



SAARC CULTURAL CENTRE  
COLOMBO, SRI LANKA

[www.saarcculture.org](http://www.saarcculture.org)

## CONCEPT PAPER

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### SAARC Symposium on Cultural Heritage for Sustainable Future

Host Member State-The Republic of India

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## 1. Background

SAARC Symposium on **Cultural Heritage for Sustainable Future** for 2024 was approved by the Thirteenth Meeting of the Governing Board of the SAARC Cultural Centre held from 28<sup>th</sup> to 29<sup>th</sup> November 2023 which was subsequently approved by the Fifty-ninth Session of the Programming Committee Meeting held in Kathmandu from 6<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> March 2024.

Heritage, both cultural and natural has become very important in the modern world and made the world smaller via easy access to information, fast communication and international travel due to the advance of transportation systems. Tourism, local, national and global has become a significant part of the economy and this has led to popularise heritage sites. This has led to hordes of tourists visiting these sites, sometimes beyond the capacity of the site and invariable leading to the damage and destruction of heritage sites. Cultural heritage sites in South Asia are a part of the religious, social and cultural lives of the population and in many cases, living heritage sites where large numbers of traditional visitors and modern tourists congregate, increased pollution, environmental degradation etc., have aggravated the issues faced by the living heritage sites. The activities associated with the heritage sites for decades, especially the Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) are also threatened, especially during and after the global pandemic.

In this rapidly changing world, heritage has emerged as centre for tourism and development of economy-based tourism disregarding the sustainability of heritage, especially the fragile and almost disappearing intangible cultural heritage. This has led to intangible cultural heritage becoming a tourist-oriented commodity with the social, cultural and religious values associated with, disappearing from communities and culture. This symposium is planned to address these issues and to preserve heritage and heritage values while ensuring the economic and social benefits are shared among local communities.

The symposium will be for two (2) days followed by one (1) day cultural tour. Papers for the symposium will be invited from academics from universities, relevant institutes, independent researchers, heritage practitioners, etc. from the esteemed Member States.

## **2. Research Questions**

The SAARC Symposium aims to address the following research questions:

- 2.1.** How can heritage conservation contribute to sustainable development goals in the SAARC Region?
- 2.2.** In what ways can heritage be used to promote Regional Unity?
- 2.3.** What measures can be taken to ensure the preservation of heritage sites amidst increasing tourist activities?
- 2.4.** How can communities balance the need to preserve ICH practices while adapting to modern challenges and changes?
- 2.5.** In what ways can indigenous communities be empowered to share their knowledge for sustainable development initiatives?
- 2.6.** What strategies can be implemented to mitigate the effects of climate change on heritage conservation?
- 2.7.** How could social media be transformed when interacting with cultural heritage?

## **3. Objectives**

The main objectives of the SAARC Symposium are as follows:

- 3.1.** To create a platform to bring together interdisciplinary Regional professionals to discuss key issues and debates relating to the protection of heritage for a sustainable future;
- 3.2.** To identify ways in which communities can actively participate in sustainable development initiatives while preserving their cultural heritage;
- 3.3.** To promote Regional Unity through intercultural dialogue;
- 3.4.** To examine the benefits and drawbacks of heritage tourism for local communities;
- 3.5.** To investigate the effective ways to safeguard and transmit ICH practices to future generations;
- 3.6.** To examine how indigenous knowledge systems can be utilized to promote sustainable living practices;
- 3.7.** To seek avenues as to explore how social media platforms can be utilised to engage diverse audiences in heritage-related discussions.

**3.8.** To bring out publications in the form of the Book of Abstracts of Cultural Heritage for Sustainable Future.

#### **4. Methodology**

The SAARC Symposium will be a blend of theoretical discussions and practical case studies, making it an enriching and interactive experience for the participants.

