

To States Parties to the
2001 Convention on the Protection
of the Underwater Cultural Heritage

18 February 2026

**Culture Sector
Culture and Emergencies**

Ref.: CLT/CEM/UCH/26/7

Sir/Madam,

As you know, the UNESCO General Conference, at its 43rd session, proclaimed the International Day for Underwater Cultural Heritage, to be celebrated each year on 21 August ([43 C/Resolution 39](#)).

The celebration of this International Day provides an important opportunity to raise awareness of the importance of underwater cultural heritage and to further promote the objectives and principles of the 2001 Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage. This opportunity is particularly significant as the year 2026 will also mark the 25th anniversary of the adoption of the Convention. Adopted by the General Conference of UNESCO on 2 November 2001, the Convention remains the only international legal instrument specifically dedicated to the protection of underwater cultural heritage, ensuring its preservation for the benefit of humanity.

In this context, States Parties are invited to consider organizing activities on the occasion of the International Day, as well as throughout the year, to mark the 25th anniversary of the Convention. Such initiatives may include conferences, exhibitions, educational, scientific, community-based events or other public outreach actions aimed at promoting responsible access to and protection of underwater cultural heritage.

To this end, I would be grateful to receive information on any initiatives planned or undertaken in connection with the International Day and the 25th anniversary throughout the year, in order to facilitate coordination, visibility and synergies among activities worldwide. I also invite to confirm or update the contact details of your National Focal Point for the 2001 Convention and to transmit this information to the Secretariat at the following address: convention2001@unesco.org.

I wish to express my appreciation for your continued commitment to the protection of underwater cultural heritage and look forward to continuing our cooperation to ensure that the International Day and the 25th anniversary are marked in a meaningful and impactful manner.

Yours sincerely,



Krista Pikkat
Director, Culture and Emergencies
Secretary of the 2001 Convention

cc: National Commissions for UNESCO
UNESCO Field Offices