

The Embassy of the Federal
Republic of Germany in Cairo

Ministry of Environment of
the Arab Republic of Egypt

have the pleasure to invite you to the 52nd Cairo Climate Talks (CCT) Panel Discussion on

April 17th 2018 at 6:30 pm

German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD),
11 Al Saleh Ayoub Street, Zamalek

“Climate & Heritage: Unlocking the Past & Sustaining the Future”



Identifying climate change threats to cultural heritage is becoming more urgent by the day. Different climate phenomena are proving to be extremely dangerous to heritage sites across the globe. Rising sea levels are threatening ancient monuments near water surfaces, which constitute a major portion of the world heritage sites. Extreme weather events are also causing a huge threat, providing an environment where termites and other organisms can destroy ancient wooden artifacts. Buildings and sites which have been designed to withstand specific weather patterns may cease to exist. In 2016, UNESCO and the Union of Concerned Scientists published a report of heritage sites which are already being affected by climate change. Said report showed that sites all over the world are already threatened, and that more threats are yet to come.

The importance of cultural heritage stems not only from its economic significance, but also from its role as a roadmap to modern life. It is a key to understanding history, identities and recently a key to understanding climate change. According to the UNESCO, world heritage sites serve as climate change observatories. Not only do they harbor information about changes in climate and weather patterns, they also include traditional knowledge that can support adaptation and resilience in local communities. Moreover, tourism is a massive job provider and GDP contributor worldwide. The industry is naturally reliant on world heritage

sites, decline in world heritage sites will cause a decline in number and quality of jobs, as well as a lot of harm to many economies.

In Ancient Egypt, naturally occurring climate change played a major role in the relocation of people. Studies show that the settlement on the Nile banks was a rather recent phenomenon. The trigger was the drastic changes in climate and the drying of the desert which made settlers of inland territories move. This explains many monuments and sights discovered in the desert. Today, climate change and unsustainable practices are endangering Egypt's cultural heritage. In the recent floods in the city of Alexandria, many of its buildings in the Roman style were hit by the floods and have been damaged beyond repair. In addition, air pollution is causing the deterioration and erosion of many heritage buildings. Protecting cultural heritage sites proves to be both extremely difficult and extremely important. Reducing unsustainable practices as well as immediate intervention are necessary for maintaining heritage, its cultural knowledge and its economic return.

The 52nd Cairo Climate Talks will bring together experts from research institutions, government, private sector and civil society to explore climate change and cultural heritage affect each other. Experts will also discuss the different mitigation and adaptation measures needed to protect heritage sites, as well as intervention methods.

The discussion will be opened by

H.E. Julius Georg Luy

Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany in Cairo

H.E. Dr. Khaled Fahmy (tbc)

Minister of Environment of Egypt

Panelists

Dr. Abdulwahab Afifi

Plant Ecologist, National Biodiversity
Central Department & National Focal
Point, Nature Conservation Sector, Egyptian
Environmental Affairs Agency (EEAA)

Dr. Ghaith Fariz

Director of UNESCO Regional
Bureau for Sciences
in the Arab States

Dr. Rudolph Kuperl

University of Cologne
(Germany), Chairman of
Heinrich Barth Institute e.V.

Dr. Kholoud Mohamed Ali

Geologist, Institute of African
Research and Studies, Cairo
University

Mr. Abdelhamid Salah ElSherif

CEO, Egyptian Heritage
Rescue Foundation

Moderator: Meredith Brand, Science Journalist

A networking dinner by Baladini slow food project will close the event