

**Meeting of the Ministers of Culture
of the Members of the G7 Countries**

Culture as a Tool for Dialogue among Peoples

Florence, 30-31 March 2017

Meeting of Experts

**Contribution of the
International Council of Museums
(ICOM)**

TABLE OF CONTENT

Introductory statement	3
I. CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES OF INTERNATIONAL LAW.....	4
1. <i>Opportunities and limits of international regulation of cultural heritage</i>	4
2. <i>ICOM normative instruments.....</i>	5
a) Position	5
b) Actions	5
3. <i>Role of international and national courts and/or tribunals</i>	7
a) Position	7
b) Actions	7
II. INITIATIVES SUPPORTING THE PROTECTION OF CULTURAL HERITAGE. 8	8
a) Position	8
b) Actions	9
III. PROFESSIONAL TRAINING	11
a) Position	11
b) Actions	12

Introductory Statement

The first summit of the Ministers of Culture of the *Group of 7 (G7)*, taking place in Florence on 30 and 31 March 2017, is the occasion to focus discussions on *Culture as a Tool for Dialogue among Peoples*.

The International Council of Museums (ICOM), created in 1946 alongside UNESCO as the worldwide non-governmental organisation of museums and museum professionals, is committed to promoting and protecting natural and cultural heritage, present and future, tangible and intangible. With more than 36,000 members in 138 countries, ICOM is active in numerous fields relating to museums and cultural heritage. As an international professional organisation bringing together museums and museum professionals from all over the world, ICOM's commitment to culture and knowledge sharing is reinforced by its 30 International Committees dedicated to a wide range of museum specialties conducting advanced research in their respective fields, functioning as a global think tank on museum and heritage matters with a common aim to define professional standards and share scientific information.

Very present on the international stage through its work in the promotion and protection of cultural heritage, ICOM maintains formal relations with UNESCO and has a consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) as an expert in the fight against illicit traffic in cultural goods. ICOM also works in close cooperation with international organisations such as INTERPOL and the World Customs Organization (WCO) to carry out one of its main international public service mission, the fight against illicit traffic in cultural goods. The role of ICOM includes the exchange of information and expertise, the organisation of awareness-raising campaigns, the development of training programmes for law enforcement officials and heritage professionals, and the dissemination of practical tools and publications developed by ICOM to curb illegal trade in cultural objects.

Dedicated to the development of professional and ethical standards in the field, and convinced of the importance culture plays in increasing dialogue around the world, across individuals and nations, ICOM is strongly supportive of and engaged in the areas addressed by the 2017 G7 Meeting of Experts' technical sessions – the challenges and opportunities of international law, the initiatives supporting the protection of cultural heritage, and professional training.

I. CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES OF INTERNATIONAL LAW

1. Opportunities and limits of international regulation of cultural heritage

The current legal framework and international regulation pertaining to cultural heritage, built over the last century, has evolved to feature more elaborated and robust instruments. The adoption and implementation of dedicated legal instruments is a prerequisite to any effective protection of cultural heritage.

Cultural property protection is now accepted as an obligation codified as part of International Humanitarian Law (IHL), starting as early as the 1899 and 1907 Hague Conventions and, in particular, in Articles 27 and 56 of the Regulations of the 1907 Fourth Hague Convention, in the 1977 Additional Protocol I to the 1949 Geneva Conventions in Article 53 and 85(4)(d) and the 1998 Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court in Article 8(2)(b)(ix) and 8(2)(e)(iv). The International Humanitarian body of Law is accompanied by numerous resolutions issued by the United Nations bodies on the matter. The United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, adopted in 2000 and first opened for signature in Palermo, is the main international instrument in the fight against transnational organised crime. Since its adoption, a visible evolution is taking place as the topic is progressively unpacked and focused upon more deeply in each of the UNODC related resolutions, up to the publication of the most recent guidelines on the matter in 2014 with the International Guidelines for Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice with respect to Trafficking in Cultural Property and Other Related Offences. The United Nations Security Council also issued two resolutions on the protection of cultural heritage in Iraq, with Resolution 1483 in 2003, and in Syria, with Resolution 2170 in 2014, which are to be respected by every State party to the organisation.

