



History
of **ICOM**
(1946-1996)

Sid Ahmed Baghli
Patrick Boylan
Yani Herreman



INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF MUSEUMS
CONSEIL INTERNATIONAL DES MUSEES

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To Leaders in Museum Work

international cooperation

mutual understanding

A grain of sand that has become a sparkling jewel

Saroj Ghose

President of ICOM

A period of 50 years is, in fact, not that large that an Organisation shall boast of it. It is a small period like a grain of sand in the big sand clock of human civilisation. Yet this has been a most important period, one that has witnessed an unprecedented growth in museums and the museum profession. This is the period that has seen a sea change in the concept of museums, with the emergence of new breeds of museums that had never been thought of earlier: Interactive science centres, society-oriented ecomuseums, and multidisciplinary thematic presentations have all changed the concept and contents of traditional museums to the greatest extent that man has ever known. This last half century has also witnessed perceptible changes in museum activities. Hands-on involvement of visitors not only in science museums but in museums of all kinds, and outreach programmes beyond the four walls of museums have made them much more people-minded than ever before. This period has also seen an invasion of technology with a large impact on museum functions. Exhibit documentation is now done on CD-ROM or video disc; electronic eyes supplement human surveillance in museum security; computerised LCD projection is replacing traditional audio-visual presentation; high energy electron microscopes are coming more to hand in conservation laboratories; conventional exhibition design appears old-fashioned and limited with the advent of computer-aided design systems; and finally the Internet is bringing the museum to the visitor's desk round the world.

In the last 50 years ICOM has grown with these changes, hand in hand with the museums, riding a new wave of progress and dynamism. In its small and humble way ICOM has given help and support to the museum world in this time of change. ICOM is not just another 50-year-old organisation, it has assumed the role of a torch bearer in five continents. ICOM has not remained a little grain of sand in the sand of time, it has turned into a tiny sparkling diamond of quality and brilliance.

Now that these 50 years are over, ICOM has to look forward to meet the new challenges of time, the new opportunities and threats. Time will judge ICOM's success, not on the basis of its performance in the past but on its ability to cope with the demands of the future. Challenges are manifold, and the first may come from what appears today as an exciting boon, the Internet, which provides high-level global visibility from space. This powerful visibility may

demand strong accountability from museums, and ICOM will be required to gear up all its arsenal to help museums in their combat against stagnation of ideas and mediocrity in approach, so as to project excellence through this powerful electronic medium.

Another challenge of time in the next half century will be what ICOM chose as a theme for its General Conference in 1998. Will museums succeed in becoming 'generators of culture' rather than remaining confined as reflectors of culture? The role of museums in reflecting the past has always been passive. The next half century will witness ICOM's effort in converting this passivity into activity. Museums have to offer catalytic support for generating a new progressive culture and for ushering in social transformation. What will ICOM's agenda be for this reform? Challenges are manifold, as I stated earlier. The identity crisis arising out of newly emerging nationalism all over the world, continued threat to world heritage, both natural and cultural, degradation of the environment, loss of values in society and adaptability in the wake of exponential growth of technology – every issue demands sensitivity to the problem and creativity in its solution.

ICOM can well rise to the occasion, as its past dynamism has shown. This *History of ICOM*, compiled by eminent experts from different academic backgrounds, cultures and regions, underscores its extraordinary development. Whenever necessary, the Organisation has been able to put itself into question, adapt and innovate so as to better serve museums, the museum profession and society. Among the authors' merits is the fact that they have retraced the path followed, analysed the different steps, the crises and the successes, and have tried to discover the key to the Organisation's representativeness and efficacy.

This book is also a tribute to all those who have given their best to promote, defend and above all make museums popular places. May their efforts and sacrifices not have been in vain!

I can assure you that ICOM will live up to expectations in the next fifty years and so celebrate its centenary.

Sid Ahmed Baghli:

*General Conferences, ICOM's influence in developing countries,
important personalities in the Organisation, and Conclusion*

Patrick Boylan:

Institutional aspects and the evolution of the museum profession

Yani Herreman:

ICOM and the museums of Latin America

Sid Ahmed Baghli and Patrick Boylan:

Origins and definition of the museum

Sid Ahmed Baghli and Laura Gutman:

Editors

Penelope Poulton:

Translation

ICOM's history and prehistory

Introduction

ICOM, the International Council of Museums, is a professional non-governmental organisation that belongs to the large family of world culture and heritage. It has remained a lively forum where museum professionals can share their experience. It is this international dialogue and cooperation that has made the Organisation an exceptional instrument of development and exchange.

