

## India's Historic Moment: Chairing and Hosting UNESCO World Heritage Committee's 46th Session

(India to chair UNESCO World Heritage Committee's 46th session, hosting in New Delhi July 21-31, 2024, showcasing rich cultural heritage.)



(Source: English Jagran)

In a landmark development, India has been chosen to chair and host the 46th session of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee, scheduled to take place in New Delhi from July 21 to 31, 2024. This momentous occasion not only signifies a significant recognition of India's commitment to global cultural and natural heritage conservation but also provides a platform for the nation to showcase its rich history, diverse traditions, and ongoing efforts in heritage preservation.

### Collaboration for Conservation:

The decision to hold the 46th session in India was confirmed during the 19th extraordinary session of the World Heritage Committee in 2023. This decision, stemming from a proposal by Indian authorities in consultation with the UNESCO Director-General, reflects the collaborative efforts between India and UNESCO in fostering global cooperation in education, arts, science, and culture to promote world peace.

### UNESCO's Enduring Legacy:

As a United Nations agency, UNESCO plays a crucial role in recognizing and safeguarding cultural and natural heritage worldwide. The official UNESCO statement expressed enthusiasm for India's role in hosting this esteemed event, highlighting the nation's rich cultural heritage and dedication to the preservation of global treasures.

### World Heritage Committee: Guardian of Global Treasures

The World Heritage Committee, consisting of representatives from 21 member states, gathers annually to deliberate on matters related to the identification, protection, conservation, and presentation of cultural and natural heritage sites. These discussions contribute to the prestigious UNESCO World Heritage Sites list, a catalog of exceptional places that hold universal value.

## India's Commitment to UNESCO Principles:



(Source: PTC News)

India's chairing of the World Heritage Committee in 2024 underscores its commitment to the principles of UNESCO. The nation's involvement in shaping global conversations on the preservation of cultural and natural heritage aligns with UNESCO's mission to promote international collaboration in these vital areas.

## Showcase of Diverse Cultural and Natural Heritage:

India's diverse cultural and natural heritage, exemplified by its 42 UNESCO World Heritage Sites, will take center stage during the 46th session. This provides a unique opportunity for the world to appreciate India's contributions to global history and biodiversity.

## UNESCO: A Beacon of Global Cooperation

### 1. The Genesis of UNESCO:

The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, commonly known as UNESCO, was established on November 16, 1945. Its Constitution came into force on November 4, 1946, and the first General Conference session was held in Paris from November 19 to December 10, 1946, with the participation of 30 countries.

### 2. UNESCO's Organizational Structure:

Headquartered in Paris, France, UNESCO operates through 21 national offices and 27 cluster offices. With approximately 195 member countries and 8 associate member countries, UNESCO collaborates with nations worldwide to advance global peace and well-being through education, scientific cooperation, cultural understanding, and exchange.



### 3. Key Functions of UNESCO:

UNESCO's major functions include the protection of world heritage sites, education, science, climate change, protection of cultural human rights, development of science, computing, communication, and cultural aspects. The organization engages in collaborative efforts with member countries, supporting various programs, initiatives, campaigns, and organizations to advance the welfare of the world's people.

### 4. UNESCO's Global Impact:

India, a member country since 1946, hosts two UNESCO offices and has benefited from UNESCO's initiatives, particularly in the protection of its 42 World Heritage Sites. UNESCO's impact extends beyond conservation efforts, encompassing a wide array of fields crucial for global development and well-being.

#### A Historic Milestone for India:



(Source: Republic World)

### 1. Recognition of India's Significance:

India's selection to chair and host the 46th session of the World Heritage Committee is a testament to its growing influence and prominence in the international community. This historic milestone acknowledges India's dedication to the ideals of UNESCO and its willingness to take on a leadership role in the global conservation of cultural and natural heritage.

### 2. Diplomatic Achievement for India:

Vishal V Sharma, India's Permanent Representative to UNESCO, played a pivotal role in conveying this historic announcement. His diplomatic efforts and collaboration with UNESCO exemplify India's commitment to fostering international cooperation in areas of education, science, and culture.

### 3. Strengthening Global Cultural Bonds:

The decision to host the session in New Delhi reflects the collaborative spirit between India and UNESCO. This event will not only strengthen cultural ties but also provide a platform for dialogue on shared challenges and opportunities in preserving global heritage.

#### India's Contributions to UNESCO's Goals:

#### 1. Protection of World Heritage Sites:

India's association with UNESCO dates back to 1946 when it became a member country. Over the years, India has actively participated in the protection of its rich cultural and natural heritage, resulting in the recognition of 42 World Heritage Sites.

#### 2. UNESCO's Recognition of India's Heritage:

The inclusion of 42 World Heritage Sites in India is a testament to the nation's diverse heritage, ranging from historical monuments to natural wonders. This recognition underscores India's role as a custodian of global treasures with universal value.

#### 3. Collaboration in Education and Science:

UNESCO's objective to promote global peace and well-being aligns with India's efforts in education and scientific cooperation. The collaboration between India and UNESCO in these areas contributes to the advancement of knowledge and the fostering of international understanding.

#### 4. Climate Change and Cultural Rights:

India's engagement with UNESCO extends to critical areas such as climate change and the protection of cultural human rights. The nation actively supports UNESCO's initiatives in addressing contemporary challenges that impact both the environment and cultural heritage.

#### Global Impact of India's Chairmanship:

#### 1. Showcasing India's Rich History:

The hosting of the 46th session in New Delhi presents a unique opportunity for the world to explore India's rich history and cultural diversity. Delegates, experts, and policymakers from around the globe will gather to discuss the challenges and opportunities in preserving global heritage.

#### 2. Strengthening International Cooperation:

India's chairmanship provides a platform for fostering international cooperation in the preservation of cultural and natural heritage. The event will facilitate meaningful discussions on shared responsibilities and strategies to address global challenges in heritage conservation.





### 3. Positioning India as a Global Leader:

Chairing the World Heritage Committee elevates India's standing as a global leader committed to the principles of UNESCO. This role allows India to contribute actively to the decision-making process and influence global policies related to cultural and natural heritage preservation.

India's chairing of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee's 46th session is a historic milestone that showcases the nation's dedication to the principles of UNESCO and its role as a responsible global citizen. As India takes on this pivotal role, it reinforces the collective responsibility of nations to safeguard and celebrate the cultural and natural treasures that unite humanity. The event in New Delhi will not only be a platform for diplomatic engagement but also an opportunity for the world to appreciate India's rich heritage and ongoing efforts in heritage conservation.

