



PRESS RELEASE

Paris, 9 June, 2011:

ICOM's Annual Meetings The international museum community discussed three hot topics in today's museum context: sustainability, ethical principles and research standards

The International Council of Museums (ICOM) met at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris from 6 to 8 June 2011 to review the past year and discuss future objectives. The event brought together museum representatives and professionals from all over the world from various disciplines, who reflected on some of the major talking points for the museum community today, including sustainable development; museum ethics; and research, training and publications.

This year's special guest, British artist and film director Peter Greenaway, gave a presentation entitled *The New Visual Literacy*. He spoke of a widespread visual illiteracy due to an essentially text-based culture and discussed the global museum's obligation in this new digital age to promote the visual. Through several spectacular demonstrations of his reinterpretation of classic paintings such as Leonardo da Vinci's *The Last Supper* and Rembrandt's *Night Watch*, Mr Greenaway illustrated what can be done to encourage visual awareness and support the dictum: "the Image always has the last word".

As in previous years, the General Assembly, held on 8 June, reviewed the actions taken by ICOM and its members on important questions concerning the international museum community but also the organisation itself. The Assembly also adopted the organisation's new Strategic Plan for 2011 – 2013.

In 2011 and 2012 ICOM will continue to endorse greater inclusiveness and diversity. In particular, the organisation will continue to promote a greater knowledge of and respect for the diverse heritage of the African continent in terms of museum development, for instance through its support for the Inclusive Museum Conference, to be held in Johannesburg, South Africa at the end of June, and through its ongoing discussions with African heritage organisations.

ICOM will also seek to amplify its previous activities in the fight against illicit traffic by introducing new Red Lists of cultural property at risk, including an emergency Red List for Egypt and a Red List for West African cultural objects in danger.

At the close of the annual meetings, ICOM President Hans-Martin Hinz said: "It is a pleasure to witness the remarkable flow of energy that occurs when our international museum community comes together. Thanks to the fruitful dialogue between members from various disciplines and cultures, participants walk away better armed with solutions to the challenges facing museums today." Director General Julien Anfruns added: "This year's annual meetings raised several constructive questions as to how our organisation can adapt to today's changing world. Peter Greenway's presentation provided an excellent insight into how museums can embrace new technologies to reinforce their role in contemporary society."

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ICOM in brief

Created in 1946, ICOM (International Council of Museums) is an international non-governmental organisation maintaining formal relations with UNESCO. Within the United Nations, ICOM has a consultative status with the Economic and Social Council. ICOM is the only international organisation representing museums and museum professionals on a global level.

What is ICOM?

- ◉ A diplomatic forum of representatives from 137 countries and territories
- ◉ Standards of excellence for museums, especially in terms of ethics with the publication of the *ICOM Code of Ethics for Museums*
- ◉ A unique network of more than 30,000 museum professionals worldwide
- ◉ An international think tank of 31 International Committees representing specific museum fields
- ◉ International public service missions, committed to fighting illicit traffic in cultural property and developing emergency response programmes for situations of natural disaster or armed conflict

For all queries regarding the international museum community or to interview the Director General of ICOM:

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