



Yatra aur Tammanah

Yatra: our purposeful Journey and
Tammanah: our wishful aspirations
for our heritage

Learnings & Commitments from the CultureNature Journey @ the 19th ICOMOS General Assembly, Delhi 2017

Participants in the CultureNature Journey offer heartfelt thanks and gratitude to ICOMOS India for the warmth of the hospitality offered to all delegates to the 19th ICOMOS General Assembly in Delhi; and for the opportunity to add the CultureNature Journey to the full and vibrant programme that has been presented. We have worked on this statement with excitement, and it is our honour to present it to you. We invite you to enjoy - and join - our journey!

In our work to distil the vibrancy of the exchanges while in Delhi, India, we have drawn inspiration from the Hindi word **yatra**, which means 'purposeful journey'. Our **yatra** began long ago, in many small but important places and moments; gained momentum, focus and commitment; led us to Hawaii for the IUCN World Conservation Congress in 2016; and continued to Delhi in 2017. As we pass through this gate on our journey, and continue toward a more optimistic and equitable future, we commit to furthering our journey through our work as we return to our homes.

We acknowledge and take immense inspiration from the 2016 text titled *Mālama Honua - to care for our Island earth*, prepared by the NatureCulture Journey at the IUCN World Conservation Congress in Honolulu, Hawaii.

Languages provide us with both barriers and opportunities. Barriers because so much of the discourse – particularly in relation to World Heritage - is conducted in English, French or other languages that reflect a western ontology that separates nature from people and culture. Consciousness of the ways in which language creates our thinking, our approaches and our limitations is therefore essential; and it should be a continuing quest by ICOMOS, IUCN and all their partners in the **yatra** to find different concepts and words that can overcome this situation.

For these reasons, we use **naturecultures** (with no space, hyphen or 'and' between them) because we recognise these domains as inseparable, entangled and mutually constituted. **naturecultures** can encompass and include concepts such as biocultural diversity, geodiversity and agrobiodiversity, and the multiple perspectives of disciplines and worldviews.

Gathering today in Delhi, we embraced the Hindi word **milap** which can mean unity, reconciliation, coming together, and harmony in diversity – a concept well understood in the modern state of India. At the same time, the participants of the CultureNature Journey acknowledge the realities of the potentially difficult choices that lie ahead. For example, choices about letting go of heritage are as important as questions of designation and

protection; yet such questions receive little current attention. There is a need to work through complexity and contestation rather than simplifying, whilst acknowledging the multiple scales (physical, technological and temporal) that shape our work and thinking.

The theme of the scientific symposium chosen by ICOMOS India, 'Heritage and Democracy' was reflected in conversations throughout the CultureNature Journey, including the recognition of the importance of equity and respect between peoples, other species and the spiritual realm. The CultureNature Journey also noted the need for more clarity in our thinking about the future. We need to investigate how cultural and natural heritage practitioners perceive future realities, how their practices make specific futures, and how they relate to the societal and other challenges which the future generations to whom we transmit the heritage will face.

An action-oriented outcomes report will be presented to ICOMOS and IUCN as a resource for future work planning, based around 14 themes arising from the rich discussions in Delhi. These themes are offered here to the closing session of the 19th ICOMOS General Assembly.

1 Konohiki

We believe that in our fragmented times, it is important to strive to work with a spirit and mindset like that of a **konohiki**, a Hawaiian term and title for a person tasked to serve as a bridge between government, people and place in a way that invited a willingness to care for that place together. **naturecultures** creates a space, a rich common ground and new paths to collaboration. On our way to these common understandings we stumble over terms, constructs and institutional assumptions, all of which trouble us with unshared meanings. When we take the time to explore ideas in detail, we can step beyond troublesome labels. We celebrate those elements of our work that draw us together, and recognise the need to let go of those words and concepts that restrain us.

2 Ways of Doing

At the CultureNature Journey in Delhi, we learned about **naturecultures** through the value of experiences, learning-by-doing, collecting evidence and learning-by-listening. We undertake to implement these grounded approaches in ways that respect the rights and obligations of communities.

3 Virasat – our received and transmitted legacies

Bearing in mind that we have inherited multiple legacies that are intrinsic to our lives, we strive to assume the role of custodians to ensure that these legacies - or the Hindi concept of **virasat** - are handed down to our future generations.

4 Kuleana – care, responsibility and stewardship of the lands and seas

naturecultures embraces the Hawaiian cultural concept of **kuleana**, meaning that in our role as custodians of the land and the seas, we have rights and privileges to enjoy but bound up with that is our duty and sense of responsibility to conserve our heritage.

