

Report on Key Principles Identified at the Experts Meeting on Safeguarding Sudan's Cultural Heritage Tokyo Kyoto and Osaka Japan 24–27 February 2026

We, the participants of the Experts Meeting in Japan for Safeguarding Sudan's Cultural Heritage, convened in Tokyo, Kyoto and Osaka from 24 to 27 February 2026, reaffirm our shared commitment to the protection and recovery of Sudan's rich and diverse cultural heritage, which continues to face severe threats due to the ongoing war.

This meeting highlighted the fundamental importance of understanding and safeguarding Sudan's cultural heritage from Sudan's own perspectives, recognizing that sustainable and meaningful international cooperation must be grounded in the knowledge, priorities, and capacity of Sudanese experts and communities. We recognized the centrality of the Government of Sudan and its relevant institutions, while recognizing the essential contribution of community-based expertise in shaping all future collaborative efforts.

We express deep concern over the critical situation confronting museums, heritage sites, archives, and community cultural spaces across Sudan, as well as the risks faced by cultural heritage professionals. We acknowledge and commend the dedicated efforts of Sudanese institutions, including the Embassy of the Republic of Sudan in Japan, the Ministry of Culture, Information and Tourism, the National Corporation for Antiquities and Museums (NCAM), and community-based initiatives such as the Kassala Community Peace Park, in safeguarding cultural heritage under extremely challenging circumstances.

Participants also recognized the vital role of UNESCO in jointly monitoring, with national authorities, the situation of Sudanese cultural heritage affected by war. They expressed appreciation for the funding provided to assess risks and damages to heritage sites and museums, as well as for UNESCO's indispensable support in strengthening national stakeholder capacities to combat illicit trafficking. Special acknowledgment was extended to the UNESCO Sudan Office for its effective support and continued engagement.

Informal exchanges of views were conducted with the Embassy of the Republic of Sudan in Japan, NCAM, UNESCO, ICESCO, the Agency for Cultural Affairs and the Tokyo National Research Institute for Cultural Properties during their visit. The Sudanese delegation also met with representatives from the National Museum of Ethnology and JICA. These consultations particularly highlighted the meaningful engagement of ICESCO, whose participation contributed to opening new channels of dialogue with Japanese governmental and cultural institutions. It is noteworthy that this meeting provided the first-ever opportunity for both NCAM and ICESCO to engage in this type of consultation.

Participants welcomed ICESCO's active contribution, noting that its engagement complemented the roles of other international partners, including UNESCO. The workshop was recognized as a significant step toward establishing a promising new relationship between ICESCO and Japanese institutions, paving the way for deeper cooperation and future joint initiatives in support of Sudan's cultural heritage.

Participants recognized on the need to advance the following areas of cooperation:

1. strengthening emergency documentation, risk assessment, and monitoring systems.

2. supporting the rehabilitation of damaged museums, heritage sites and cultural institutions.
3. expanding capacity building opportunities for Sudanese experts in conservation & restoration, museum management, and disaster risk reduction.
4. promoting community-based approaches that safeguard and sustain living heritage, peacebuilding and social cohesion.
5. ensuring that all cooperation efforts are grounded in Sudan's own perspectives, priorities, and cultural contexts.

Safeguarding Sudan's cultural heritage is vital not only for preserving the identity and memory of its people, but also for contributing to peacebuilding and the country's long-term recovery.

We express our deep gratitude to the Agency for Cultural Affairs and the Tokyo National Research Institute for Cultural Properties for their steadfast commitment to the organization of this meeting, and we welcome the occasion it has created for Sudanese and Japanese experts to convene in person, fostering enhanced mutual understanding and a renewed spirit of cooperation. We also extend our sincere appreciation to the Embassy of the Republic of Sudan in Japan for its indispensable support, facilitation of the meeting with Japanese high officials, and diligent follow-up throughout the process.

We signed this declaration with a renewed commitment to deepen collaboration, mobilize resources, and uphold our collective responsibility to protect Sudan's cultural heritage for future generations.

Adopted on 27 February 2026, Osaka, Japan.

