



CDCPP THEMATIC SESSION

**CLIMATE CHANGE AND SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT AS RELATED
TO HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEMOCRACY,
and specifically, culture, heritage and landscape
resources**

CONTRIBUTION BY

**IFLA Working Group on
Climate Change**

presented by Michael Oldham
(following the Special Report on Global
Warming of 1.5 °C by the Intergovernmental
Panel on Climate Change (October 2018))

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Statement to the 8th Plenary Session of the Steering Committee for Culture, Heritage and Landscape (CDCPP) on behalf of the International Federation of Landscape Architects (Europe)

Landscape architects understand that our greatest contributions to ensuring a prosperous future are vested in the creation of human societies characterized by an enhanced capacity for resilience, a willingness to transform to a better state, and a commitment to ensuring the long-term sustainability of environments, cultures and well-being. Together with allied planning and design professionals, natural scientists, sociologists and economists, we will continue to advocate for innovative approaches to low carbon community development and management, and for the protection and enhancement of natural systems with emphasis on the integration of the natural environment into human communities through blue/green infrastructure projects and an enhanced urban canopy. We can and must do our part locally, nationally and internationally.

So, how such a broad statement can be put into action is not immediately clear, but I will give you two simple examples, this building and its grounds, and a choice of trees. I am not actually suggesting any change, but I want to use this as an example because it's one that we can all visualise easily, and it deals with climate change, biodiversity and depletion of species. In addition, it represents the basic, simple but important choices we need to make at ground level.

On the southwest side of this building is a large area of grass. At present it is regularly mown contributing positively to the carbon footprint of the building. As an area of grass, it is scenic but does nothing to protect the building in the summer from high temperatures, nor in the winter from low temperatures. If this area of land were planted with trees, these buildings would be cooler in the summer and warmer in the winter and cost less to maintain. The carbon footprint would be lower, a reduction of air particles would also occur, production of oxygen rather than CO₂ and, if this were a building in the UK and the trees planted were oak (*Quercus robur*) they would provide a living habitat for over 500 other species, if they were sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*), fewer than 50 species, and if they were maritime pine (*Pinus maritima*), less than 10 species. So, we have choices to make, but they need to be made intelligently and we need to understand the significance and consequences of the choices we make. The effects of these changes for one building may be small, but citywide such changes can be significant.

Cities will change significantly over the next few decades providing huge opportunities for reinvesting in blue/green infrastructure. This realm of blue/green infrastructure is the core of landscape architecture and the example I have just given is no more than the tip of an iceberg of knowledge.

Working together we can achieve great things, isolated we can do nothing. IFLA EU is committed to working closely with the Council of Europe and especially the European Landscape Convention.