

Interview with Regine Schulz – Chairperson, Resolutions Committee 2007

1. Why are Resolutions of a General Conference so important?

Resolutions are essential means to achieve three important goals. They express the needs, necessities, and targets of the National and International Committees, as well as the Regional Alliances. Resolutions should be related to the Strategic Plan and its objectives, but not be congruent with them. Therefore, they offer the chance to act on (in a preventive or supportive way) and react to actual occurrences, current events and needs not only of the museums communities, but also to situations or special incidents related to the cultural and natural heritage. Consequently, resolutions are appropriate vehicles to interrelate in a flexible and focused way the ICOM communities, as well as engage ICOM with affiliated organisations and the outside world.

2. Which Resolutions were particularly important and how do these separate Resolutions interconnect? What criteria did you use to select and handle the proposals?

All the proposals were relevant and important, and the Resolution Committee has to thank all the submitters. Nevertheless, for some of the proposals a resolution was not the right vehicle; especially, requests related to procedures and regulations of ICOM, or to very general ideas and suggestions, which were either covered by the goals and objectives of the Strategic Plan, or could/should lead into future modifications of the plan. Such proposals were forwarded to the responsible committee, the Executive Council and/or the Secretariat, which will deal with these requests or suggestions. In addition, it had to be decided how to handle proposals that addressed or followed up on issues which were part of former resolutions or plans. Such proposals showed that there was still an urgency, and we tried as far as possible and without being repetitive to implement these thoughts. The importance of the resolutions was dependent on several equal factors: urgency related to a special situation (e.g. Resolution 6.2), necessities expressed in several proposals (e.g. Resolution 2.1), and support of the Strategic Plan (e.g. Resolution 1.2).

3. What was the process of gathering Resolutions and producing the final text like?

The Committee, with the support of the Secretariat, tried to collect and implement the 32 incoming proposals to the last possible moment to offer all committees and groups the chance to address their issues. First, those proposals which would be handled in a more appropriate way as a request to or suggestion for the Executive Council or the Secretariat were forwarded to them, then the proposals were sorted by themes related to the Strategic Plan. Several proposals addressed the same issues and therefore the Committee tried to find adequate wording, which included as far as possible all mentioned aspects. It was a real challenge to produce the final text in a way that the resolutions were linked to one another and to the Strategic Plan, that they did not repeat former resolutions or plans of ICOM or the affiliated organisations, and did not lose the substance presented in the proposals. Where it was possible, we tried to implement the wording of the proposals, but in many cases this was problematic, especially, when the same issue was addressed several times. In the end, the final text was constructed in a way that the resolutions were sorted by theme related to the Strategic Plan. A resolution title addressed these

themes followed by one or more statements, which introduced the recommendations, advice, or opinions.

4. Why was it important to mention both general principles and specific examples in the Resolutions?

Although ICOM is part of a political framework, it is not a political organisation, and cannot interfere in partisan political issues. All goals, objectives and especially the resolutions must be formulated in a way that the intention is clearly stated and not misleading. Therefore, it is essential to emphasize the general principles as a basis and framework for special issues. The chosen examples address not only the implications of its special case, but also serve as a basis of comparison for similar issues, which have not been specifically mentioned.

5. What general orientation did you use to organise the Resolutions?

The committee oriented the organisation of the resolutions in accordance to the Strategic Plan. Such a strategy was important to convey

the intention to tie the actual needs with the general principles and the planned goals and objectives for the next years. It is an attempt to combine flexibility and present circumstances with the clearly defined long-term goals of the organisation.

6. Many people have commented on the excellence of the Resolutions produced by this ICOM General Conference and the global scope of commitments these reflect. The definition of "Universal Heritage" is a new concept. How can ICOM carry through to action?

Most essential is to raise awareness not only of our members, but also of non-museum related groups; therefore, we have to strengthen our partnerships. In addition, it is essential that ICOM modifies slightly its brand towards an organisation, which is open minded enough for creative ideas and a discussion partner for all groups interested in the protection of the "Universal Heritage". One step could be the creation of an online platform, which invites ideas for the promotion and protection of the heritage, but also expresses concerns. If especially the younger generation is to accept ICOM as a partner, we have to provide up-to-date communication tools, which are much more flexible and would enhance action-driven performances.

7. How did you feel before, during and after the voting of the Resolutions at the General Assembly?

At the beginning of the conference I was deeply concerned about the lack of prepared draft resolutions. Later, I felt somewhat overwhelmed by the huge amount of incoming proposals. However, I really have to express my deep gratitude towards the members of the Committee, our advisor Ben Koevoets, and the members of the Secretariat as well as the Executive Council, who worked very closely together with us. Many of them also had obligations in other working groups and committees; but each of them was coming, whenever possible, and the discussions led in the end to the result we achieved. It was frustrating that we had not been able to present the draft in advance to the Assembly, and that many colleagues had the feeling that the process was not transparent enough. We can only learn and try to organise the process in a better and more effective way in future. However, the overall satisfactory result is grounded in the submitted proposals, and I would like to thank on behalf of the Resolutions Committee all involved members for their excellent work.