Participants

Dr. Abdelrahman Ali (Head of the Culture Unit, UNESCO Sudan Office/ former Director General, National Corporation for Antiquities and Museums (NCAM))

H.E. Mr. Khalid Fathalrahman (Director, ICESCO Center for Civilizational Dialogue)

Dr. Shadia Abdrabo (Deputy Director, Museums Sector, National Corporation for Antiquities and Museums (NCAM))

Mr. Elnzeer Tirab (Director, National Ethnographic Museum)

Dr. Amani Noureldaim (Chairperson, National Ethnographic Museum Advisory Committee)

H.E. Mr. Elrayih Mohamed Elawad Hydoub (Ambassador, Embassy of the Republic of Sudan in Japan)

Mr. Ali Mohamed (Counselor, Embassy of the Republic of Sudan in Japan)

Dr. Tomo Ishimura (Director, Department of Intangible Cultural Heritage, Tokyo National Research Institute for Cultural Properties)

Ms. Yoko Futagami (Head, Cultural Properties Information Section, Department of Art Research, Archives and Information Systems, Tokyo National Research Institute for Cultural Properties)

Mr. Tsuyoshi Chiba (Researcher, Center for Conservation Science, Tokyo National Research Institute for Cultural Properties / Researcher, Center for Cultural Heritage Disaster Risk Management)

Ms. Naoyo Sekihiro (Senior Archaeological Director, Kyoto City Archaeological Research Institute)

Dr. Nobuhiro Shimizu (Associate Professor, Faculty of Engineering, Hokkai Gakuen University)

✂The findings, interpretations, and conclusions expressed in this work do not necessarily reflect the views of the organizations or the governments they represent.

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Non-binding Document on Collaborative Cultural Heritage Actions (2026)

Dr. Abdelrahman Ali

Head, Culture Unit, UNESCO Sudan Office

Former Director General, National Corporation for Antiquities and Museums (NCAM)

Signature:

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Date: 9/4/2026


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H.E. Mr. Khalid Fathalrahman

Director, ICESCO Center for Civilizational Dialogue

Signature:



Date: 8.4.26

Signature Page

Non-binding Document on Collaborative Cultural Heritage Actions (2026)

Dr. Shadia Abdrabo
Deputy Director, Museums Sector
National Corporation for Antiquities and Museums (NCAM)

Signature:



Date: 8/4/2026

Signature Page

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Mr. Einzeer Tirab
Director, National Ethnographic Museum

Signature:

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Date: 13 APR / 2026

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Dr. Amani Noureldaim

Chairperson, National Ethnographic Museum Advisory Committee

Signature:

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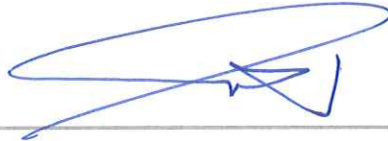
Date: 8/4/2026

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H.E. Mr. Elrayih Mohamed Elawad Hydoub
Ambassador, Embassy of the Republic of Sudan in Japan

Signature:

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Date: 8-4-2026

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Mr. Ali Mohamed

Counselor, Embassy of the Republic of Sudan in Japan

Signature:



Date: 8-4-2026

Signature Page

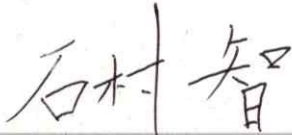
Non-binding Document on Collaborative Cultural Heritage Actions (2026)

Dr. Tomo Ishimura

Director, Department of Intangible Cultural Heritage

Tokyo National Research Institute for Cultural Properties (TOBUNKEN)

Signature:



Date: April 20th, 2026

Signature Page

Non-binding Document on Collaborative Cultural Heritage Actions (2026)

Ms. Yoko Futagami

Head, Cultural Properties Information Section

Department of Art Research, Archives and Information Systems

Tokyo National Research Institute for Cultural Properties (TOBUNKEN)

Signature:

二神 葉子

Date: 2026/2/27

Signature Page

Non-binding Document on Collaborative Cultural Heritage Actions (2026)

Mr. Tsuyoshi Chiba

Researcher, Center for Conservation Science

Tokyo National Research Institute for Cultural Properties (TOBUNKEN)

Researcher, Center for Cultural Heritage Disaster Risk Management

Signature:

千葉 毅

Date: April 17, 2026

Signature Page

Non-binding Document on Collaborative Cultural Heritage Actions (2026)

Ms. Naoyo Sekihiro

Senior Archaeological Director

Kyoto City Archaeological Research Institute

Signature:

関広尚世

Date: 2026/2/27

Signature Page

Non-binding Document on Collaborative Cultural Heritage Actions (2026)

Dr. Nobuhiro Shimizu

Associate Professor, Faculty of Engineering

Hokkai Gakuen University

Signature:

Nobuhiro Shimizu

Date: APR. 15 2026