

'Heritage in Trust: Conservation in a Changing World'



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The International National Trust Organisation joins with our friends in the cultural heritage community in expressing our deepest sympathy to the people of Haiti on the unimaginable tragedy that occurred as a result of the earthquake earlier this month. The members of INTO and their supporters share Haiti's grief and sense of loss. Our thoughts are with the families of the victims and those close to them at this difficult time.

The current response in Haiti is rightly focused on addressing the immense human tragedy. Once that immediate human relief effort is completed, we call on INTO members and the world's conservation community to come together in solidarity to help in whatever way we can with the heritage recovery process. We know that much has been lost. It is the right time now to identify individuals and groups who would be willing to form volunteer teams to be deployed to Haiti as needed when the time is appropriate and the heritage needs are manifested by our Haitian colleagues.

Together with our friends and colleagues at ICOMOS (International Council on Monuments and Sites), we call on you to circulate this message to your members and supporters. In countries with disaster recovery experiences, we also ask you to urge your government and other national institutions to be generous with their assistance.

INTO and the members of the international National Trust community are working in concert with ICOMOS in the formation of these initial assessment and response teams. Should members of your organization wish to be a part of this effort, you may contact [me](mailto:Catherine.leonard@nationaltrust.org.uk) (Catherine.leonard@nationaltrust.org.uk) or go directly to the [ICOMOS web site](http://www.icomos.org) (www.icomos.org) to volunteer. Our member organisation in the United States, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, is also working closely with INTO and ICOMOS to coordinate volunteers and the response.

International cooperation in this type of disaster is critical. ICOMOS President Gustavo Araoz writes: "For me personally, Haiti is a special place where I began my professional conservation life. It was at the Citadelle and later at the Palais de Sans-Souci in Cap Haitien that I had my very first projects as head of the OAS heritage assistance mission after graduation. I know the Haitians to be a good people, possessing great dignity and generosity while living amid extreme poverty. For this reason, I put my own name down as the first volunteer to assist in whatever way I can."

Many of you and your members will want to join this effort. I look forward to speaking with you.

Catherine Leonard
Head of the INTO Secretariat