The main international legislation central to ICOM's work that deal with cultural property protection and require State Parties to take action are the 1954 Hague Convention on the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict and its two successive Protocols of 1954 and 1999, the 1970 Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property, and the 1995 UNIDROIT Convention on Stolen or Illegally exported cultural objects, underpinning the provisions of the 1970 UNESCO Convention and supplementing them by formulating minimal legal rules on the restitution and return of cultural objects.

In addition to these Conventions, normative and operational actions and official statements related to destructions of cultural heritage can be useful and relevant, although not legally binding. Among those, the 2003 UNESCO Declaration concerning the Intentional Destruction of Cultural Heritage mentions a range of issues, from protection of cultural heritage in the event of armed conflict, including in the case of occupation, to State responsibility and individual criminal responsibility.

ICOM sees the current international legal framework to be fairly well-endowed. While pushing for the creation of new instruments would not necessarily result in more efficient protection of art and heritage, broader ratification, better implementation as well as a greater synergy between the existing texts' operating bodies should be the aim that could still be attained. Maximizing the number of States that ratify and adequately implement the texts is of utmost importance in order to improve their full reach and increase their power.

The different legal instruments created to respond to cultural property protection are meant to be used in conjunction as they mutually reinforce and complement each other. ICOM's normative tools and guidelines are produced in the same logic of complementarity, and in alignment with the existing standards but expanding them on the basis of ethical practice.

Looking ahead, several challenges are still awaiting the global legal framework surrounding cultural property: topics such as protected cultural zones, collection mobility and safe havens for movable heritage all are elements that require further legal detailing and defining. ICOM is currently seeking to further support the museum community in tackling these issues by drafting official policies, guidelines, standards and positions on those diverse topics.

2. ICOM normative instruments

a) Position:

As ICOM promotes excellence, dialogue and the implementation of professional standards within the global museum community, it does so through the development of soft law, operational standards, guidelines and codes to foster the development of effective norms and procedures at the international level. Indeed, non-binding instruments contribute to setting a framework that accompanies museums and heritage professionals through shifting paradigms, by supporting the improvement of their standards and actions. The unique position of ICOM allows it to develop and disseminate such instruments throughout the world.

Through its National and International Committees, ICOM defines guidelines and museum professional standards that contribute to the national and international acknowledgement of museum professionals and encourage their mobility. ICOM's standards and guidelines supply models to museum professionals in order to facilitate the implementation of their good practices in terms of objects acquisition, personnel, conservation of art objects and various museum specialties. Since 1970, over fifty ICOM publications contributed to the global body of norms on cultural property management and protection, for example with tools to facilitate inventories of collections and international guidelines for security, heritage protection and preservation. A complete list of publications is available through ICOM's publications database.¹

b) Actions:

– ICOM Code of Ethics for Museums (adopted in 1986, revised in 2004)

The cornerstone of ICOM's work can be found in its Code of Ethics for Museums², officially recognised as the main international ethical standard for museums. In view of improving the promotion and protection of cultural heritage, and supported by the provisions of the Code of Ethics, museum institutions around the world have adopted strict rules for the acquisition and transfer of collections, limiting the risk of acquiring illegally obtained artefacts. The ICOM Code of Ethics for Museums and the ICOM Definition of a Museum were both recognised as main international references by being included in some countries' national museum law, and lately by being enshrined in the 2015 UNESCO Recommendation on the

¹ <http://icom.museum/resources/publications-database/>

² http://icom.museum/fileadmin/user_upload/pdf/Codes/code_ethics2013_eng.pdf

Promotion and Protection of Museums and Collections, their Diversity and their Role in Society.

– **Key Concepts of Museology booklet (2010)**

Each museum is made up of professionals with a complex set of skills and specialties. Interaction between these professionals is growing worldwide, within ICOM's unique network. A common language that conveys the complex reality of current social and cultural values – ethical, aesthetic, scientific and technological – remains a constant concern for those in charge of transmitting a message to society, particularly in the field of museology.

