

## **DECLARATION ON THE NEED TO PROTECT AND SAFEGUARD CULTURAL HERITAGE IN THE AMERICAS AND THE CARIBBEAN.**

*Adopted by the Inter-American and Caribbean Cultural Heritage Working Group at its first session (UNICAMP, Campinas, Brazil, 12 August 2015). Ratified by ABA, ALA, CASCA, CEAS, SAA, SAB and UNICAMP. Amended following discussion at its second session (João Pessoa, Brazil, 6 August 2016).*

The second session of the Inter-American and Caribbean Cultural Heritage Working Group took place during the 30<sup>th</sup> Brazilian Anthropological Meeting, on 4, 5, and 6 August 2016, in João Pessoa, Paraíba, Brazil. The purpose of the meeting was to take further the implementation of the Inter-American and Caribbean Cultural Heritage Forum. Representatives of the American Anthropological Association (AAA); Associação Brasileira de Antropologia (ABA); Asociación Latinoamericana de Antropología (ALA); Society for American Archaeology (SAA); and the Anthropology Department of UNICAMP met to discuss the procedures to be adopted for the implementation of the Forum, the group's working agenda for 2017–2018, and aspects of the wording of the Declaration, in response to issues raised by the American Anthropological Association Working Group on Cultural Heritage (July 2016) during the ratification of that document by AAA.

The following revised version addresses such concerns raised subsequent to preparation of the original version. It has been prepared by Cristina Oehmichen (ALA), Elizabeth Chilton (AAA), and Antonio Arantes (ABA) and approved as the version to be sent out for ratification/re-ratification by the Declaration's Founding Signatories. We affirm the following *Declaration on the Need to Protect and Safeguard Cultural Heritage in the Americas and the Caribbean* and encourage all those who are in sympathy with its goals and objectives to likewise affirm their acceptance.<sup>1</sup>

- I. WHEREAS, cultural heritage has been defined in many ways in international conventions and charters as well as in national laws, all definitions recognize the importance of the dynamic and mutable tangible and intangible resources and cultural expressions that provide people with senses of identity and continuity, at local, national, and international scales, but differ in specifics that fit the interests of particular communities of interest. We take this common understanding as a working definition for this Declaration;
  
- II. WHEREAS, in the face of social, political, and economic change, past and present, decisions are made that affect civil society in ways that disrupt traditional cultural practices, changing societies in unanticipated and often unwelcome manners, and sometimes threatening their survival, and because heritage is integral to a group's identity, placing them in relation to others and shaping their aspirations for their future, protecting and safeguarding this heritage is critical not

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<sup>1</sup> Future members of the forum will be invited to become "concurring parties" to the declaration.

only to these groups but to humanity in general, and

- III. WHEREAS, recognizing that the opportunity to engage with the cultural heritage of one's choice, while respecting the rights and freedoms of others, is an inalienable human right; and that heritage results from complex negotiations in the public sphere between and among social agents, state institutions, private investors, and a wide range of mediators, including academic researchers, independent consultants, and professionals working for public and private institutions, and
- IV. WHEREAS, we recognize the economic, political, and legal differences among the various countries of the Americas and the Caribbean at the same time we acknowledge that cultural heritage, particularly that of indigenous peoples and traditional populations, is under threat from various forces throughout the region, we affirm that research on the cultural heritage of all segments of society is needed and such research should be conducted collaboratively with heritage communities as equal partners when appropriate, whereby the community is incorporated into all stages of research from planning to research and finally to documenting results and forwarding recommendations, and
- V. WHEREAS, cultural heritage research needs to be encouraged throughout the Americas, we need to strengthen both the methods and theories used to study cultural heritage, and
- VI. WHEREAS, we recognize the responsibility of consultants as well as the agents of private and public institutions, all cultural heritage research should be conducted according to the ethical codes of each participating society, and all research products, including collections (i.e., artifacts and records), should be curated following protocols and codes of ethics of contemporary museology and collections management, those adopted by ICCROM and additional relevant contributions compatible with the ethical principles of anthropology and related disciplines, and
- VII. WHEREAS, the state is a key stakeholder in the safeguarding of heritage, we must work to strengthen laws and regulations protecting cultural heritage and urge state's agents to enforce their legal mandates through a transparent process for safeguarding heritage in the public interest, and
- VIII. WHEREAS, non-governmental organizations and the affected populations<sup>2</sup> that act as social agents should be empowered in their negotiations with public or private agencies directly or indirectly responsible for the implementation of heritage policies or projects,

