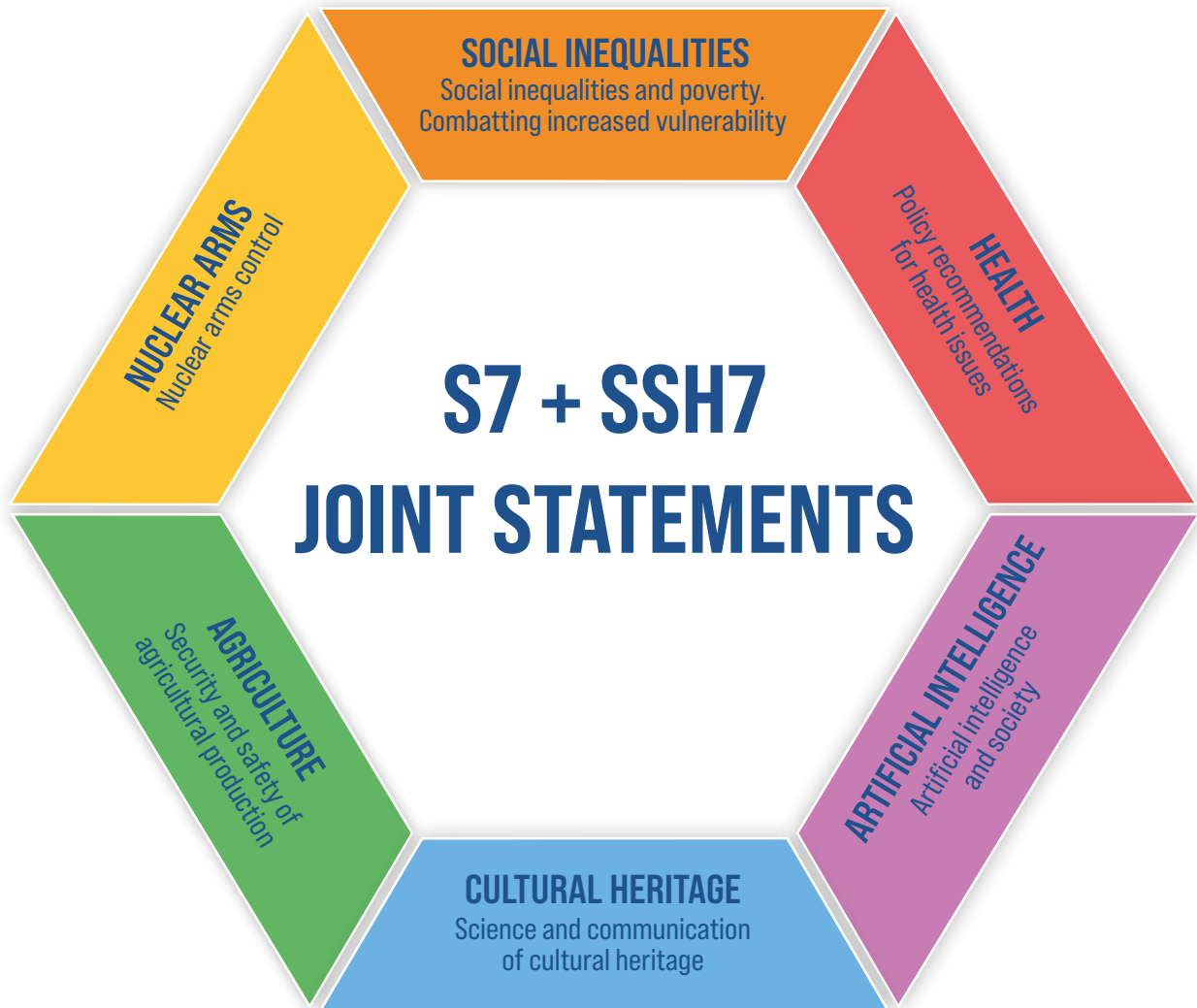




SCIENCE FOR THE FUTURE

CHALLENGES,
RESPONSIBILITIES
AND OPPORTUNITIES

SCIENCE 7 +
SOCIAL SCIENCES
& HUMANITIES 7
2024



**SCIENCE AND
COMMUNICATION OF
CULTURAL HERITAGE.
KNOWLEDGE AND
PUBLIC AWARENESS OF
OUR COLLECTIVE ROOTS**

SCIENCE AND COMMUNICATION OF CULTURAL HERITAGE. KNOWLEDGE AND PUBLIC AWARENESS OF OUR COLLECTIVE ROOTS

1. “Cultural heritage” includes the tangible and intangible products of human culture within nature, as well as the transformative effects of those cultures on the natural world that generate culturally significant landscapes, and it includes information gathered from human remains (viewed as a biological archive of the humans in the past). Cultural heritage is related to our common nature as a species as well as to our diversity as individuals, populations, and communities. It consists of archaeological and bio-archaeological remains, geo-archaeological settings, buildings, monuments, including those underwater today, landscapes, archival materials, books, works of art and artefacts, historical documents, languages and literature, as well as folklore and traditions.
2. Cultural heritage is the foundation of both our collective identity as human beings and the distinct identities shaped by different traditions. It expresses the tangible and intangible memory of societies and is thus at the root of the understanding of our collective past and the human place in nature. The retrieval of this memory substantially contributes to our ability to meet present and future challenges.
3. The contribution of natural sciences, social sciences and humanities, as well as their transdisciplinary involvement, are all crucial to the full and thorough exploration, understanding, preservation and communication of cultural heritage. This is particularly the case for the archaeological and historical heritage, but it also concerns other forms of cultural expression.
4. Scholars and institutions in this field should aim to communicate new knowledge and results achieved through scientific and historical research widely and accurately, avoiding distortions or mere spectacular display of evidence. Public involvement is crucial to enable people to learn and experience directly the tangible and intangible traces left by our ancestors, which are the basis of our cultural and historical roots.
5. Like all scientific knowledge, knowledge of cultural heritage is subject to continuous critical scrutiny according to evolving processes and methods of intellectual inquiry. Rigorous knowledge is invariably a work in progress, with inevitable doubts and uncertainties, which do not weaken but rather enrich knowledge by keeping it transparent, constantly open and growing. Good practice