In this context, the International Committee of ICOM for Museology (ICOFOM) developed the booklet “Key Concepts of Museology”³, as well as a complete Dictionary of Museology (2011), a reference tool that provides museum professionals worldwide with a common language, presenting 21 fundamental concepts of museology.

– **Proposal for a Charter of principles on museums and cultural tourism (2005)**

Tourism can widely contribute to the wealth of a country in promoting its cultural heritage. Unfortunately, it can also endanger it, especially in the more vulnerable regions. Thanks to their leading role in protection and conservation of heritage and in the promotion of cultural diversity, museums are able to promote the essential interaction between protecting the cultural heritage and cultural development. ICOM has always paid close attention to the cultural and natural global heritage protection and conservation concerns as tourism keeps developing. This proposal for a Charter of principles on museums and cultural tourism⁴ was based on the ICOM Code of Ethics for Museums and highlights the strategies and objectives that might allow guaranteeing the use, the interpretation and the management of the cultural heritage so that the future generations can enjoy it.

– **Object Identification (Object ID) (1997)**

The international standard Object Identification (Object ID)⁵ makes the identification of endangered objects easier. Conceived by the international heritage community, led by the Getty Information Institute in 1997, it gives essential information about archaeological, artistic and cultural objects in order to facilitate their identification in case of theft. ICOM is responsible for regulating, promoting and administering the use of this standard among museum professionals and the wider heritage community. The Object ID norm is compatible with the INTERPOL database of stolen works of art and should be the basic guideline followed when describing artifacts in inventories.

Examples of other norms and standards developed by ICOM:

- ICOM Code of Ethics for Natural History Museums (2013)
- Museum Professions – A European Frame of Reference (2008)

³ http://icom.museum/fileadmin/user_upload/pdf/Key_Concepts_of_Museology/Museologie_Anglais_BD.pdf

⁴ http://archives.icom.museum/prop_tour.html

⁵ <http://icom.museum/programmes/fighting-illicit-traffic/object-id/>

- Curricula Guidelines for Museum Professional Development (2nd publication in 2008)
- Profile for a Historic House Museum Curator (2008)
- Running a Museum: a practical handbook (2004)
- The CIDOC Conceptual Reference Model (CRM, 2001)
- Interpreting Musical Instruments in Museum Collections: Guidelines (1998)
- Guidelines for Costume (1998)
- Handbook of Standards Documenting African Collections (1996)
- International Core Data Standards for Ethnology/Ethnography (1996)
- International Guidelines for Museum Object Information: the CIDOC Information Categories (1995)
- Recommendations for the Application of Accession Numbers (1995)
- Registration Step by Step: When an Object Enters the Museum (CIDOC Fact Sheet 1, 1993)
- Labelling and Marking Objects (CIDOC Fact Sheet 2, 1993)
- Guidelines for Disaster Preparedness in Museums (1993)
- Recommendations for Regulating the Access to Musical Instruments in Public Collections (1985)
- The Conservator-Restorer: a Definition of the Profession (1984)
- ICOM Guidelines for Loans (1974)
- Terminology to characterize the conservation of tangible cultural heritage (2008)

3. Role of international and national courts and/or tribunals

a) Position:

ICOM recognizes and supports the crucial role played by international courts and tribunals both at the national and international level. ICOM wishes for prosecution possibilities to be reinforced, in particular in proven cases of cultural property trafficking and destruction. As justice is closely tied in its proceedings to the ratification and adoption of both international treaties and conventions, and national bodies of law, ICOM advocates in favour of the adoption of strict legislation to support the intervention of courts and tribunals. In particular, a sound national legal framework is a fundamental step in ensuring the protection of cultural property threatened by illicit traffic. ICOM always seeks to raise awareness on and promote such initiatives.