To throw light on the origins of ICOM we have tried to retrace the various steps in its fascinating history, whose roots go back to a little-known prehistory. We have underlined the importance of the General Conferences, which have served as institutional dynamos. We have also studied ICOM's contribution to the development of the profession and have paid special attention to developing countries, as it is these places that have the greatest difficulties and the most original museum experiences. Lastly, we have called to mind some of the important personalities in ICOM's history.

The antecedents

Museums have existed for several centuries, and well before ICOM was created there was a degree of cooperation among them although this took the form of isolated or occasional exchanges without any universal or institutional dimension. It was not until the late 19th century that a wider attempt at cooperation came into being with the founding of The Museums Association in York, in the United Kingdom. Later, in the early 20th century, the League of Nations took the positive step of setting up the International Museums Office.

From a Museums Association to an International Museums Office

The history of ICOM was preceded by a long and interesting prehistory, particularly in terms of the development of cooperation among museums.

In June 1889, about a dozen British curators and museum governing body members met at The Yorkshire Museum, and resolved to establish what was probably the world's first national, and indeed international, organisation for museums, The Museums Association. It was called "The" Museums Association, without specifying the nationality, because at the time it was unique in the world. Its members were both national and international, individuals and museums, the first foreign institutional member being the Salt Lake City Museum in the USA. However, the proportion of overseas members fell as national museums associations gradually developed in other parts of the world. For example, the American Association of Museums was established in 1906 as a parallel museum body for its own professionals. In France the Association des Conservateurs des Musées et Collections Publiques was founded in 1923, and was exclusively reserved for professionals who had been given the official status of curator by the State.

As the movement towards associations emerged around the world, cooperation among museums became a reality, heralding more positive initiatives.

After the First World War museums were recognised for the first time by the international community as having an important role to play in mutual understanding and international cooperation.

In the early 1920s, after the creation of the League of Nations, an international commission of intellectual cooperation led by the French philosopher Henri Bergson met in Geneva to found an International Institute of Intellectual Cooperation (1). It was in this framework that Henri Focillon, Professor at the Sorbonne, was later to write a report recommending that the League of Nations create an International Museums Office to undertake the documentation of museums, promote joint projects including research on museum practice, and to publish information and advice. The International Museums Office was placed under the supervision of the International Institute of Intellectual Cooperation.

The work undertaken by the Office, particularly between 1927 and 1939, was notable for its relevant action and the quality of its scientific and technical achievements. Among its initiatives was *Museumion*, a specialised international periodical and the forerunner of UNESCO's *Museum*, now *Museum International*.

In 1930 it also undertook a study on the delicate, controversial subject of cleaning and restoring works of art, which led to the International Conference for the Study of Scientific Methods for the Examination and Preservation of Works of Art, in Rome, after the Second World War. The findings of the study were published by the Office in a substantial book that is still considered a landmark today. And it was the Office's Commission on oil paintings that was reconstituted after the Second World War to become ICOM's International Committee for Conservation (ICOM-CC).

The Office's most ambitious project was without a doubt the *Traité de Muséographie*, a massive encyclopaedia on museum techniques of which only three volumes were published.

One particularly important task undertaken by the Office in cooperation with representative museum professionals was to consider the danger to museums from aerial bombardment. The tragic example of the Spanish Civil War was examined by the Office, which monitored the effectiveness of various kinds of air raid protection for museums, monuments and their collections, and of other practical measures, such as the temporary evacuation of important collections to places of safety abroad (as in the temporary removal of some Spanish works of art to Vienna).

The Office then prepared a text which was, in fact, the first draft for an international treaty on the protection of monuments and works of art in the event of armed conflict. Though this text was never ratified it had a significant impact on the Hague Convention of 1954.

(1) This Commission was to a certain extent a forerunner of UNESCO. F. Valderriama, *A History of UNESCO*, Ed. UNESCO, Paris 1995.

The International Council of Museums
September 4, 1946

To Leaders in Museum Work in Various Countries throughout the World,

In conformity with the charter of the United Nations and pursuant to the authority thereof the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has been created for the purpose of advancing, through the educational, scientific and cultural relations of the peoples of the world, the objectives of international peace and of the common welfare of mankind for which the United Nations was established and which its Charter proclaims.

