



**Report event on international heritage cooperation
&
Launch of Cultural Heritage Connections**

On 21 June 2011 over a hundred international, and national, heritage experts and organisations participated in the international heritage cooperation event. It was organised by the CIE - Centre for International Heritage Activities in partnership with Faculty of Archaeology of Leiden University and Museum Volkenkunde. The highlight of the day was the launch of *Cultural Heritage Connections*, an online platform to facilitate and strengthen the international cooperation on mutual cultural heritage. The platform is developed by the CIE, in the framework of the Netherlands Mutual Cultural Heritage (MCH) Policy and includes information on heritage projects and the involved organisations and experts. The platform is a follow-up of the Heritage Days, organised in the Netherlands and the MCH countries, since 2007.

Mutual cultural heritage is one of the focal points within the International Cultural Policy of the Netherlands Government. Within this policy heritage relationships with eight countries were formalized: Brazil, Ghana, India, Indonesia, the Russian Federation, Surinam, Sri Lanka and South Africa. However, mutual cultural heritage exist in many more countries.

We were very pleased the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science announced today that the mutual heritage policy will stay an important element in the new International Cultural Policy.

Welcome & introduction

Host of the event was Professor Willem Willems, Dean of the Faculty of Archaeology of Leiden University. He opened the day with underlining the special relationship between Leiden University, the international heritage work and of course the good collaboration between the University and the CIE.

Dr. Robert Parthesius, director of the CIE, introduced the long need for a platform on mutual cultural heritage work. The platform presented is the result of organising Heritage Days in the past years. Something that was only possible thanks to the many partners who joined us the last years, and of course the financial support of the Netherlands Cultural Fund. The platform *Cultural Heritage Connections* is an essential step, when building towards an more profound cooperation, offering a 'sustainable information and communication platform'.



Parthesius expresses his hope for a durable and fruitful international cooperation in the broad field of heritage activities.

Official launch platform

Mrs. Ida de Kat, Coordinator of Culture, Sports and Development of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Mr. Sander Bersee, Director Cultural Heritage of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science officially launched the online platform *Cultural Heritage Connections* by starting the introductory film.



The film can be viewed at youtube and on *Cultural Heritage Connections.org*:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eotC44Kt0E4>.

Introduction to the platform

Ms. Anouk Fienieg, Deputy Director of the Centre for International Heritage Activities, summarized the main points of the platform for the audience:

- The goal of *Cultural Heritage Connections* is creating a central point in a worldwide network of experts, organisations and projects.
- The methods for gathering information on these themes are the Heritage Days. Besides the platform, these Heritage Days resulted in research reports.
- The Wikipedia format of the platform enables everyone to keep contributing to its content.
- Possibilities: find and share information on international heritage cooperation and connect with other experts.

Find the platform at: www.culturalheritageconnections.org



Panel discussion

The programme continued with a discussion on international cultural heritage cooperation chaired by Dr. Steven Engelsman, Director of the Museum Volkenkunde in Leiden.

Participants of the panel:

Mrs. Sibongile van Damme, CEO of the South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA)

Mrs. Catrini Pratihari Kubontubuh: Executive Director of BPPI / Indonesian Heritage Trust

Dr. Wayne Modes, Head of Museum Affairs Tropenmuseum

Mr. Roelof Hol, Programme Director Mutual Cultural Heritage, National Archives (the Netherlands)

Prof. Willem Willems, Dean of the Faculty of Archaeology of the Leiden University

Dr. Robert Parthesius, Director of the Centre for International Heritage Activities



Theme 1: Is mutual heritage a common ground for international cooperation?

All panel members agree that the term ‘mutual’ or ‘shared heritage’ is a difficult and challenged one, because every stakeholder has a different view on the mutual heritage. The way we see mutual heritage says more about our current interactions with it, and not what it once was. Although heritage may have come from a colonial period, the way we work with it now, as professionals, is not in a colonial way.

But no matter how we call this heritage, it is important to find each other’s perspective and work together on keeping it preserved. In working together with partners it becomes apparent that they bring in new heritage in the form of other perspectives and new meanings.

Above all, heritage is something that has to be experienced by the public. Heritage is not something of the past, it still has its utility in present day life. Although ‘mutual’ is a difficult term, it is something that we need to understand because it is part of our past, present and future.

Theme 2: Strategies in, reciprocity of and inspiration for international heritage cooperation

When thinking of effective strategies in cooperation, it is important to consider, and work with, the public. Although heritage may be ‘mutual’, in daily life the public that lives in or near it considers it not shared, but theirs. This feeling of responsibility motivates the people to be more involved in preserving the heritage.

This involvement with the public must also be communicated to governments that allocate funds. When asking for funds, heritage professionals must show that heritage preservation has significance. For instance tourism can help raising money that can be used to fight problems such



as poverty. In doing this, western concepts of preservation, like the example the question of leaving archaeological items in situ, can not always be followed. When archaeological sources can contribute economically, it should be an option to benefit from it, and use that heritage in a responsible and sustainable way. It is important that not just one stakeholder decides; that everyone gets something out of it.

About Cultural Heritage Connections

Connecting experts, projects and organisations



Find

Cultural Heritage Connections connects experts, projects and organisations in the field of international heritage cooperation. The emphasis is on mutual heritage: heritage that is shared between two or more countries. It is a platform for information exchange and a documentation centre for projects. The platform offers Dutch and foreign partners access to knowledge and expertise concerning international heritage projects.

Share

The platform is set up in close collaboration with experts and organisations related to this heritage field through Heritage Days that are organised per country. Professionals with various expertise within the field of cultural heritage come together to share their ideas and experiences on international heritage cooperation. Their input is available at Cultural Heritage Connections

Cultural heritage connections is a growing entity that should be kept up-to-date. That's why we need your help! After all, who are more suitable than the people who are committed to the promotion of international cooperation for the safeguarding of mutual heritage?

The online platform can be consulted from anywhere in the world, by every involved heritage expert. A platform made *by* the people who work in the field of heritage, *for* the people who work in the same area, will, consequently, grow as a dynamic, multilateral and devoted community.

Connect

Join us at www.culturalheritageconnections.org

Please look for us on **linkedin**: *cultural heritage connections*



Who are we?

www.culturalheritageconnections.org is an initiative of the CIE - Centre for International Heritage Activities and is financially supported by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands and the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science of the Netherlands.