Among the very recent historical progress in the implementation of international legislation, the high profile International Criminal Court trial focusing on the Al-Mahdi case was closely followed by heritage community. The sentencing found Ahmed Al-Faqi Al-Mahdi guilty of the war crime of intentionally directing attacks against and destroying nine mausoleums and the gate of the Sidi Yahia mosque in Timbuktu, a Malian UNESCO World Heritage site, in June and July 2012, and sentenced him to nine years in prison. ICOM acknowledged this judgement as an important milestone that creates a precedent in criminal liability and cultural property protection, and provides hope of accountability for perpetrators of such crimes.

b) Actions:

Without directly collaborating with courts and tribunals, ICOM can assist museums through alternative dispute resolution. When faced with disagreements concerning the restitution of illicitly acquired cultural property, mediation is ICOM's preferred tool for dispute resolution. It also answers a need for neutral assistance in negotiations in return or restitution cases but also answers a broader need for museums to be supported in dealing with various legal issues.

In the context of a ground-breaking global partnership, ICOM and the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO), a United Nations agency, designed a unique mediation process adapted to art and cultural heritage issues, based on a relationship of mutual benefit, to set up a service tailored to the needs of museums and actors of the cultural sector. The *Art and Cultural Heritage Mediation* is a voluntary process in which the parties have primary responsibility for resolving their dispute or reaching an agreement after negotiations. The mediator acts as a non-coercive neutral facilitator, meeting directly and simultaneously with both parties, he maintains the dialogue between the parties and assists them in identifying the issues and the interests at stake.

The *Art and Cultural Heritage Mediation* procedure is designed to satisfy the long felt need for a specialized alternative dispute resolution procedure adapted to the settlement of art and cultural heritage disputes or assistance in negotiations in the art and cultural heritage field. The ICOM-WIPO Mediation procedure is not restricted to ICOM Members; non-members can request mediation under the ICOM-WIPO Mediation Rules and benefit from the special joint ICOM-WIPO List of Mediators selected for their skills in mediation and their expertise in art and cultural heritage. Moreover, mediation under the ICOM-WIPO Mediation Rules is a guarantee of respect of safeguards for mediator impartiality and independence and of high ethical standards embodied in the ICOM Code of Ethics for Museums.

The focus is on assisting the parties to reach an agreement through direct communication and increased understanding. The shortcomings of litigation are avoided in mediation as it enables the parties to negotiate in confidentiality and control the procedure. Furthermore, mediation is cost-effective, and faster than litigation. There are no losers in mediation: the parties reach a mutually satisfactory agreement which safeguards both parties' interests. An outcome in mediation cannot be forced upon the parties like in arbitration, which is a procedure adapted to negotiation and seeking mutually satisfactory settlement in art and cultural heritage.

Aside from the above described formal programme and procedure, it is by offering its good offices through cultural diplomacy, thanks to its expertise and important international network, that ICOM most successfully supports parties in the repatriation of movable cultural heritage.

II. INITIATIVES SUPPORTING THE PROTECTION OF CULTURAL HERITAGE

a) Position

Recognising the right of access to, study and enjoyment of cultural heritage as a human right, developing strategies and preventive measures for safeguarding cultural property, countering illicit trafficking and increasing cooperation at the international level is a high priority for ICOM. As stated by the United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, “cultural rights are an integral part of human rights, which are universal, indivisible, interrelated and interdependent.” The Universal Declaration of Human Rights states, in its Article 27, the right of all to freely “participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits”. Furthermore, Article 15 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights recognizes the right of everyone “to take part in cultural life”. Without the tangible evidence of the past that constitutes moveable and immovable cultural heritage, this relationship becomes increasingly difficult to sustain. When cultural property is lost, it is impossible to replace: just as an individual without a memory is a dysfunctional individual, a community or society without traces of its history can become dysfunctional. Much of this ‘memory’ is held in cultural property. Safeguarding it is therefore essential: ICOM wholeheartedly supports the above statements and insures that its work makes it one of the main agents of that mission.

The intentional destruction and the illicit trafficking of cultural property is particularly damaging for cultural heritage preservation. It takes different forms, involves multiple parties and serves diverse purposes, depending on the geographical, socio-economic and political context. Illegal trade in art or archaeological objects contravenes national or international legal instruments. The term “illicit traffic in cultural goods” can therefore address a wide range of practices, depending on the national and international legislation in force: Thefts from museums, monuments, religious sites and other public or privately held places of conservation, illicit excavations of archaeological objects, including underwater excavations, removal of cultural property during armed conflicts or military occupation, illicit export and import of cultural property, illegal transfer of ownership of cultural property (sale, purchase, assumption of mortgage debt, exchange, donation or legacy), production, trade and use of forged documentation, traffic of fake or forged cultural property.