In the course of a recent trip to Europe, from which I have just returned, I had the opportunity, as Chairman of the Policy Committee of the American Association of Museums, of meeting and conferring with many museum leaders in France, Switzerland, Holland, Belgium and England, and with officials of the Preparatory Commission of UNESCO in London and elsewhere. As a result of these conferences and inasmuch as there did not exist any international organization of museums, it was determined to organize an International Council of Museums.

You will find enclosed copies of various reports and documents which indicate the steps taken leading to the organization of this Council and the naming of its temporary officers as listed in Report Number Three issued in London, England, August 17, 1946.

The plan to be followed in effectuating the permanent organization of the International Council of Museums is also outlined in this same report. An essential feature of this plan calls for the prompt organization within each country, which may desire to participate, of a committee consisting of museum leaders to be known as a Committee for International Cooperation among Museums. You will note that such committees have already been organized in France, Switzerland, Holland, Belgium, England and the United States and that steps have been taken to bring about their organization in Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Poland and Czechoslovakia.

As temporary President of the Council, I have undertaken the task of securing the organization of similar committees, so far as is possible, in every other country where the museum leaders may desire to so organize and thus cooperate in the program outlined in the enclosed documents.

I am, therefore, extending, through you, an invitation to the various museum leaders in your country to consider this matter and effectuate as promptly as possible, the organization of a Committee for International Cooperation among Museums in your country by designating the members to serve thereon and by selecting or nominating a Chairman.

It is our sincere hope that museum leaders in a large number of countries throughout the world will be willing to cooperate in this program and arrange for the organization within their respective countries - within the next two months of the suggested committees, which should in each instance, be widely representative of the museum interests in each country.

May I respectfully request that you advise me by air mail of the receipt of this letter and, if possible, further advise me by air mail to reach Buffalo on, or before, November 1, 1946, of the names, addresses and titles of the museums leaders who will constitute the Committee of International Cooperation among Museums in your country, specifying the name of its Chairman.

Sincerely yours

Chauncey J. Hamlin,
Temporary President



conserving, studying, enhancing

exhibiting for research and educational purposes, and delight

Fifty years. of activity

(1946-1996)

Chapter I

General Conferences:

important milestones
in ICOM's history

ICOM's history has certainly been forged by a multitude of events with repercussions that might have appeared decisive, but it is the General Conferences that have undoubtedly been the most outstanding landmarks along its path. Much more than solid links in the fifty-year chain, they have always been the tireless dynamos behind ICOM's development.

ICOM has been driven and shaped by almost twenty General Assemblies that have directly influenced its management, policies and organisation. The permanence of this tradition should be underlined, as it has meant that many museum professionals have been able to have a democratic influence on ICOM's activities and future. This direct contribution has stimulated their commitment and created new membership.

While there were only a few dozen delegates from around fifteen countries at the Constitutive Assembly in Paris in 1946, there were 1,200 participants from 94 countries – representing 12,000 members from 130 countries – at the General Assembly in Stavanger in 1995. What a long way to have come in fifty years!

To understand the keys to this astonishing success, we have to cast our minds back to the General Conferences. These major international meetings have by turn been studious or stormy, serious or resolutely audacious, but have always borne the stamp of a critical eye and the will to challenge things when necessary. The terrific wind of revolt that blew through the General Conference in Grenoble in 1971 could have destabilised the Organisation, but it turned out to be a good thing. And in 1974, the General Assembly in Copenhagen decided to revise the Organisation's *Statutes* to breathe new life into its structures and enable more professionals to have a say in ICOM's activities.

The different sessions have been particularly fruitful thanks to the regularity at which they have been held and the quality of the work. Careful attention has always been paid to an often fragile and unstable environment, marked by difficulties of all kinds. And so ICOM has had to be organised and run on a solid, democratic basis, with constant attention to the changing, strategic role of museums, and proof of imagination, daring, solidarity and tolerance.

It is this ability to adapt that has made ICOM's history so distinctive.

16th November 1946

Chauncey J. Hamlin's initiative



Chauncey J. Hamlin, President of ICOM, during UNESCO's General Conference in 1950.