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<sup>2</sup> The term "affected population" is used here in the broadest sense possible to include social groups that use heritage as a means of self-identification. The term includes, but is not limited to, what others have variously termed indigenous, local, descendant, migrant, traditional, and ethnic social groups

NOW, THEREFORE, the professional societies and academic institutions signing this declaration will endeavor to carry out to the best of their abilities, recognizing that the declaration is signed solely on a voluntary basis with no obligations, the following:

1. Through the Inter-American and Caribbean Cultural Heritage Forum, coordinate efforts to identify and to establish a network of partners in our efforts and encourage collaboration among heritage researchers representing all of the subfields of anthropology and related disciplines.
2. Promote symposia, workshops, or other activities as a way of contributing to the exchange of experiences and to improving our knowledge about heritage, particularly on the following themes, among others:
  - a. Relationship between tangible and intangible heritage;
  - b. Relationships among heritage, land rights, and customary representations of territoriality;
  - c. Relationship between heritage and economic development;
  - d. The role of heritage, including traditional knowledge, in sustainable development;
  - e. Intellectual rights related to cultural expressions and traditional knowledge;
  - f. Effects of heritage policies on the lives affected by such policies, either as holders or practitioners of intangible cultural heritage, or as landowners or inhabitants of protected sites, conservation units, or historic city centers;
  - g. Threats of economic, political, moral, military, ecological, demographic, or other nature to the continuity of cultural heritage.
3. Stimulate and encourage research and the publication and dissemination of works on cultural heritage, both printed and electronic.
4. Support the creation of independent, fair, and open-minded bodies to monitor the effects of cultural heritage policies and to promote the establishment of safeguards and policies for cultural heritage when they are lacking.
5. Stimulate capacity building among groups affected by heritage projects or policies as well as among professionals working in public or private institutions.
6. Stimulate the inclusion of themes related to cultural heritage in formal and informal education, and promote capacity building among educators.
7. Incorporate other professional societies and academic institutions into the forum as partners at the discretion of the founding members, per the working procedures to be established at the group's next meeting.

## **FOUNDING SIGNATORIES**

Jeffrey Altschul (Past President, Society for American Archaeology)

Antonio Augusto Arantes Neto (Professor, Anthropology Department, UNICAMP)

Michel Bouchard (President, Canadian Anthropology Society/Société Canadienne d'Anthropologie)

Flávio Rizzi Calippo (Vice President, Sociedade de Arqueologia Brasileira) Artionka Capiberibe (Assistant Professor, Anthropology Department, UNICAMP)

Teresita Majewski (Co-chair, Cultural Heritage Task Force, American Anthropological Association)

Cristina Oehmichen (President, Asociación Latinoamericana de Antropología and Colégio de Etnólogos y Antropólogos Sociales, México)

Silvana Rubino (Assistant Professor, History Department, UNICAMP)

Renata Sá Gonçalves (Co-chair, Heritage and Museums Committee, Associação Brasileira de Antropologia)

Antonio Carlos de Souza Lima (President, Associação Brasileira de Antropologia)  
Izabela Tamazo (Chair, Heritage and Museums Committee, Associação Brasileira de Antropologia)

Claudia Marinho Wanderley (Researcher, Center for Logic, Epistemology and History of Science, UNICAMP)

## **CONVENING SIGNATORIES**

AAA - American Anthropological Association

ALA - Asociación Latinoamericana de Antropología

ABA - Associação Brasileira de Antropologia

CASCA - Canadian Anthropology Society/Société Canadienne d'Anthropologie

CEAS - Colégio de Etnólogos y Antropólogos Sociales, México

UNICAMP - Universidade Estadual de Campinas, Departamento de Antropologia

SAA - Society for American Archaeology

SAB - Sociedade de Arqueologia Brasileira