Countering illicit traffic in cultural goods is thus one of ICOM’s main international public service missions. The cultural heritage of nations demonstrates a unique and invaluable historical, archaeological, artistic and documentary richness. Throughout history, regions and states have suffered extensive losses of cultural heritage, in particular as conflicts erupt in an area, weakening the security of the region and expanding risks of lootings and illegal trade of protected cultural goods. Large numbers of invaluable antiquities and other unique cultural objects are still smuggled across borders in spite of increased efforts made by governments to protect their past through the enhancement of national and international legislation and other collaborative efforts. The looting of sites has been continuing, and the illicit trade in cultural goods has developed as a serious threat that causes irreparable harm to all nations’ unique heritage that requires constant efforts to be curbed.

b) Actions:

– ICOM Disaster Risk Management Committee (DRMC)

The protection of heritage in the case of natural disasters or armed conflict is carried out by ICOM in conjunction with its Disaster Risk Management Committee (DRMC)⁶ and through its active involvement in the Blue Shield International. Having the ability to rapidly mobilise expert networks in the field of cultural heritage from all over the world, through its members and numerous programmes, enables ICOM to monitor, assess and salvage cultural heritage in danger in countries most in need.

– Support to Law Enforcement Agencies

ICOM supports the work of law enforcement agencies in the fight against illicit traffic in cultural goods by providing capacity to their agents on the ground, namely through the World Customs Organization's (WCO) ARCHEO programme, by addressing the challenge, for non-experts, that object identification represents. Thanks to ICOM's daily cooperation with WCO, customs officials who suspect a work of art may be transiting illegally can benefit from the support of ICOM to identify the type of object in question before deciding if a more in-depth investigation is necessary. The success of this initiative is due in part to the ICOM General Secretariat's programme to fight illicit trafficking and its available network of more than 36,000 members. ICOM is the only non-police body, along with UNESCO, to have the authority to suggest the registration of stolen works of art into the INTERPOL database, and it is the only NGO recognised by the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) as a member of the expert group on illicit traffic in cultural goods. As such, it develops several programs relating to cultural property protection and the fight against the illicit traffic in cultural goods.

– The Red Lists of Cultural Objects at Risk

The Red Lists of Cultural Objects at Risk were designed by ICOM to highlight the categories of objects that are subject to smuggling and illegal trade and that are often found on the illicit market, in spite of being protected by national and international legislation. They classify the endangered categories of archaeological objects or works of art in the most vulnerable areas of the world, in order to prevent them from being sold or illegally exported. They therefore contribute to the protection of cultural heritage in the countries concerned. These tools are transmitted to and used by police and customs officials worldwide. They are also distributed to museums, auction houses and art dealers.

Given the diversity of regional and national cultural heritages, the Red Lists of Cultural Objects at Risk do not intend to be exhaustive lists, and they are drafted following specific scientific guidelines. The types of objects shown on a Red List must meet three criteria: they must come from a site or region that has been a victim of theft and looting, they must be protected by legislation, and, most importantly, they must be in demand on the art and antiquities market. For each Red List, the market and traffic is studied in order to understand the types of endangered objects that are most in demand among buyers. Actions are

⁶ <http://icom.museum/the-committees/standing-committees/standing-committee/disaster-risk-management-committee/>

undertaken to review reports of thefts and looting, communicate with colleagues on the ground and survey the illicit art market. The final selection of categories and sub-categories is made in conjunction with a group of national and international experts (including historians, art historians, archaeologists, curators, etc.), who all provide knowledge and experience in the field. A list of the norms and legislations protecting cultural heritage in the concerned countries, as well as the international conventions they adhere to, are added to each Red List along with local applicable bi-lateral agreements regarding the protection of heritage, in line with ICOM's support for the development of legislative tools and criminalisation of offenses in the field. Every Red List is published in the official language(s) of the country of origin of the objects at risk but also in the languages of the places where these objects transit and where they might end up being sold. The standard practical format used for all of ICOM's Red Lists has been developed in cooperation with law enforcement, based on the needs of the field and the facilitation of its use.