We can never stress enough the important part in ICOM's creation played by the American Chauncey J. Hamlin, President of the Buffalo Museum of Science and influential member of the American Association of Museums.

In the days following the Second World War he launched his idea by corresponding and travelling widely, using a pragmatic approach to carry out his project. Moving on from his plan to bring together museums in Europe and North America, he gradually enlarged his field of action to include other parts of the world. He then took the opportunity on the occasion of UNESCO's first conference in Paris to organise ICOM's Constitutive Assembly at the Louvre on 16th November, 1946.

During his many trips and contacts to promote cooperation between museums, Chauncey J. Hamlin's vision seems to have been to set up an international organisation of museums consisting mainly of national representative bodies and individuals appointed by museum associations. He drew on the model adopted by non-governmental organisations and by federations, such as the International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA).

As a matter of priority Hamlin then strove to gain the support of all these bodies and to persuade them to set up what were known as "National Committees on International Co-operation Among Museums". Indeed the initial rules of ICOM made it clear that *In each nation, where associations of museums have already been organised, the national committee [of ICOM] for such country has been appointed by such association.* In countries without an association Hamlin issued personal invitations to museum leaders selected to represent the museum interests of their respective countries in the Council. In practice, almost all the invitations went to the directors of national and other major museums and galleries, or to senior officials of government ministries or agencies responsible for museums. With this as its model, ICOM started up as a federation of locally appointed National Committees. The membership of each National Committee was fixed at a maximum of fifteen individuals per country. However, each committee was asked to make sure that membership should be selected to be *as widely representative as possible of museum interests.* This was sometimes taken seriously, as in the case of Great Britain where the Council of the Museums Association, which selected the initial membership, explicitly chose to include one of the rising stars of the Junior Museum Officials Group, Lorraine Conran, while Brazil appointed Mario Barata, a dynamic young graduate trainee attached to the Louvre.

The first two international meetings

In less than a year, two meetings, one in Paris and the other in Mexico City, marked the birth of the International Council of Museums.

1946
1947

The advent of ICOM

Constitutive Assembly, Paris, 1946

The Constitutive Assembly was held at the Musée du Louvre in Paris, from 16th to 20th November, 1946. Fourteen nations were represented: Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, France, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States. In addition, letters of support announcing the formation of National Committees in the four corners of the earth were received from: Argentina, Chile, China, Egypt, Finland, Greece, Haiti, India, Nicaragua, Peru, the Philippines, South Africa and Turkey.

Chauncey J. Hamlin was appointed Chairman, and a draft Constitution and By-laws were studied for the non-governmental organisation.

As a general line of policy it was agreed that priority should be given to the training and exchange of students and curators, and National Committees were asked to report on training facilities within their own regions.

Mutual understanding and cultural exchanges

Interim Conference, Mexico City, 1947

A preparatory Interim Conference was held in Mexico City from 7th to 14th November, 1947. This constituted ICOM's first General Assembly.

A resolution was taken to encourage the International Exchange of Objects in accordance with the following points:

- We believe that it is of the greatest importance for every nation that the knowledge of the cultures of the various countries forming part of one world should be made more widely known;*
- By these means there will be a broader ground of mutual understanding, for through exchange of cultural knowledge there is a common ground for peace;*
- We believe that in the great museums of the various countries of the world there should be an adequate and significant representation of cultures of mankind;*
- We believe that each country through its museums should facilitate and implement by all means possible this interchange;*
- We declare ourselves strongly opposed to the illegal excavation and exportation, without the*

authority of the State, of objects which are considered of primary importance and of specific and unique national interest.

Structures were set up. Apart from National Committees and their members, other key bodies were put in place during the early days of the Organisation: the Executive Committee, the Advisory Board (later renamed the Advisory Committee), International Committees and an administrative body (the ICOM Secretariat). The management of ICOM was primarily the responsibility of the Executive Committee (later renamed the Executive Council), which was first elected for two years, and then for three years at each General Conference. Initially there were fifteen members comprising a President, three Vice-Presidents, a Treasurer, two Secretaries, the Chairman of the Advisory Board and seven other members.



T h e b i r t h o f t h e I n t e r n a t i o n a l C o m m i t t e e s

International Committees

which were first known as "Specialised Groups" then "International Subject Committees" were placed under the chairmanship of what were described as "distinguished museum leaders in their specialised fields".

