

## RECOMMENDATION – PROPOSAL OF PRINCIPLES RELATING TO REMOTE SENSING MONITORING OF CULTURAL PROPERTY

### Preamble

The Expert Meeting "Heritage from Space for Peace" which met on 7 June 2022 at UNESCO and online:

*Recalling* the Principles on Remote Sensing adopted by the United Nations General Assembly ([Resolution 41/65](#), 1986), and the use of Earth Observation technologies by the various entities of the United Nations for the better management of our planet's natural resources, the preservation of peace and support to humanitarian missions,

*Also recalling* the [Declaration](#) of the intergovernmental Group on Earth Observations (GEO), adopted at the Mexico City Ministerial Summit (2015), which confirms that full and open access to Earth observation data, information and knowledge is crucial for humankind, and recognizes that Earth observation data and the information and knowledge derived from them are fundamental to identifying and implementing solutions, monitoring progress and measuring impacts,

*Noting* the use, since 2001, of remote sensing monitoring of the state of conservation of cultural and natural properties inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List,

*Further recalling* [Decision 44 COM 7.2](#) on Earth Observation for World Heritage Conservation adopted by the World Heritage Committee (UNESCO, 2021) which calls for the exploration of collaborative partnerships to apply innovative advances in remote sensing technologies to the improved monitoring and protection of World Heritage properties,

*Having contributed* to the study carried out by the Secretariat of the 1954 Hague Convention and its two (1954 and 1999) Protocols, on the rules and practices for the use of data collected by means of remote sensing technologies, including by the United Nations and its Specialized Agencies, in order to facilitate the development, by the *ad hoc* subcommittee, of the mechanisms for the monitoring and supervision of cultural property under the 1999 Second Protocol to the 1954 Hague Convention,

*Having considered* a set of four principles proposed by the *ad hoc* subcommittee governing the future implementation of monitoring and supervision mechanisms under the 1999 Second Protocol, such as (i) the Principle of Effectiveness; (ii) the Principle of Efficiency; (iii) the Principle of Cooperation; and (iv) the Principle of Consent, applicable to technical monitoring missions on the ground,

*Acknowledges* that the Principle of Consent applies to the mechanism for aerial remote sensing monitoring of the state of protection of cultural property, in accordance with international air law;

*Further acknowledges* the immense capabilities of space-based remote sensing technologies for monitoring the state of protection of all cultural property, and in particular in areas of armed conflict and in situations of occupation,

*Proposes* that the mechanism for monitoring cultural property by satellite remote sensing be guided by the following Principles:

1. **The Principle of access to the data gathered from remote sensing by satellite and use of satellite images** implies that they should be used for the benefit and interest of all States for the protection of cultural property, in conformity with international law including the Charter of the United Nations, the Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies, the relevant instruments of the International Telecommunication Union, and the 1986 Principles on Remote Sensing;

2. **The Principle of data sharing** implies that United Nations Specialized Agencies having access to satellite images make them available to the extent it is allowed // made possible by licensing requirements to the Committee for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict, through its Secretariat, to facilitate the monitoring of the state of protection of cultural property and the assessment of damages;

3. **The Principle of transparency** implies that the Secretariat may use in its report to the Committee remote sensing satellite images and processed data, including for cultural property located in areas of armed conflict or occupation, if they are available. This guarantees the States the existence of transparent and objective information analyzed by the Secretariat.

4. **The Principle of data protection and security** implies that remote sensing satellite images of cultural property located in areas of armed conflict or occupation which are not available for public access, are analyzed by the Secretariat. The Secretariat shares with each of the observed States exclusively the satellite analyzed information of cultural property located on the territories under their respective jurisdictions, in case of armed conflict. The report of the Secretariat on monitoring of cultural property in areas of armed conflict or occupation, including the technical assessment of damages, will be publicly available to the Committee without the satellite images. The report with the remote sensing satellite images not available in public domain will only be made available to the public with the consent of each States concerned.

The Expert Meeting "Heritage from Space for Peace" also recommends that the *ad hoc* subcommittee take into consideration the following recommendations:

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Invites the Secretariat to integrate into its documentation resources for damage monitoring the satellite images available and accessible free of charge to all;

- Encourages UNESCO to reactivate its Open Initiative with ESA and other Space agencies for the creation of a catalogue of images to be integrated into cultural heritage documentation, involving HIST and other UNESCO category 2 centres;

- Invites UNESCO to set up a UN inter-agency working group with Space agencies for the establishment of a *Charter on protection of cultural property in the event of armed conflict* using

the model of the [International Charter on Space and Major Disasters](#), including a mechanism for collection of satellite images to assess the state of cultural property in zones of armed conflict;

- Encourages UNESCO to reinforce the existing framework agreement with the United Nations Satellite Centre (UNITAR/UNOSAT) facilitating the implementation of project agreements, and capacity-building in data interpretation, subject to available financial resources, in cases of extreme emergency;

- Recommends to UNESCO the development of a proposal to extend the [Urban Heritage Climate Observatory](#) to the protection of cultural heritage in all its forms;

- Encourages States Parties to the Second Protocol to financially support the Secretariat to extend the GIS database which is currently being developed for the World Heritage properties to all cultural properties by also enriching it with remote sensing images.