The efficiency and relevance of ICOM's Red Lists of Cultural Objects at Risk was recently recognised by being inscribed in Section 44 of the latest German law protecting cultural heritage. It states that "cultural property indicated on one of the International Council of Museums' Red List of Cultural Objects at Risk is now subject to strict due diligence requirement. Art and antiquities dealers must comply with these requirements. The same applies to cultural property that is known or thought to have been taken from its owners due to National Socialist persecution (Nazi looted art)." This is another great example of an ICOM tool becoming part of the legal framework.

Thanks to the generous support of national agencies such as the US Department of State, 16 Red Lists were published since 2000, with six of these Red Lists classified as "Emergency" Red Lists because they concern countries whose movable heritage had suddenly been placed at risk, either following a natural disaster (as in the case of the earthquake in Haiti in 2010) or due to armed conflict (Iraq, Egypt, Syria, Libya and Mali). The published Lists are as follows:

- Red List of African Archaeological Objects, 2000
- Red List of Latin American Cultural Objects at Risk, 2003
- Emergency Red List of Iraqi Antiquities at Risk, 2003
- Red List of Afghanistan Antiquities at Risk, 2006
- Red List of Peruvian Antiquities at Risk, 2007
- Red List of Cambodian Antiquities at Risk, 2009
- Red List of Endangered Cultural Objects of Central America and Mexico, 2009
- Emergency Red List of Haitian Cultural Objects at Risk, 2010
- Red List of Chinese Cultural Objects at Risk, 2010
- Red List of Colombian Cultural Objects at Risk, 2010
- Emergency Red List of Egyptian Cultural Objects at Risk, 2011
- Red List of Dominican Cultural Objects at Risk, 2012
- Emergency Red List of Syrian Cultural Objects at Risk, 2013
- Emergency Red List of Iraqi Cultural Objects at Risk, 2015
- Emergency Red List of Libyan Cultural Objects at Risk, 2015
- Red List of West African Cultural Objects at Risk, with an Emergency section for Mali, 2016

Existing Red Lists are currently being translated into different languages and new Red Lists are in development, namely for Yemen and Southeast Europe. A new comprehensive online tool compiling the Red List series is in development to increase global capacity for the identification of trafficked cultural objects.

– **The International Observatory on Illicit Traffic in Cultural Goods**

The first International Observatory on Illicit Traffic in Cultural Goods has been created by ICOM in 2013 as a long-term international cooperative platform network between law enforcement agencies, research institutions and other external expert stakeholders. It includes a global information databank available to the public through a website⁷. Designed to improve the fight against the illegal trade in cultural property and related crimes, at both national and international levels, the Observatory actively produces reports and publications, such as the book *Countering Illicit Traffic in Cultural Goods – The Global Challenge of Protecting the World’s Heritage*, available to all online.

⁷ <http://obs-traffic.museum/>

III. PROFESSIONAL TRAINING

a) Position:

The international awareness-raising efforts made by ICOM and its partners to highlight the importance of protecting the cultural heritage of the world are supported by the belief that culture is an instrument of dialogue between individuals and among populations. To increase public awareness of the role of museums in the development of society, each year, on 18 May, ICOM organizes the International Museum Day, in which millions of visitors worldwide take part, celebrating the work of their favoured institutions.

As the representative of the international museum community, ICOM also places the enhancement of professional standards at the heart of its missions. Considering capacity-building as a rapidly increasing priority, ICOM regularly implements and supports training workshops and programmes. These workshops are the occasion for experts to transmit their knowledge and share their know-how with their colleagues from other countries, in an aim to reinforce the professional skills of museum professionals in a wide range of areas: inventory, collection management, exhibition, safety and security, education, marketing, disaster risk reduction, ethics and more. The workshops are organized to offer an opportunity to share ideas and experience, in hope of contributing to the scientific and reasonable collection management, to the sufficient display and utilisation of collections, and to the effective communication among museums and between museum and society, enabling museums to fully fulfil their functions and value.

