



## **International Conference “Italy-ASEAN Virtual Learning Centre on Cultural Heritage and Sustainable Development”**

**Dialogues on training for the sustainable development of cultural heritage**

### **Chairman’s Report**

The Chairmanship of the conference was assumed by Amb. Michelangelo Pipan, in his quality of President of the Italy-ASEAN Association, promoter of the project - the first one implemented in the framework of the activities of the Development Partnership between Italy and ASEAN - that secured the financing of the same by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation.

The present Report is under the sole responsibility of the Chairman and has the purpose to provide the participants with a record of the proceedings for their memory.

The conference took place in Casa Italia, Hanoi, on the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> of January 2024 and included two working sessions and two field trips to the Thang Long Imperial Citadel and to the Vietnam National Museum of History.

It was opened by the institutional greetings by Amb. Marco della Seta (Ambassador of Italy to Vietnam), Mr. Tran Dinh Thanh (Deputy Director General of the Cultural Heritage Department of the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism of Vietnam) and Mr. Ky Anh Nguyen (Director for Sustainable Development at ASEAN Secretariat).

The working sessions took the form of roundtables that saw the participation of government officials and experts from Italy and ASEAN Member States that were present at the event, as well as representatives from the ASEAN Secretariat.

The roundtables provided a very useful opportunity to discuss the various aspects and problems related to sustainable cultural heritage management, with particular regard to issues specific to each individual country and situation.

Upon opening the first roundtable, the Fondazione Lerici, executing agency of the project, presented a relation on purposes, activities and results of the on-line course “*Holistic and sustainable approach to the management and safeguarding of cultural heritage*”.



Noting that the on-line course constituted the first initiative foreseen in the framework of the *Italy-ASEAN Virtual Learning Centre on Cultural Heritage and Sustainable Development*, both Prof. Cucarzi and Amb. Pipan expressed the hope that more will follow, in particular pointing to the fact that the same Virtual Learning Center already provides all interested parties from Italy and each ASEAN Member States (officials both at local and national level, researchers, scientists, scholars, as well as students) with a fully-working platform for pursuing a rich and useful exchange of experiences and opinions. They also expressed the hope that the availability of the platform be made widely known in the participating Countries - possibly with the help of the ASEAN Secretariat - so that a “community” of people engaged in sustainable cultural heritage management be established for the benefit of all.

The two roundtables were launched by the inspiring introduction made by Dr. Richard Engelhardt, longtime UNESCO Regional Advisor in Asia and the Pacific, whose outstanding experience in the field is widely known and appreciated all over South-East Asia. A very active participation and extremely stimulating discussions followed. All presents expressed their appreciation for the initiative of the Italian Government and, in particular, for the on-line course *“Holistic and sustainable approach to the management and safeguarding of cultural heritage”*. They unanimously shared the hopes previously expressed by the organizers that the on-line platform provided by the project be promptly and fully exploited for fostering contacts and discussions among the “community” of subjects involved in cultural heritage management. They also took note with great interest of other prospected possible follow-ups.

In particular, in view of possible future activities, the issue of environment - including effects of climate change on cultural heritage - was singled out as a possible matter of discussion on the Virtual Learning Centre as well as a possible subject for an on-line course similar to the one just concluded - if financial means be made available.

The field trips provided a most useful and appreciated insight on two relevant study cases of sustainable management of cultural heritage and registered a great interest from all participants.

The event was concluded by the presentation by the Ambassador of Italy to Vietnam, Amb. Marco della Seta, of the certificate awards to the participants to the on-line course that submitted the best final essays.

Michelangelo Pipan  
President  
Italy-ASEAN Association