**4.1.** Speakers shall do oral presentations to share their expertise and insights on the subject.

**4.2.** Assign session chairs to introduce speakers, manage Q & A sessions and ensure the smooth flow of the symposium.

**4.3.** Virtual options will be available for those participants unable to attend physically.

#### **5. Outcomes**

The expected outcomes of the SAARC Symposium are the following:

**5.1.** Identify challenges and opportunities in balancing cultural preservation with sustainable development practices.

**5.2.** Creation of new partnerships and collaborations between organizations working in the fields of culture, heritage and sustainability within the SAARC Region.

**5.3.** Dissemination of best practices, case studies and research findings within the SAARC Region through the publication of papers presented at the Symposium and uploading them online at the SAARC Cultural Centre website for free global access.

#### **6. Sub-themes of the SAARC Symposium**

The following sub-themes have been identified for the SAARC symposium. However, papers based on related themes will be accepted depending on their content and relevance to the main theme.

##### **6.1. Heritage and Sustainable Development**

Heritage and sustainable development go hand in hand. Preserving heritage is vital for sustainable development as it provides a connection to the past and paves the way for a better future. By integrating heritage conservation into development strategies, we can ensure the longevity of both tangible and intangible heritage for future generations. For this session, we seek contributions that illustrate this interconnectivity between Heritage and Sustainable Development.

## **6.2. Heritage and Peace**

Heritage has the power to build bridges and foster understanding among different communities. By promoting mutual respect and understanding for heritage, conflicts can be reduced and a more peaceful and inclusive society can be created. For this session, we are looking for papers that illustrate how heritage can play a crucial role in promoting peace and harmony.

## **6.3. Heritage Tourism**

Heritage Tourism has become increasingly popular in recent years as it offers an opportunity to showcase cultural heritage and provides economic benefits to the local communities. In this session, we seek papers that address how promoting responsible tourism practices, heritage sites can be preserved for future generations.

## **6.4. Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) Practices for Communities**

ICH practices play a significant role in shaping the identities of communities. By recognizing and safeguarding ICH practices, we can foster a sense of pride and belonging among communities. In this session, we seek papers that illustrate how, by safeguarding and promoting these practices, communities can maintain their cultural continuity.

## **6.5. Indigenous Knowledge for Sustainable Development**

Indigenous knowledge has proven to be a valuable resource for sustainable development, especially in the face of environmental challenges. In this session, we encourage research papers that show how incorporating indigenous wisdom into development plans, we can promote a more harmonious relationship between humans and the environment.

## **6.6. Heritage and Climate Change**

Climate Change poses a significant threat to heritage sites. Rising sea levels, global warming, etc. pose a significant threat to our heritage sites. In this session, we welcome papers that address the impact of climate change on heritage and how we can work towards developing adaptive strategies to protect these valuable assets for future generations.

## **6.7. Role of Social Media for Heritage**

In the digital age, social media has emerged as a powerful tool for promoting heritage. Social media platforms have transformed the way we engage with heritage. In this session, we seek papers that explore the role social media plays in raising awareness in preserving heritage resources.

## 7. Participants

### 7.1. Officially Nominated Participants from the Member States

The SAARC Cultural Centre invites all **Member States** to send a maximum of **Five (5) Official Nominations** of experts working on the abovementioned themes from their respective countries for the SAARC Symposium. The participants may be selected from diverse disciplines among academics and policy-makers including but not limited to archaeologists, art historians, conservators, curators, museologists, anthropologists, sociologists, and heritage site managers. The SAARC Cultural Centre would provide local hospitality (Hotel accommodations on a full board basis) and local transport to all Official Nominees of the SAARC Member States.

**7.1.1.** The airfare of the Official Nominees of the SAARC Member States is to be borne by the respective Member States.

**7.1.2.** The **Host Member State** can nominate a maximum of **15 Official Nominees**. All Official Nominees of the Host Member State will be invited to participate in the Cultural Tour and provided with the symposium kit. Official Nominees from the Host State will be provided with accommodation if required depending on the availability of the budget.

