

Cultural Heritage in the Context of Sustainable Development Goals: A Rationale for Engaging Heritage Paradigm into Climate Actions

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Cultural heritage, despite its widely acknowledged contribution to social, economic and environmental goals, has been largely marginalised in the discourse of global sustainable development agenda. In spite of the wide ratification of the UNESCO Culture Convention by vast majority of the States Parties to the Convention, cultural heritage has been somewhat trivialised in the mainstream sustainable development discourse. This perhaps, is due to a complex of reasons and sometimes, fundamental misconceptions. On the one hand, this is partly due to the fact that the term 'cultural heritage' often evoke diverse paradoxes in different contexts of usage and also, hypothetically, due to the canonisation of modernist ideologies on the other hand.

Over the last few years however, there has been increasing intellectual awareness on the part of the UNESCO to posit platform for developing and testing new approaches that demonstrate the relevance of heritage for sustainable development. Within that context, three main thematic areas were identified in which the World Heritage Convention perspectives can be integrated into the SDG, such which includes; environmental sustainability, inclusive social development and inclusive economic development. Despite the surge in awareness however, the precise quantitative and qualitative targets and indicators that express the contribution of the cultural heritage to sustainable development remains inadequately conveyed and largely oblique in contemporary literature today.

Against the backdrop of the three identified thematic areas in which cultural heritage can be a contributor to sustainable development, this paper therefore aims to posit an indicator based approach to position the contribution of cultural heritage in the context of environmental sustainability, precisely, the SDG goal 13 'climate actions'. To achieve this imperative therefore, the paper is organised in twofold. Firstly, the literature review of the paper is drawn on the documents produced so far by UNESCO in the context of World Heritage Convention and sustainable development. Secondly, the empirical part of this paper relies on the result of a research conducted by the author with Louroujina Village in North Cyprus as the case study. Conclusively, the paper argues that lessons from energy consumption and carbon emission rates in cultural heritage can be a contribution to the abatement of greenhouse gases from the building sector if the ethos are incorporated at the policy level especially in developing countries where movements against cultural heritage is not - yet - as exacerbated unlike the developed countries.