The seven following committees were set up in 1946:

- Science and Health Museums and Planetaria*
- Museums of Art and Applied Arts*
- Museums of Natural History*
- Museums of History of Science and Technology*
- Museums of Archaeology and History and Historical Sites*
- Museums of Ethnography (including folk art and culture)*
- Zoological Gardens, Botanical Gardens and National Parks.*

The early chairpersons of these committees were chosen by the Executive Council. However, the rules were relaxed at ICOM's First Biennial Conference in Paris in 1948, allowing the establishment of permanent International Committees and giving these the right to choose their own members and elect their own officers.

Of the early International Committees some still survive today in one form or another. Furthermore, other International Committees were not long in coming, particularly the International Committee for Conservation (ICOM-CC), which was to become ICOM's largest.

ICOM's growth

1948
1968

ICOM's first seven General Conferences – in Paris in 1948, in London in 1950, in Genoa and Milan in 1953, in Basle, Zurich and Geneva in 1956, in Stockholm in 1959, at The Hague in 1962 and in New York in 1965 – saw the Organisation developing little by little. Its structures were reinforced, geographical representation grew, and above all, activities became increasingly professional in terms of consistency and orientation. In the two second-last General Conferences of the period there were respectively no less than 42 motions (for the one in 1959) and 58 (for the one in 1962).

This can be explained by the sheer scope of the field, the huge needs, and the enthusiasm of the participants. The General Conference that followed in New York in 1965 was more realistic, with only ten motions!

The three main concerns during this period were:

- the educational role of museums
- exhibitions and the international circulation of cultural property
- the conservation and restoration of cultural property.

Setting up structures

First General Conference, Paris, 1948

The First Biennial Conference was held in Paris from 28th June to 2nd July 1948, thus beginning the brilliant series of seventeen international meetings, which were first held on a biennial, and then on a triennial, basis. On this occasion, 300 museologists from thirty countries, mainly from Europe but also from America, South-East Asia (Siam and China) and Australia, focused on documentation, restoration and exchanges.

From that moment on, the Organisation's foundation was clearly established. "Museums" were defined as follows:

The word 'Museums' includes all collections, open to the public, of artistic, technical, scientific, historical or archaeological material, including zoos and botanical gardens, but excluding libraries, except in so far as they maintain permanent exhibition rooms.

This definition was, of course, to be called into question, re-specified and amended constantly, depending on the concerns and environment of the professionals, and on the demands of society and the public.

ICOM News, the Organisation's periodical, appeared for the first time on 1st October, 1948. The second issue was accompanied by a French version, which was to be entitled *Nouvelles de l'ICOM* from 1956 onwards.

The seven Specialised Groups set up in November 1946 were restructured and became International Committees to which more were added with time. For almost thirty years they complied with the twin principles of limits on the number of members, and admission to membership only by invitation or election, until membership became open (at least in principle) following the General Conference in 1977. During the General Conference in 1948, twelve permanent

International Committees were set up covering a number of disciplines. Some would then move out of ICOM into other international organisations, such as the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS). The Committees were named and briefly described as follows:

- **Science museums and planetaria, health museums, museums of history of science and technology**
- **Museums of natural history, zoological gardens, aquaria and botanical gardens, and educational activities in national parks and nature reserves**
- **Museums of ethnography, including folk art and open-air museums**
- **Museums of archaeology and history and historical sites**
- **Museums of art and applied arts**
- **Children's museums and activities concerning children in museums**
- **Educational work in museums**
- **Museums and industry**
- **Museum personnel: (a) Training, (b) Status; (c) Exchanges**
- **Museum techniques**
- **Museum legislation and administration**
- **Publicity.**

The early resolutions adopted already set out principles of ethics, education, conservation, research, and, in the terminology of the time, of museums as *civilising influences*.

The third resolution underlines:

- *The importance of the role played by museums in the popularisation of arts, sciences and techniques and the opportunity for these establishments to act as civilising influences*
- *The importance of drawing the attention of the general public to these points*
- *The advisability of increasing its own sphere of influence.*

It was also at this General Conference that ICOM's International Documentation Centre was set up, with the following tasks:

- *To assemble all information on: museums and public collections (of which a complete list should be drawn up, classified by country and by subject); museum catalogues; auction sale catalogues; museum methods (a special bibliography concerning museography should be published annually);*
- *To draw up rules regarding the publication of museum catalogues, their standardisation, and the use of duplicate photographic reference cards;*
- *To organise the international exchange of publications, photographs and information.*

The initial programme introduced the outline for cooperation based on exchanges of professionals, on exhibitions and training. Since then, training concerns have practically never ceased to feature on the agenda of the General Conferences.

