**Position paper**

Committee:United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

Topic:Improving the Conservation of Cultural Heritage with Innovative Technology

Country:The French Republic

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The protection of the world cultural and natural heritage is one of the targets of the Sustainable Development Goals; more generally, culture and cultural heritage are recognized as cross-cutting drivers and enablers to achieve the objectives of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.[[1]](#endnote-0)UNESCO has made extensive efforts in this regard:

1. Cultural Heritage and Tourism Digital Platform

UNESCO has launched the World Heritage Journeys, an online platform aimed at providing virtual exhibitions and tourism experiences. The platform adopts various digital technologies, such as 3D digitization and virtual reality technology, allowing people to explore cultural heritage from around the world from home, including architecture, ruins, traditional handicrafts, and more.

1. Digital cultural heritage protection

UNESCO has proposed the concept of digital cultural heritage protection, aiming to promote the use of digital technology to protect cultural heritage. For example, UNESCO collaborated with Google to create the "Google Cultural Heritage Plan", which uses digital technology to digitally capture, record, and preserve global cultural heritage, allowing people to browse and learn about these cultural heritage sites online.

1. 3D scanning technology

UNESCO uses 3D scanning technology to record cultural heritage and create digital copies for protection and management. For example, the organization collaborated with Slovenia's cultural heritage protection agency to use 3D scanning technology to record the "primitive women's caves" in Slovenia, in order to record their status and protect them.

1. Training and guidance

UNESCO provides training and guidance to cultural heritage conservation workers around the world, helping them learn how to use advanced technology to protect and manage cultural heritage. For example, UNESCO has launched a "Digital Cultural Heritage Training Course" to teach participants how to use digital technology to handle and manage cultural heritage.

These efforts are commendable.

France has always been an important country in the field of cultural heritage protection, actively promoting the use of innovative technologies to improve the protection and management of cultural heritage. France will continue to spare no effort in supporting and improving the conservation of cultural heritage with innovative technology, as the whole earth can benefit from the cultural heritage no matter the tangible and intangible ones. The spirit of the love and peace in those cultural heritage will pass from generation to generation.

**International efforts:**

1. World Heritage Convention (1972) : France is a signatory to this Convention, under which it protects a number of famous cultural and natural heritage sites, such as the Eiffel Tower and the Palace of Versailles.

2. The Louvre Principles (1954) : This principle aims to protect cultural property from destruction and plunder caused by war and armed conflict. France is one of the signatories of the principle to ensure the protection of cultural heritage in France in the event of war and armed conflict.

3. European Convention on Cultural Heritage (1992) : France is a signatory to this Convention, which aims to protect the cultural heritage of the European region, including historic buildings, monuments, cities, etc.

4. Convention on the Prohibition of the Illegal Import and Export of International Cultural Property (1970) : France is one of the signatories of this Convention, which aims to prevent the illegal trade and plunder of cultural property and to protect the world's cultural heritage.

5. Convention on the Protection of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity (2003) : France is one of the signatories of this Convention, which aims to protect the intangible cultural heritage of humanity, such as oral traditions and performing arts, social practices, celebrations, knowledge and practices, etc.

6. Convention on Cultural Diversity (2005) : France is a signatory to this Convention, which aims to protect and promote cultural diversity and to combat cultural standardization and cultural conflict.

7. Convention on the Protection of Moving Cultural Objects (1954) : This Convention aims to protect cultural property from destruction and plunder caused by war and armed conflict. France is a signatory to the convention.

8. European Convention on Culture (1954) : France is one of the signatories of this Convention, which aims to promote cultural cooperation among European countries and to protect and pass on the cultural heritage of the European region.

9. UNESCO Convention for the Protection of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (2005) : France is a signatory to this Convention, which aims to protect and promote the diversity and creativity of cultural expressions and to support and promote the development of cultural industries.

**Domestic effort:**

1.France has enacted a series of laws to protect its cultural heritage. For example, the Law on the Protection of Historical and Cultural Heritage promulgated in 1986 stipulates the scope and protection measures of cultural heritage, including the protection of historical buildings, monuments, sites, works of art, libraries, museums and other cultural heritage.

2.Establishment of Cultural heritage institutions: The French government has established a number of institutions to manage and protect its cultural heritage. For example, the State Bureau of Cultural Heritage is responsible for the protection and restoration of national cultural heritage; The National Bureau of Museums manages the National Museums and galleries of France; The Foundation for Cultural Heritage is a private non-profit organization that aims to preserve France's historic buildings and cultural heritage.

