

Resolution No. 6: Promoting Sustainable Development (S.O.2)

ICOM recognizes the potential for conflict between economic and political interests and the continuing development of peoples, communities and their cultures as well as the protection of natural resources.

6.1 The ICOM General Assembly launches an appeal

- to support initiatives and steps to ensure social, financial, and intellectual autonomy for museums with respect for their missions; and
- to make museums more attractive for the general public by transforming them into educational venues for enjoyment, experiencing, and learning about culture and nature, while at the same time taking into account the importance of safeguarding heritage for future generations.

6.2 ICOM recognizes the increasing dangers to universal heritage posed by infrastructural mega-projects. Even where such projects may contribute to economic growth and may benefit the people of the region, nevertheless, they often have a very destructive effect on the cultural heritage and the traditions of the people living there. The ICOM General Assembly recommends to its members in this context

- to contribute to raising awareness in relation to these dangers at all levels in all countries, regarding any and all such projects, and for example, at this time, the Ilisu/High Dam Project in Turkey. The ICOM General Assembly appeals to its members and partners in relevant and intergovernmental organisations
- to urge the responsible authorities of Turkey to reconsider their activities and timeframe in the scope of the planned project on the Tigris River in order to ensure better protection of the heritage in the affected region, the populations living in the area and the ancient city of Hasankeyf; and, in particular;
- requests its members of the countries involved with this project (especially in Austria, Germany, Switzerland, and Turkey) to appeal to their authorities and private entities located in these and other countries that support and contribute to the project to consider the universal heritage implications of their actions.

With regard to the circumstances of Resolution No. 6, I must say that there were several reasons for intensive discussions and some frustrations related to the proposal of the National Committee of Austria and the Disaster Relief for Museums Task Force for a resolution related to the Ilisu-Highdam project in Turkey. The proposal intended to express deep concerns on dangers posed to the cultural (ancient and modern) and natural heritage in the Tigris region, but was never meant to be a political statement directed against one country. The committee tried several times, unsuccessfully, to contact representatives of the board of ICOM-Turkey to receive their input and views on the proposal. However, other members of the National Committee of Turkey contacted the Resolutions Committee, and worked with us together to revise the wording. There was also another factor involved. Ms. Bianca Jagger, Council of Europe Goodwill Ambassador and Chair of the World Future Council, very concerned about the impact of the Ilisu-Highdam project, contacted us and requested to make a presentation to the General Assembly. Such a presentation was not possible, but she sent a letter to the Resolutions Committee, the Ethics Committee, and the President of ICOM. This letter was discussed but since contrary to the drafted resolution, it also raised political issues, it could not be disseminated with official announcements of ICOM. When the proposal was discussed by the General Assembly, it failed at first, because of concerns that political issues might be part of it. At the instigation of the Turkish colleagues who had worked closely with the Resolutions Committee to formulate the proposal, the rejection was revised, and the proposal became part of Resolution No. 6. The last act was that the very committed, but clearly politically oriented letter of Bianca Jagger appeared on the ICOM2007 General Conference website. That caused immediate negative reactions from our Turkish colleagues who had worked on the resolution, and we had to ask our Austrian colleagues to remove the letter from the site. This story is a good example of how possible misunderstandings and misconceptions arise about what an organisation such as ICOM can do, and what it cannot. ICOM must warn about actual threats and dangers for world cultural and natural heritage, but not destroy the basis of trust with colleagues and recourse to diplomatic channels.

Regine Schulz, Chair of the Resolutions Committee

Case Study – Hasankeyf: a Medieval Site Threatened by the Ilisu Dam

Hasankeyf, which is one of the medieval sites in Turkey, is faced with the danger of being inundated by Ilisu Dam. The project was started without giving due attention to the presence of the unique architectural heritage at Hasankeyf. In spite of objections from archaeologists, art historians, architects, environmentalists and writers, the project has not been changed or cancelled. The authorities provide only eight more years for further research. This very short time is not enough to complete archaeological research; several cultural layers and artefacts will not be able to receive proper attention during the haste or will be flooded before they are systematically studied. The same is also true for several other prehistoric, ancient and urban sites in the GAP region; Zeugma, a Roman garrison city, and Halfeti, a beautiful town in the stone tradition are among significant ones sentenced to death by dam constructions. (...)

> International charters and conventions concerning protection of cultural heritage recommend that at the preliminary survey stage of engineering projects, sites of historic and archaeological importance be mar-

ked and measures taken to preserve them *in-situ*. UNESCO's Recommendations concerning the Preservation of Cultural Property Endangered by Public or Private Works (1968) points out the fact that "it is a duty of governments to ensure the protection and the preservation of cultural heritage of mankind as much as to promote social and economic development. Preventive and corrective measures should be aimed at protecting or saving cultural property from public or private works likely to damage and destroy it..."

> UNESCO's recommendations have been ratified by Turkey, and we must insist on the revision of the dam project in the light of this fact. Hasankeyf is a Grade I archaeological site with significant monuments. No permission is yet granted from the Monuments Council of the region for the construction of the dam. The Ministry of Culture should try to solve this problem for the benefit of Hasankeyf.

Extracts from the report from ICOMOS-Turkey, 2005, published on ICOMOS website: www.international.icomos.org/