INVITATION FOR COOPERATION

The International Council on Monuments and Sites, a non-government global organisation,\(^1\) which is dedicated to promoting the application of theory, methodology, and scientific techniques to the conservation and preservation of cultural heritage is, like IUCN, an Advisory Body to the UNESCO World Heritage Committee. Since 2014 we are working together on the Connecting Practices Project and on two international ‘Nature-Culture Journeys’. The first took place as part of the IUCN World Conservation Congress in September 2016 at Honolulu, Hawaii, United States, and the second at the ICOMOS General Assembly in December 2017 in Delhi, India.

ICOMOS is committed to continue its cooperation with Nature conservation organisations to showcase the relevance of water-related heritage for present and future water management planning and policies in international WATER events such as the Stockholm Water Weeks, the World Water Fora and the Culture Nature Journey.

\(^1\) ICOMOS has 10,100 Individual Members in 153 countries; 320 Institutional Members; 110 National Committees; and 28 International Scientific Committees
The relation between water heritage with present and future water planning and policies may seem obvious. However, at the present time there is limited interaction between heritage groups concerned with the protection of water-related cultural heritage and organisations committed to the protection of water-related natural heritage – under the Ramsar Convention, for example. Furthermore, there is limited interaction between cultural and natural heritage communities and organisations working on contemporary and future water issues (such as the International Commission on Irrigation and Drainage, the World Water Council, and the International Water Association). Our aim is to bring into dialogue those organisations.

Mrs Irina Bokova, the former Secretary General of UNESCO, wrote in her foreword to the 2015 ICOMOS publication “Water and Heritage, material, conceptual and spiritual connections”

‘As a basic element of life, our relation with water is complex, entailing material and spiritual dimensions, and embodied in heritage that is both tangible and intangible. … This relationship has always been a source of inspiration, and a well spring for innovation and creativity, leading us to think not only of the present, but also the future and the security of future generations’.

This foreword inspired ICOMOS Netherlands to propose to at the 2017 ICOMOS General Assembly to in Delhi, India held in December 2017, to establish an International Scientific Committee on Water and Heritage. This proposal was endorsed by the ICOMOS Scientific Council at the same event. The International Scientific Committee on Water and Heritage will address 5 themes: water for services, waterscapes, waterways, water for power and power of water, and worldviews on water.

To create the International Scientific Committee on Water and Heritage ICOMOS NETHERLANDS and the Taiwan International Institute for Water Education are organising the international conference ‘Water as Heritage’ (23 to 27 May 2019; in Chiayi, Taiwan). Wetlands as well as Qanats are included under the theme ‘Waterscapes”. This theme is being coordinated by Dr Steve Brown of the ICOMOS-IFLA International Scientific Committee on Cultural Landscapes; and by Dr Sahdev Singh, Research Director of the International Commission on Irrigation and Drainage.

Also on behalf of Henk van Schaik, ICOMOS Netherlands Ambassador for Water and Heritage I invite the Ramsar Partners and indeed all of you to join us in the dialogue with water managers that will start in the ‘Water as Heritage’ conference next May. You can register your interest in the conference ‘Water as Heritage’ via the link www.water-as-heritage2019.org.tw/.

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