullest extent of international law and established treaties. It is truly the responsibility of the international community to ensure the preservation of endangered cultural heritage sites.

¹ "Kim Jung Un Stresses Protecting National Heritage." *North Korean Economy Watch*, Archive for the 'UNESCO' Category, 18 Nov. 2014, www.nkeconwatch.com/category/countries/un/unesco/.

² *Ibid.*

³ Centre, UNESCO World Heritage. "PERIODIC REPORTING ON THE APPLICATION OF THE WORLD HERITAGE CONVENTION." *UNESCO World Heritage Centre*, UNESCO, 2003, <http://whc.unesco.org/archive/periodicreporting/APA/cycle01/section1/kp.pdf>

⁴ *Ibid.*

II. Addressing the Global Economic Effects of Natural Disasters

The Democratic Republic of Korea (DPRK) is fully aware of the economic and social cost of natural disasters and firmly believes that in order to ensure sustainable development in the DPRK and other developed and developing Member States, practical steps must be taken to assist communities, regions, and nations in solving scientific and technical problems that hinder the effectiveness of disaster risk management. On August 2016, Typhoon Lionrock brought devastating floods which regrettably killed at least 600 people, destroyed about 35,000 homes and left many thousands of our citizens homeless and suffering from great hardship, as well as the dry weather conditions which have brought deadly droughts to our great homeland. While these events are unfortunate, due to the grace of our Ever-Victorious, Iron-Willed Commander Kim Jong-un, socio-economic development of both short term and long term strategies are underway to combat these issues and simultaneously ensure economic and sustainable development within the DPRK. Some of these solutions include the consideration and integration of climate change in international dialogues, developing scientific and technological advances such as a cycling production system in the agricultural sector, constructing zero-energy buildings, utilizing renewable resources to increase the efficiency of electric power generating facilities and enacting legal and policy frameworks in order to augment the current laws on environmental protection.

All disaster prevention initiatives led by the government of the DPRK are “conducted in all-society and all-nation manner.”⁵ The DPRK has worked hard to fittingly address disaster risk by establishing the DPRK Law on Disaster Risk Prevention, Rescue and Rehabilitation, as well as the creation of the State Committee for Emergency and Disaster Management, and the specialized Department of Disaster Management and subsequent Ministries.⁶ Following the devastating floods of 2016, the Supreme Leader Kim Jong-un provided his people with dwelling homes, functioning hospitals and clinics, nurseries, schools and instructed that all available resources be quickly mobilized to affected areas and in as little as two months reconstructed the resilient streets and villages in the northern Hamgyong province.⁷ The DPRK was proud to work alongside various UN agencies, the International Federation of the Red Crescent, and private international aid groups to properly assess the needs of those affected.⁸ Supreme Leader Kim Jong-un and the Supreme People’s Assembly continues to make considerable enterprises to achieve the required aims and goals of the Sendai Framework and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)’s Paris Climate Agreement within a shorter timeframe. The DPRK is currently conducting Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) work in accordance with the Paris Agreement by declaring war on deforestation through the implementation of a national plan to reforest 1.67 million hectares comprising 20% of DPRK’S intermountain area by the year 2024.

As sign of global cooperation, the DPRK is committed to researching and finding ways to be an active participant in the Sendai Framework and reiterates that it is committed to resolving the issue of addressing the global economic effects of natural disasters. DPRK believes that it is paramount that the international community seek ways to provide monetary assistance to Member States affected by natural disasters in order for them to gain accessibility to tools, programs and resources such as the Green Climate Fund, International Donor Partnerships and the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction Support Group. These international organizations will act as liaisons between the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR) and all UN willing and able Member States in the field of disaster risk reduction. The DPRK would like to expand on current international data services provided by the Sendai Framework which can combine the programs, expertise, and best DRR practices from all over the world. That being said, the DPRK firmly believes that it must call to attention the malicious, illegal and unethical acts that seek to deprive sovereign Member States of their fundamental rights to economical and sustainable development. Regretfully, Western powers seem to value more the pursuit of improper politics and misuse of economic recourses and military power than the safety of those innocent people affected by the devastating socio-economic effects of natural disasters by depriving the DPRK of its ability to engage in the process of multilateral international cooperation. When, and only when, these sanctions are referred to the Security Council will we be able to properly address the global economic effects of natural disasters through the implementation of tools and resources and the fomentation of multilateral collaboration.

⁵ “Korea, Dem People’s Rep of: Statement made at the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction (2017).” Korea, Dem People’s Rep of: Statement made at the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction (2017) - Policy, Plans & Statements - Knowledge Base - PreventionWeb.Net, www.preventionweb.net/english/professional/policies/v.php?id=53824

⁶ “Enhancin Enhancing Institutional Capacities in Disaster Risk Management for Food Security in the D.P.R Korea” The European Commission’s Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO).

http://kp.one.un.org/content/dam/unct/dprk/docs/unct_kp_FAO%20DRR.Final%20draft_Roadmap_Enhancing%20Institutional%20Capacities%20in%20DRM%20for%20Food%20Security%20in%20the%20DPRK.010615.pdf

⁷ “Korea, Dem People’s Rep of: Statement made at the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction (2017).” Korea, Dem People’s Rep of: Statement made at the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction (2017) - Policy, Plans & Statements - Knowledge Base - PreventionWeb.Net, www.preventionweb.net/english/professional/policies/v.php?id=53824.

⁸ Press, Associated. “Relief Agencies Operating in North Korea After Typhoon Lionrock Unleashes Deadly Flooding, Country Issues Rare Plea for Help.” Weather Wunderground, www.wunderground.com/news/deadly-floods-displace-thousands-north-korea.