Facilitating professional exchanges between professionals from different countries is a goal that also seeks to permit cross cultural dialogue to develop inclusive approaches and innovative guidelines as to how museums should aim at dealing with cultural heterogeneity, peacebuilding, and diversity. ICOM wishes to lead by example in encouraging museums to embrace their social role as a means to remain relevant.

Lastly, it is a for ICOM priority to keep making sure it does everything it can to strengthen the capacities of law enforcement agents around the world, in order to support their pivotal role in identifying cultural objects of dubious provenance that could originate from illicit excavation or illegal trade.

b) Actions:

– ICOM International Training Centre for Museum Studies (ICOM-ITC)

The ICOM-ITC, housed at the Palace Museum in Beijing, China, is a collaboration between ICOM, ICOM China and the Palace Museum officially inaugurated on 1 July, 2013⁸. The operation and management of the Centre is conducted by the Palace Museum. By providing inclusive and participatory training programmes intended to ICOM members from emerging countries and for museum professionals from the Asia-Pacific region, the Centre is intended to “promote research and exchange among museums at an international level and develop the museum expertise of professionals from developing countries, especially those from the Asia-Pacific region” where the museum sector is growing rapidly and there is a high demand for museum professionals.

⁸ <http://icom.museum/activities/training/icom-international-training-centre-for-museum-studies/>

– **Building capacity of museum professionals worldwide**

In an aim to better serve the members of developing museum communities around the world, custom-designed workshops to improve knowledge and professional practice are regularly organised by ICOM in various locations throughout the year, based on the needs expressed by its membership.

In addition, ICOM's International Committees are also very active in raising awareness on and in addressing emerging issues affecting museums. As an example, the International Committee for the Collections and Activities of Museums of Cities (CAMOC) has been organising workshops on migration and museums. It recently addressed migration and risk management by encouraging institutions and professionals to work more closely with the communities concerned. ICOM's International Committee for Documentation (CIDOC) also regularly hosts workshops in its area of expertise, such as the harmonisation of museum documentation practices, an essential aspect of building good practices that contribute to preserving cultural heritage and protect it in the event of destruction and trafficking.

– **Specific training on the protection of cultural heritage at risk**

In collaboration with its national and international partners, ICOM conducts workshops to train government representatives, police and customs agents as well as heritage professionals in the implementation of practical tools to protect cultural heritage at risk. Such capacity-building actions can respond to conflict situations or immediate risks threatening cultural heritage. The International Council of Museum's Disaster Risk Management Committee (DRMC), the Blue Shield International, and major museum institutions such as the Smithsonian Institution have been key partners in carrying out training missions in emergency in the past years. Programmes carried out with the Smithsonian include site-specific training actions conducted on the ground for management planning, preservation, and educational development at the Iraq Institute for the Conservation of Antiquities and Heritage (IICAH) located in Erbil, offering courses to Iraqi heritage professionals. Diverse endeavours to train heritage professionals from Syria and Mali on risk mitigation and post-conflict activity have also been developed and are on-going.

To accompany the publication of the Red Lists, training has proven a useful tool in supporting border control enforcement units and police officials. Numerous success stories surround the use of the Red Lists, following training on adequate use of the main practical tool in fighting illicit traffic. As an example, in 2012, French Central Office on Cultural Goods (OCBC) announced that ICOM's Emergency Red List of Iraqi Antiquities at Risk (the 2003 version) helped in the identification, the recovery and the restitution of 13 Iraqi archaeological objects from the ancient civilisation of Mesopotamia, dated from 2350 BC to 1700 BC. Other successful operations involving Red Lists concern cases where law enforcement authorities had benefited from prior training. Over the years, thousands of cultural objects have been returned to their countries of origin thanks to police and customs using the Red Lists. For those success stories to multiply, focus should be put on increasing awareness among law enforcement agencies around the world on the importance of using the ICOM Red Lists.

Aiming at raising awareness on the importance of cultural heritage necessarily includes building the capacities of all those involve in its promotion and protection.