**7.1.3.** All Official Nominees must present a paper at the symposium.

### 7.2. Other Participants from the Member States

#### **Category A**

**7.2.1.** The SAARC Cultural Centre would also accept the participation of other experts from the Member States (other than the Official Nominees of the respective SAARC Member States).

**7.2.2.** Applications should be sent through the respective Ministry of Foreign Affairs/Ministry of External Affairs to the SAARC Secretariat.

**7.2.3.** The selection of Other Participants (Category A) will be at the discretion of the SAARC Cultural Centre based on the availability of space and the relevance of the abstract to the symposium themes.

**7.2.4.** Air Travel is to be borne by the participant and SCC will provide accommodation (depending on availability), Symposium kit and the cultural tour.

## **Category B**

- 7.2.5.** Participants from the Host Member State (the Republic of India) where the symposium is held can participate. (It is anticipated that researchers, academics, etc., from the host country will present papers at the symposium).
- 7.2.6.** Other Paper Presenters (Category B) from the Host Member State (the Republic of India) will not be provided with travel and accommodation.
- 7.2.7.** Other Paper Presenters (Category B) will receive the symposium kit and meals during the symposium.
- 7.2.8.** Virtual Participants -Participants unable to attend the symposium physically can join virtually.
- 7.2.9.** Officials of the SAARC Cultural Centre-The Director, Deputy Director-Research (officiate the symposium) and two other officials from SCC will attend this event.

## **7.3. Additional Information**

- 7.3.1.** Registration Forms of all participants (Official Nominees, Other Participants Category A and B) must be channelled through the respective Ministry of Foreign /External Affairs of the Member States and the SAARC Secretariat to SCC.
- 7.3.2.** The Language of the symposium is English. All abstracts and presentations should be in English.
- 7.3.3.** The SAARC Cultural Centre reserves the right to select the Other Participants (in Category A and B) for the symposium.
- 7.3.4.** The symposium facilities (delegate kit, tea, working lunch) as well as invitations to special events and the field trip would be extended to all participants.

## **7.4. Nomination Process**

- 7.4.1.** The Official Nominees will be selected by each Member State comprising leading academics, archaeologists and other experts from the Member States. Official Nominations should be submitted to the SAARC Secretariat, with the Registration Form (**Annexure 1**) and the Format for the Submission of State Papers/Abstracts (**Annexure 2**) attached (or downloaded from the SCC website) and the details requested below.
- 7.4.2.** All Other Participants (Category A) from each Member State are requested to forward their information (**including Annexure 1 & Annexure 2**) through the respective Foreign Ministries to the SAARC Secretariat in Kathmandu.

**7.4.3.** An advance copy can be emailed to **sccpublications@saarcculture.org** or **dd-research@saarcculture.org**.

**7.5. All Participants should include:**

**7.5.1.** Full Name and Affiliation of the Person and other details requested in the Registration Form attached herewith. (**Registration Form – Annexure 1**)

**7.5.2.** Detailed CV of the participant.

**7.5.3.** Scanned copy of Passport / Scanned copy of National Identification from the Participants of the Host Member State.

**7.5.4.** An Abstract (350 words) of the proposed paper. The Abstract should be submitted in the Submission Form attached herewith. (Format for the Submission of Abstracts- Annexure 2)

**7.5.5.** The participants are requested to submit their full papers to SCC by 20<sup>th</sup> August 2024 and prepare a Power Point Presentation of 15 minutes maximum to be presented during the SAARC Symposium.

