Conserving and transmitting natural heritage and cultural heritage for sustainable development

**Introduction to the global UNESCO context**
Globally, UNESCO’s action for conserving and transmitting natural heritage and cultural heritage is well profiled and implemented across the areas of the organisation’s mandate. In addition to the World Heritage Convention and the famous List of cultural and natural sites of outstanding universal value, this work is conducted in all UNESCO’s cultural conventions as well as in a multitude of other programmes and networks such as Biosphere Reserves and Geoparks. The fundamental perspective of the work is the significance of natural and cultural heritage to identity and community and as a point of departure for dialogue across borders and differences. Insight and raised consciousness of own natural and cultural heritage linked to peoples and nations, and exchange and inspiration across ethnic groups and the borders of nation states will unlock creativity and enterprise to the benefit of sustainable development and the fight against poverty – locally and globally.

UNESCO supports this development in the Member States by setting standards for the protection, conservation, transmission and development of natural and cultural heritage. In connection with the preparation of global post-2015 sustainable development goals, UNESCO has, furthermore, set the agenda for incorporating culture and creativity in the future global agenda. Together with the UNDP, UNESCO has most recently submitted a significant contribution for documentation and inspiration of this debate with the publication: “Creative Economy Report 2013. Widening local development pathways.”

In line with UNESCO’s work for a human rights-based approach to culture and development, the Danish Government in June 2013 published an overall strategy for this area under the heading “The Right to Art and Culture. Strategic Framework for Culture and Development.”

Similarly in 2013, the International Culture Panel of the Ministry of Culture published an action plan for international exchange of culture with a focus on the themes: sustainability, children and young people as well as dialogue, democracy and participation. In the future work in Denmark, it should be endeavoured to achieve maximum synergy between UNESCO activities and the above-mentioned political initiatives.

**National challenges and opportunities for the UNESCO work**
Many Danish actors are involved in the work on natural heritage, cultural heritage and development. In this connection, it is a challenge to foster synergy across the various activities and to optimise the development potential in UNESCO branding of natural heritage and cultural heritage in Denmark.

Denmark has ratified five out of UNESCO’s six cultural conventions. As a State Party to the cultural conventions, Denmark participates in the current work on the implementation of these. Denmark has not yet acceded to the 2001 Convention on the Protection of Underwater Cultural Heritage. In connection with the 1972 World Heritage Convention, Denmark has at the moment six sites that are recognised as World Heritage. They are the Jelling Monuments, Roskilde Cathedral, Kronborg Castle, Stevns Klint, the Danish part of the Wadden Sea and Ilulissat Icefjord. Another three sites have been nominated for evaluation in 2015. Two regions in Denmark are preparing for admission to the Global Geoparks Network, which cooperates closely with UNESCO. In the course of a few years, they are expected to be able to use the designation UNESCO Geoparks. They are Geopark Odsherred in the Municipality of Odsherred and Geopark Vestjylland (Geopark West Jutland) in the Municipalities of Holstebro, Lemvig and Struer.

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Maintaining global perspectives and network opportunities in this connection is also of key importance from a UNESCO point of view.

In addition to the Nature Agency and the Danish Agency for Culture, there are many opportunities of entering into cooperation and partnerships. From 1 September 2014 Aarhus University, for example, offers a new master’s degree programme in English called “Sustainable Heritage Management”. The programme is to meet the complex challenges linked to the future management of cultural heritage, locally as well as globally. In the field of culture and development, the Danish Centre for Culture and Development (CKU) is a key actor. With regard to knowledge transmission, the Danish UNESCO ASP net has worked on World Heritage education and cooperation with schools in the Middle East for ten years. Also institutions and local societies related to Danish World Heritage sites and future Geoparks will be natural partners. And, naturally, the National Museum of Denmark, specialised museums and local museums to a relevant extent.

**National focal areas**

- A strengthening of the development potential in UNESCO branding of institutions, natural heritage and cultural heritage in Denmark, including World Heritage sites and Geoparks
- The development of sustainable tourism in relation to World Heritage sites and Geoparks
- Ongoing adjustment of the work on the conventions in light of developments nationally and in the Nordic countries, within the EU and globally.