

Underwater Cultural Heritage (UCH), undisturbed in situ, is often better preserved than land-based cultural heritage, holding invaluable information to reconstruct past cultures. UCH are also valuable for tourism, provided the tourism is soundly managed from an environmental protection and heritage safeguarding perspective.

The Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage was adopted in 2001. The UCH Convention establishes a protection regime for UCH by maritime zone determined by UNCLOS and provides a comprehensive coverage of UCH regardless of its location, greatly extending the legal protection of UCH. The UCH Convention recognises the right of the coastal states to prohibit or permit activities directed to UCH in their EEZ and continental shelf.

By joining the UCH Convention, countries can (i) achieve UCH protection at the same level as for land-based cultural heritage, (ii) protect UCH from looting and commercial exploitation for trade or speculation, (iii) ensure comprehensive protection of UCH through a state cooperation system. By joining the UCH Convention, Parties pledge to protect UCH against looting and commercial exploitation and to apply the provisions of the UCH Convention and the Rules in its Annex as internationally recognised guidelines for UCH protection.

The wealth of Pacific UCH, ranging from submerged human settlements, traditional fish weirs, to WW- related wrecks and aircraft, reflects the strong connection of the Pacific community to its ocean, and the specificity of Pacific UCH that integrates the tangible remains and intangible knowledge. The Pacific community has a role to play in showcasing the indigenous UCH in the region that embodies indigenous knowledge and supports community livelihoods, and demonstrating the contribution of UCH to the Blue Economy through sustainable tourism.

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**From Small Island Developing States (SIDS)
to Big Ocean Sustainable States (BOSS):**

SAFEGUARDING UNDERWATER CULTURAL HERITAGE

**IN THE PACIFIC
FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

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sustainable tourism

Blue economy

SAMOA Pathway

Paragraph 54:
We also support their efforts
to conserve their valuable
underwater cultural heritage.

Paragraph 58 (j):
For States that have not
done so, to consider
becoming parties to the 2001
**UNESCO Convention on the
Protection of the Underwater
Cultural Heritage**

What is the UCH Convention?

The UCH Convention was
adopted in 2001 by UNESCO
to fight against the extensive
pillage, commercial
exploitation and illicit traffic
or unethical recovery of
UCH. **14** SIDS member states,
including **1** Pacific SIDS have
ratified the Convention.

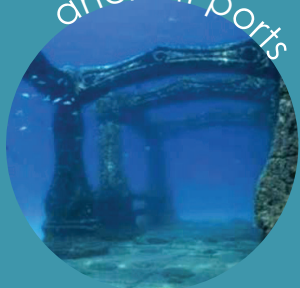
What is under water cultural heritage?

Under Water
Cultural Heritage
(UCH) is **much
beyond shipwrecks.**

stone fish traps



ancient ports



caves



human settlements



Fujikawa Maru, Truk Lagoon, FSM



Upside down zero, Truk Lagoon, FSM



Fujikawa Maru, Truk Lagoon, FSM