in the communication of science can stimulate critical thinking and evaluation of evidence, promoting an evolving understanding of our world. This is increasingly important in counteracting pervasive misinformation. Instances of the misuse of cultural heritage and historical sources as an ideological weapon may be found throughout history, showing the enduring threat of unscientific reinterpretation for ideological purposes and underscoring the imperative to address and counteract such distortions with vigilance.

6. Critical public awareness of cultural heritage and accessibility to it are fundamental components of civic culture and civic life: they create a sense of belonging, ownership, and positive awareness of both diverse and collective roots. This process strengthens the link between communities and their histories, contributing to both a thorough understanding of cultural heritage and the conditions for its preservation. Humankind's diverse roots are the result of multiple intersecting histories and traditions. Interpretation and communication of cultural heritage should acknowledge this and thus be instrumental in fostering mutual understanding and respect for cultures that may differ from our own. Reconstructions of cultural heritage should be based on best practices in scientific and historical studies, and avoid disseminating inadequate, flawed or divisive narratives that obscure the multiple overlapping paths followed by artefacts and ideas across time, cultures and places.
7. A major tool in disseminating scientific understanding and interpretations of the wor-

ld's cultural heritage is the careful use of digital platforms, interactive devices, and multimedia installations, which may help in disseminating knowledge and engaging the public in reconstructions and immersive experiences. Narrating crucial phenomena and important dynamics of change in the history of human societies using real data and accessible language, without depriving those phenomena of their complexity, is the best way to make the study of the past relevant to understanding the present and facing the future. Open Access databases created by reliable organizations should also be promoted to disseminate and share the scientific knowledge of cultural heritage.

8. G7 countries should play a leading role in disseminating critical awareness of cultural heritage in schools, museums, and other educational institutions by promoting national and international initiatives both within and outside the G7.

8a. Major efforts should be made to develop an effective infrastructure to enhance the role of museums, heritage sites, parks, archives, and libraries in the protection and dissemination of critical knowledge and enhancement of cultural heritage. Museums as cultural hubs can play an important role in this respect. This development should be accompanied by adequate gender-neutral employment opportunities for younger generations of highly qualified researchers and professionals, who are often not sufficiently valued and properly employed. Adequate funding is recommended both for field investigations, including the preventive archaeological practices especially neces-

sary in heavily urbanised environments, and to enable subsequent thorough studies of the findings and their appropriate publication and dissemination.

8b. We recommend that G7 countries support and promote the dissemination of independent and critical historical and cultural knowledge in educational institutions at all levels, including schools, universities and NGOs. The study of the origins and histories of some crucial phenomena and processes of social change that have taken place over time in human societies and the significance of their material traces as sources of information, understanding and emotional involvement can restore people's awareness of the importance of knowing our own and other's past and the various pathways that have led human societies down to the present, thus making cultural heritage a shared heritage.

9. The G7 countries could play a decisive role in promoting systematic and decisive international collaboration to counter the theft and illegal trafficking of cultural artefacts, which deprive countries of crucial parts of their heritage and identity. In addition, and even more urgently, G7 countries should seek to strengthen international frameworks addressing the intentional destruction of cultural heritage during war or other conflicts driven by ideological, religious, or other motivations, where cultural heritage has often become a deliberate target, and seek to reinforce collaborative efforts and global commitments to preserving cultural heritage during armed conflicts. Access to and enjoyment of cultural heritage is founded

on international human rights norms, which include the right of individuals and communities to know, understand, maintain, and share cultural heritage, as well as to benefit from it. The intentional destruction of cultural heritage is a violation of human rights. The repatriation of cultural property is also a widely discussed and sensitive issue that deserves to be addressed in international contexts beyond the G7 framework.

10. The G7 countries must seek effective means to promote international collaboration between researchers in the natural and human sciences to enhance the understanding of humankind's cultural heritage. Collaboration between scientists, technologists, heritage professionals, local communities, and the general public is essential to strike a balance between innovation and the preservation of cultural heritage, ensuring that innovative technologies will not focus exclusively or primarily on the spectacular representation of vestiges of the past, but will enhance the deep historical significance of cultural heritage, at both a local and global scale. Science and technology are vital in understanding, preserving, and enhancing cultural heritage, and ethical considerations must guide their application. Respecting cultural sensitivities and involving local communities in sharing knowledge about diverse human pasts, making them aware of both what makes them different from one another and what they have in common are fundamental objectives to be pursued.

11. The protection of cultural heritage in the face of both internal and external challenges, such as poverty, conflicts and war, is

an important challenge faced by many nations around the world. Balancing the conservation of cultural heritage and historical landscapes with developmental goals is a problem with no easy solutions. Nevertheless, the G7 countries should take steps to enhance the awareness of heritage along with carefully constructed advisories to reconcile sustainable tourism with the conservation of fragile cultural ecosystems. Steps should also be taken to build skills-training programs for students, local stakeholders and other concerned parties on how best possible results could be achieved through the collaboration of institutions in different nations and the joint dissemination of information.

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