ALIPH, Iconem, Microsoft, and Planet launch HeritageWatch.AI:
Harnessing the potential of AI to protect heritage sites worldwide

Paris, 10 February 2025 – In the presence of Rachida Dati, French Minister of Culture, and Thani Mohamed Soilihi, French Minister Delegate for Francophonie and International Partnerships, a cutting-edge initiative to protect cultural heritage endangered by natural disasters, climate change, and conflict was announced at the French Ministry of Culture as part of the Artificial Intelligence Action Summit in Paris. HeritageWatch.AI is a new project, born from a relationship between its co-founders ALIPH (International alliance for the protection of heritage), Iconem, Microsoft, and Planet Labs PBC.

HeritageWatch.AI will be an independent, noncommercial effort dedicated to forecasting and analyzing the short- to long-term risks threatening cultural heritage, particularly those related to climate change and natural disasters. This groundbreaking work will be possible for the first time, thanks to deep expertise of the four founding organizations:

- **ALIPH**, an international organization founded in 2017 in Geneva, which has supported over 500 cultural heritage projects implemented on-the-ground in more than 40 countries in conflict or in crisis, for nearly USD 100 million;
- **Iconem**, a pioneer in the application of digital technologies to cultural heritage by executing 3D scans and using satellite imagery to model and analyze some of the world's great cultural heritage in complex environments such as Syria, Libya, and Mali;
- **Microsoft**, a world leader in the development of AI tools with a track record of supporting projects through its AI for Good program;
- **Planet**, a leading provider of global, daily satellite imagery and analytic solutions, which designs, builds, and operates the largest fleet of Earth Observation satellites.

The project will leverage Planet's high-resolution satellite images of cultural heritage sites to deliver targeted and more efficient solutions in real time to protect **cultural heritage impacted by disasters**. Moreover, HeritageWatch.AI is designed to enable the cultural heritage sector to move toward **a prediction-based approach**, identifying areas prone to crises and implementing mitigation measures ahead of disasters. For instance, it aims to observe the progressive impact of desertification on earthen architecture in the Sahel region, of rising sea levels of coastal heritage, or the consequences of a hurricane on age-old sites. In turn, organizations such as ALIPH will have more robust tools with which they can support impacted communities before they are in crisis. With their partners on the ground, ALIPH and other organizations can develop plans to protect and secure cultural heritage and identify and accompany the most relevant rehabilitation projects.

HeritageWatch.AI will focus on three priorities:

- **Mapping climate change and natural disasters**, such as earthquakes, floods, and fires, to predict their impact on cultural heritage;
- **Assessing the damage** caused by natural disasters, climate change, or conflicts on cultural heritage; and
- **Contributing to the fight against the illicit trafficking of cultural goods**, identifying looting activities.

HeritageWatch.AI headquarters will be based in Paris. Its first round of funding has been secured through the support of Microsoft with an initial pledge of USD 1 million over four years in addition to USD 750 000 in in-kind services, and USD 250 000 from ALIPH for the launch.

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About ALIPH

The International alliance for the protection of heritage (ALIPH) is the main global fund exclusively dedicated to the protection and rehabilitation of cultural heritage in areas in conflict, post-conflict or in crisis. It was created in 2017 in response to the massive destruction of cultural heritage over the previous two decades, predominantly in the Middle East and the Sahel. ALIPH is a public-private partnership assembling eight countries (China, Cyprus, France, Kuwait, Luxembourg, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Uzbekistan) and three private donors (Dr. Thomas S. Kaplan, Getty Trust, and Fondation Gandur pour l'Art). Based in Geneva, this Swiss Foundation also benefits from the privileges and immunities of an international organization. To date, ALIPH has supported over 500 projects in 41 countries. ALIPH is now committed to protecting cultural heritage from the impact of climate change in countries in conflict, post-conflict or in crisis. ALIPH finances concrete initiatives carried out on the ground, hand in hand with local partners, authorities, and communities. Through its mission, it contributes to peace-building and sustainable development. www.aliph-foundation.org

About Iconem

Founded in 2013, Iconem is an innovative French company specialized in the digitization of cultural heritage sites in 3D and the production of immersive experiences. Using large-scale scanning to create photorealistic 3D digital twins of historic monuments, landmark sites, and entire cities, Iconem's 3D models serve as analytical tools for the scientific community, for conservation and restoration projects. They also offer limitless possibilities for engaging the general public and enriching permanent displays and exhibitions of cultural institutions.

https://www.heritagewatch.ai/

ABOUT MICROSOFT

Microsoft (Nasdaq "MSFT" @microsoft) creates platforms and tools powered by AI to deliver innovative solutions that meet the evolving needs of our customers. The technology company is committed to making AI available broadly and doing so responsibly, with a mission to empower every person and every organization on the planet to achieve more.

ABOUT PLANET

Planet is a leading provider of global, daily satellite imagery and geospatial solutions. Planet is driven by a mission to image the world every day, and make change visible, accessible and

actionable. Founded in 2010 by three NASA scientists, Planet designs, builds, and operates the largest Earth observation fleet of imaging satellites. Planet provides mission-critical data, advanced insights, and software solutions to over 1,000 customers, comprising the world's leading agriculture, forestry, intelligence, education and finance companies and government agencies, enabling users to simply and effectively derive unique value from satellite imagery. Planet is a public benefit corporation listed on the New York Stock Exchange as PL. To learn more visit www.planet.com and follow us on X (formerly Twitter) or tune in to HBO's 'Wild Wild Space'.

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