3. Promoting cultural heritage tourism: France has made a lot of efforts in promoting cultural heritage tourism. For example, the French government has promoted cultural heritage tourism routes throughout the country, established cultural heritage tourism information centers, and produced a cultural heritage tourism guide, attracting a large number of tourists.

4. Strengthening cultural heritage education: The French government is also committed to strengthening cultural heritage education so that the public can better understand and appreciate their own cultural heritage. For example, French schools generally include courses on cultural heritage, and many museums and cultural heritage institutions offer a variety of cultural heritage education activities and courses to enable the public to have a deeper understanding of French cultural heritage.

While the current framework and mechanisms of the UNESCO system have evolved well over the years, there are still abundant potential challenges behind protection: climate change, poverty, inequality, the digital divide, and increasingly complex emergencies and conflicts,the highest global geo-strategic tensions, existential climate crises, and growing global mistrust. In addition to these global challenges above, there are also some outstanding ones in France.

1. After the lamentable fire at Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris, France needs to strengthen prevention, monitoring and protection of historical and cultural heritage sites throughout the country, especially to strengthen safety measures during the renovation and construction of historical and cultural heritage sites.
2. Travel pressure. With the rich cultural heritage, France attracts more tourists than any other country in the world. The tourism industry is quite developed, which is one of the important pillars of the French economy. The survey shows that 94% of people think rich cultural heritage is the main factor attracting tourists. However, the annual number of 60 million tourists undoubtedly brings heavy pressure on the protection of cultural heritage in France. As one architecture and heritage director put it, developing tourism and preserving cultural heritage are both opposites and co-exists. Properly handled, they can form a virtuous cycle of mutual promotion; If handled improperly, the heritage will be destroyed and tourists will be lost. How to strike a balance between the two is a test of the wisdom of the government and society.
3. Professional companies are not of high quality. The maintenance of cultural heritage has strict requirements on the construction units, such as achieving a high level of technology, continuous technological innovation, and hiring or training qualified employees. However, the lack of funds leads to the reduction of maintenance projects, which makes the survival and development environment of professional companies increasingly unfavorable, resulting in the overall quality decline of professional companies, which often appear to be unable to complete the task according to the standard although receiving orders.

For the purposes and current situations stated before, France presents the **suggestions** below

1.Promote intelligent sensor **technology to monitor** the environment, temperature, humidity, and other conditions of cultural heritage, and promptly identify and address potential risks and issues that may cause damage to cultural heritage. It allows for continuous monitoring of cultural heritage sites and objects, which is crucial for identifying and addressing potential risks and issues. For example, if a sudden change in temperature or humidity is detected, appropriate action can be taken to prevent damage to the cultural heritage. In addition, the data collected by smart sensors can be analyzed to identify patterns and trends, which can help in the development of more effective conservation strategies.

2.The **databases** should be handled properly.France thinks that there must be a third party monitoring the authenticity of the data. As the country may modify some data when applying to the UNESCO. What’s more, a third party can avoid some accidents like the destroy of databases.

3.Advertising on **social media** should be restricted.The short video has become a part of people’s lives, which means the short video has become one of the knowledge sources for them. However, the quality of the short video can not be sure as the creator is not trained with the knowledge systemically. As a result, they will make some mistakes when introducing cultural treasures. So the government should monitor the video on the social media platform like TIKTOK, facebook, twitter and so on.

4.**Talent** related to the protection of cultural heritage should be focused. Nowadays the people should not only know something about the history of cultural relic, they should also know about the digital skills like the 3D-print, the VR. The France has already apply these techniques to the conservation of cultural heritages.

5.Increase the investment of the conservation of **underwater cultural heritage**. Underwater cultural heritage refers to items or sites left over by sunken ships, warships, ports, ancient cities, and other ancient human activities. Protecting underwater cultural heritage requires the use of various technologies, such as laser scanning, 3D reconstruction, and drone detection. The innovation of these technologies not only helps to improve the efficiency and accuracy of underwater archaeology but also reduces the damage to cultural relics. In addition, in order to protect underwater cultural heritage, various countries also need to cooperate and exchange ideas to jointly solve the problems in protection work. At the same time, it is also necessary to focus on talent cultivation and involve more professionals in the protection of underwater cultural heritage.

6.Increase the investment of the mature technique application.The developed country should provide some economic support to developing countries.

Based on aforementioned ideas, France will actively participate in improving the conservation of the cultural heritage with innovative technology.France trusts that its initiative to this topic will serve as a model of a practical measure to face the challenges in all its aspects.

1. [ARTeCLIMA: Cultural Heritage Conservation and Protection in the wake of Climate Change | UNESCO](https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/arteclima-cultural-heritage-conservation-and-protection-wake-climate-change) [↑](#endnote-ref-0)