5 Forms of Knowledge

naturecultures recognises the importance of all existing forms of knowledge – indigenous, ancestral, traditional, spiritual and modern science and technology - and their combined application as the foundation for achieving its vision, ensuring the blending of innovations with the traditional, while encouraging the sharing of information, experiences and practices.

6 Spiritual and sacred dimensions

Faith and spirituality are fundamental to the perspectives and lives of more than 80% of the world's peoples. We celebrate the well-being, meaning and guidance found in the

spiritual and sacred dimensions of **naturecultures**, which provide cultural transmission, social coherence and inter-generational engagement in an ever-faster changing world.

7 Vividhta and Aadar (Hindi terms for diversity and respect)

Acknowledging the relationships between communities and the realms of **naturecultures** they inhabit can be fraught and contentious, we believe that it is not only possible, but imperative to respect and celebrate myriad diversities. As we aspire to greater equity and inclusiveness, we look beyond just the human imperative and adopt a holistic approach to life and all that sustains it.

8 Democracy and Local Empowerment

naturecultures envisions a fair and just world that recognises the critical importance of civil society; where decision-making is democratic, localised and diverse; with all voices heard and values considered; and where decisions are made in a fair, transparent and accountable way.

9 Landscapes and Seascapes

naturecultures include diverse conceptions of space and landscape. We find opportunities to ground our thinking and practice in landscapes and seascapes, where **naturecultures** meet and are intertwined. Landscape is the source and expression of biocultural diversity, a meeting ground of the past-present-future.

10 Connectivity

Connectivity has been widely used in relation to the conservation of ecological systems, and can be additionally understood to encompass cultural, social and economic values. **naturecultures** requires approaches that ensure connectivity across landscape/seascape in all its dimensions - social, natural, cultural, physical and organisational - ensuring continuity across geographic and conceptual boundaries.

11 Relational-Situational Contexts

We recognise the tensions between the universal (or general) and the particular (or specific, local contexts) in the way in which we work with **naturecultures** of landscapes, waterscapes, seascapes and spiritscapes. We aspire to understand the cultural contexts of local and indigenous communities in *relation* to their concerns regarding heritage; and to *situate* caring for peoples-heritages-places as central to our work.

12 Sustainability

naturecultures recognises the Sustainable Development Goals as a practical means of achieving sustainability, contributing to the development of inclusive and rights-based approaches for the care and use of resources. We commit to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals through the investigation, identification and monitoring of shared practices, interlinking **naturecultures** and people.

13 Change and Resilience

Accepting that **naturecultures** are inherently dynamic, we seek to understand and establish limits of acceptable change in order to create and foster systems that are vibrant, adaptive and resilient. Climate change and global environmental pressures permeate heritage concerns and responses, and there is a need to engage more actively with processes of transition in landscapes.

14 Vitality

Finally, **naturecultures** advocates for a world where heritage is alive and dynamic, with a meaningful function in the life of the community.

Our commitment

This **yatra** – our purposeful **naturecultures** journey - is a shared responsibility and its long-term success is embedded in inclusive conservation practices aimed at the transmission of heritage.



We acknowledge the importance of our shared responsibilities within the implementation of the World Heritage Convention as one important space for advancing our work; and commit to fostering meaningful cross-generational involvement and the inclusion of emerging professionals.

The participants of the ICOMOS/IUCN CultureNature journey, meeting in Delhi, India in December 2017, commit ourselves to:

- *continuing the thinking, listening and doing based on the learning gained in our yatra;*
- *building collaboration and actions for engagement and work by our membership networks; and,*
- *providing a platform for sharing the many strands of work that will flow from today.*

An action-oriented outcomes report will be presented to ICOMOS and IUCN as a resource for future work planning; and we will meet again to take another major step forward at the ICOMOS General Assembly and IUCN World Conservation Congress in 2020.

The following images emerged from the ideas ‘distillery’ symbolizing the thinking that generated this statement:-

	
<p><i>The Circle and the Path</i></p> <p><i>The converging paths that have brought us together and the journey we have yet to take, The Earth and the soil that sustains us The diverse bio-cultural systems that make up our wonderful planet</i></p>	<p><i>The Eternal Cycle</i></p> <p><i>The cycle of life, death and rebirth, The links that create a singular path An eternal journey</i></p>

Delhi, India
Friday, 15 December 2017



In conjunction with our partners for the Culture Nature Journey 2017:



And our hosts

