

Hangzhou Manifesto

of the Global Network of Water Museums

January 26, 2021

We, representatives of the Global Network of Water Museums (WAMU-NET), participants in the webinar titled “Embracing Changes”, organized in cooperation with the National Water Museum of China (Hangzhou) and the UNESCO Beijing Office, after extensive discussion and reflection, declare that while the COVID-pneumonia continues to have a catastrophic impact on all museums and cultural institutions worldwide, our attitude and determination to build a more sustainable future concerning all water uses will never fail. While a few water museums have reopened, others remain closed due to the consequences of the outbreak. Therefore, we call on our Global Network to work together with a spirit of solidarity and mutual cooperation to explore new development opportunities, to design and share new approaches, patterns and solutions that will enable to overcome the adverse effects of the epidemic and to make full use of advanced technologies - such as digital technology and artificial intelligence - to address the new challenges brought about by the pandemics.

We shall attach further importance to the cherishing of clean water resources for the protection of the environment and of human health, strengthen the connection between water museums and local communities, and disseminate actively the concept of a New Water

Culture for the protection and sustainable use of all water resources, thus contributing to the achievement of the Agenda 2030 and of the Sustainable Development Goals.

To this end, we jointly agree to:

Strengthening our Partnership

Water museums participate already in the activities coordinated by the Global Network of Water Museums in order to share best practices and resources through seminars, enhance mutual understanding of different water cultures through joint research projects, and mobilize a wide range of public and audience, as in *The Water We Want* Youth Contest and Campaign. Therefore, we engage to provide further cultural water services to the public through the Internet and social medias, and to achieve the all-round development of water museum practitioners through new online training programs.

Fostering more sustainable water perceptions, uses and practices

Conscious that culture plays a fundamental role in uniting and inspiring people and in building the foundation of a peaceful and prosperous humanity, we agree to strengthen the future activities of water museums to turn visitors, and especially young generations, into “ambassadors” of a New Water Culture characterized by new awareness and more sustainable water perceptions, uses and

practices, through education activities, positive mindset and attitudes, social mobilization and responsibility. The dissemination and popularization of scientific knowledge about our water heritage and its integration into modern and more sustainable water management approaches shall be pursued both by individual water museums and by the Global Network as a whole. Learning from ancient water wisdom of our inherited water assets is crucial to achieve future sustainability. For this purpose, we shall begin new activities focusing on sustainable water management models that must be disseminated urgently to the general public.

Promoting smart development models

While the COVID-19 pandemic brought many new challenges, it also brought new opportunities concerning the development model of water museums. We are fully aware that the digital age is an irreversible historical trend in which digital and virtual exhibitions of water museums will become more than a necessity: a “new normality”. Therefore, we are committed to promoting the smart development of both new water museums and more agile structures, such as interpretation centers, where to develop new educational approaches on water awareness, and share the benefits of scientific and technological progress, by providing multiple services through the intelligent tools which are available in the age of digital communication.

Building new solidarity and international cooperation

The Global Network of Water Museums represents a unique platform acknowledged by UNESCO-IHP that should help water museums break their isolation and join forces with all sectors – locally and globally - to bring the new water culture more widely into communities, schools, administrations and enterprises. By introducing examples of solidarity and mutual help in dealing with disasters such as the pandemic, we will strengthen people's sense of solidarity and mutual help, inspire dedication and encourage the assumption of responsibility in preventing and overcoming any negative consequence of pandemics in the transmission of our inherited water assets to new generations. Therefore, we declare to settle the future role of all water museums as cultural, and even spiritual, operational highlands aimed at ferrying people to a better world, as opposed to isolated islands not connected to each other.