**7.6. Time Schedule for the Symposium Paper Submissions**

Call for Papers	1 <sup>st</sup> May 2024
The deadline for accepting Nominees & Participants	30 <sup>th</sup> June 2024
Selection of Abstracts & Informing Participants	20 <sup>th</sup> July 2024
Submission of full papers to be published before the symposium	20 <sup>th</sup> August 2024
Symposium and Cultural Tour Dates	(TBA)October 2024

**7.7. Tentative Agenda for the Symposium**

<b>(Day 1)</b>	<b>Symposium</b>
8:30 – 9:00	Registration
9:00 – 10:00	Inauguration
10:00 – 10:30	<b>Tea</b>
10:30 – 12:30	Session 1-Heritage and Sustainable Development
12:30 – 13:30	<b>Lunch</b>
13:30 – 15:30	Session 2-Heritage and Peace
15:30 – 16:00	Tea
16:00 – 18:00	Session 3-Heritage Tourism

<b>(Day 2)</b>	<b>Symposium</b>
8:00 – 10:00	Session 4-Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) Practices for Communities
10:00 – 10:30	<b>Tea</b>
10:30 – 12:30	Session 5-Indigenous Knowledge for Sustainable Development
12:30 – 13:30	<b>Lunch</b>
13:30 – 15:30	Session 6-Heritage and Climate Change
15:30 – 16:00	<b>Tea</b>
16:00 – 18:00	Session 7-Role of Social Media for Heritage
18:00 – 19:00	The Closing Ceremony

**(Day 3) Cultural Tour**

## **8. Dates**

The Host Member State of the Republic of India is requested to propose suitable dates for the SAARC Symposium in October 2024.

## **9. Venue of the Symposium**

The Host Member State of the Republic of India is to select a suitable location for the SAARC Symposium and share the details with the SAARC Cultural Centre at the earliest.

## **10. Focal Person at the SAARC Cultural Centre**

Dr. Bina Gandhi Deori, Deputy Director (Research)  
Email: [dd-research@saarcculture.org](mailto:dd-research@saarcculture.org)

## **11. Logistic Paper**

A Logistic Paper containing more details regarding the planning of the **SAARC Symposium on Cultural Heritage for Sustainable Future** will be shared with the Host Member State of the Republic of India.

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## SAARC SYMPOSIUM ON CULTURAL HERITAGE FOR SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

### Participatory Programme-The Republic of India Annexure 1

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#### REGISTRATION FORM

(All fields must be completed, use additional paper if required.)

**Category: (Please mark the relevant category)**

- ☐ Official Nominee of ..... (Name of the SAARC Member State)
- ☐ Other Participant      ☐ Category A      ☐ Category B

**Personal Details:**

1. **Full Name** (as mentioned in the National ID/Passport with surname underlined):

2. **Nationality.**

2.1 Host Country Participants (National ID No.):

2.2 International Participants (Country and Passport No.):

3. **Contact Information**

3.1 Postal Address:

3.2 Phone No/Mobile No:

3.1 WhatsApp/Viber:

3.4 Email:

4. **Institute of Affiliation, if any:**

4.1 Present designation:

4.2 Name and address of the institute:

4.3 Name, designation, email and phone number(s) of the Head of the institute:

5. **Educational qualifications:**

**6. Work Experience:**

**7. Title of the Proposed Paper:**

**Place:**

**Signature**

**Date:**

**Full Name**



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**SAARC SYMPOSIUM ON CULTURAL HERITAGE FOR SUSTAINABLE FUTURE**

**Participatory Programme – The Republic of India  
Annexure 2**

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**FORMAT FOR THE SUBMISSION OF ABSTRACTS**

- 1. Country:**
  - 2. Name of Paper Presenter: (As used in identification)**
  - 3. Title of the Abstract:**
  - 4. Abstract: (Maximum 350 Words)**
  - 5. Theme of the Paper (Please select appropriate theme/s)**
    - Heritage and Sustainable Development
    - Heritage and Peace
    - Heritage Tourism
    - Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) Practices for Communities
    - Indigenous Knowledge for Sustainable Development
    - Heritage and Climate Change
    - Role of Social Media for Heritage
  - 6. Keywords:**
  - 7. Please state whether the full paper of the seminar can be submitted by 20<sup>th</sup> August 2024 (YES/NO)**
- Please Note:**
- The SAARC Cultural Centre reserves the right to select the Other Participants for the Seminar.
  - The Language of the Conference is English.