PHNOM PENH APPEAL

20th Summit of the Francophonie, Phnom Penh, Kingdom of Cambodia, 15–16 November 2026

"Protection of Cultural Heritage and Promotion of Cultural Diversity"

We, Heads of State and Government of the countries sharing the French language, gathered in Phnom Penh on 15 and 16 November 2026 on the occasion of the 20th Summit of the Francophonie,

Reaffirming our commitment to the values of the Francophonie, in particular cultural and linguistic diversity, dialogue, solidarity, peace and mutual understanding;

Recalling the importance of respect for international law, as well as international conventions relating to the protection of cultural heritage and the promotion of the diversity of cultural expressions, and the UNESCO Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence;

Also reaffirming our commitment to the peaceful settlement of disputes, in accordance with international law, relevant international treaties and conventions, and the principles of the Charter of the United Nations;

Recalling that tangible and intangible cultural heritage constitutes a universal legacy, embodying the memory, identity and dignity of peoples, and contributes to intercultural dialogue, social cohesion, sustainable development and the rapprochement of peoples;

Expressing our deep concern at the growing threats facing cultural heritage in several regions of the world, including destruction, illicit trafficking, armed conflicts, natural disasters, the effects of climate change, uncontrolled urbanization, and other factors that may jeopardize its preservation, safeguarding and transmission to future generations;

Expressing our solidarity with States facing situations affecting their cultural heritage, in particular sites inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List, as well as with the communities that are its custodians and work to safeguard, promote and transmit it;

Sharing a common concern regarding the rapid evolution of digital technologies, which have transformed the cultural sector as never before, giving rise to concerns about the risks of cultural homogenization and linguistic uniformity;

Recalling the role of the Francophonie in protecting and promoting cultural diversity, particularly through its efforts to enhance the discoverability of Francophone cultural content, and **being aware** of the impact of technological developments on intangible heritage and human creativity;

Reaffirming the essential role of UNESCO in strengthening international cultural cooperation, notably through knowledge-sharing, national capacity-building and the mobilization of expertise in support of the protection and promotion of cultural heritage;

1. **We call for:**

a) strengthening international cooperation in favor of the protection, safeguarding and restoration of cultural heritage;

b) supporting States facing challenges that threaten their cultural heritage;

c) promoting the transmission of knowledge, traditions and intangible cultural heritage to younger generations, while encouraging them to become actively engaged in its preservation;

d) encouraging exchanges of expertise, training programs and cooperation in the digitization of heritage and the responsible use of artificial intelligence in the cultural field, with a view to improving the documentation, conservation and promotion of heritage, while respecting cultural diversity and the rights of creators;

e) promoting cultural and creative industries, particularly by supporting innovative start-ups in the fields of culture and the creative economy, as drivers of dialogue, sustainable development and closer relations among peoples;

f) strengthening international cooperation to prevent and combat the illicit trafficking of cultural property, including antiquities, and to facilitate their return or restitution to their countries of origin, in accordance with international law and applicable international conventions, including through dialogue and agreements between the States concerned;

g) strengthening national capacities for the prevention, risk management and response to threats to cultural heritage, particularly in times of crisis, disaster or conflict.

2. **We reaffirm, finally,** that the protection and promotion of cultural heritage, the promotion of cultural and linguistic diversity, dialogue among peoples, as well as the peaceful settlement of disputes in accordance with international law and the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, constitute essential pillars of peace, mutual understanding, stability and prosperity of societies and sustainable development, both within the Francophone world and throughout the world.

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