For fifty years ICOM has faithfully kept the tradition of its General Conferences. These continue to have a vital impact on its course of action, and are always extremely popular with museum professionals.

After conversing for a week with people from the same profession whose different temperaments show a wide diversity in origins, each one of us, suddenly, renews our stock of experiences and takes a comparative look at our professional occupations, bringing the points of view from different parts of the world closer, said Georges Salles, specifying that one of ICOM's most outstanding innovations is that it frees us from our varied educational backgrounds to encourage us to focus solely on the museum mission that unites us professionally. For the first time an international association has urged us to take seriously and to improve a batch of work that in the past was left up to each person's initiative or goodwill...

MEMBERS NEWS

INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF MUSEUMS

PARIS, 1st October 1948

ENGLISH EDITION, published by INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF MUSEUMS, Unesco House, Paris-16e.

BRIEF HISTORY OF THE ORGANISATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF MUSEUMS

TOGETHER WITH A STATEMENT OF ITS PURPOSES AND PROGRAMME, AND PLAN OF ORGANISATION

The International Council of Museums was organized at a meeting held at the Musée du Louvre in Paris on November 16-20, 1946, just prior to the holding of the First General Conference of UNESCO. The membership of the Council comprises the members of the various National Committees on International Co-operation among Museums already organized within many of the nations of the world. These national committees are limited in each instance to a maximum of fifteen members for each country, selected to be as widely representative as possible of the museum interests in their respective countries, as are defined in the Constitution of ICOM as follows:—

... The word "Museum" includes all collections open to the public, of artistic, technical, scientific, historical or archaeological material, including zoos and botanical gardens, but excluding libraries, except in so far as they maintain permanent exhibition rooms. . . .

In each nation, where associations of museums have already been organized, the national committee for such country has been appointed by such associations. In other countries, pending the development of such associations, the Council has invited a selected list of leaders in the field of museums to organize such committees to represent in the Council the museum interests of their respective countries.

The following fifty-three countries have already organized their "National Committees on International Co-operation among Museums" or are in process of doing so:—

Argentina.	Italy.
Australia.	Lebanon.
Austria.	Luxembourg.
Belgium.	Mexico.
Brazil.	New Zealand.
Canada.	Nicaragua.
Ceylon.	Norway.
Chile.	Pakistan.
China.	Peru.
Colombia.	Paraguay.
Costa Rica.	Poland.
Cuba.	Portugal.
Czechoslovakia.	Siam.
Denmark.	Sweden.
Dominican Republic.	Switzerland.
Ecuador.	Syria.
Egypt.	The Netherlands.
El Salvador.	Turkey.
Finland.	Union of South Africa.

France.
Greece.
Guatemala.
Haiti.
Hungary.
Iceland.
India.
Iran.
Iraq.

Invitations to form such "National Committees on International Co-operation Among Museums" have already been extended to museum leaders in all other member nations of the United Nations.

The purpose of ICOM is to provide an appropriate organization to further international co-operation among museums and to be the co-ordinating and representative international body furthering museum interests.

It is provided in Section 3, Article 2, of the Constitution of ICOM that "the Council shall further the exchange of cultural information across frontiers by (a) international loan exhibitions, (b) loans, gifts and exchanges of museum publications, objects and specimens between museums where it is legally possible, (c) international exchange of museum personnel, (d) travelling fellowships and international museum training of selected personnel, (e) facilitation of travel by museum personnel and the shipment of museum material, works of art, travelling collections and publications across international frontiers

and (f) promoting and protecting the activity and the welfare of museums generally and their attached responsibilities of education, inquiry and research throughout the world."

The officers of the Council, chosen from its membership, consist of a President, three Vice-Presidents, a Treasurer, a Corresponding Secretary and a Recording Secretary.

The Executive Committee of at least fifteen persons, authorized to transact any and all business for the Council, when the Council is not in session, consists of the seven officers above enumerated plus the Chairman of the Advisory Board and at least seven additional members. The Executive Committee has power to co-opt at least three additional members.

The officers and members of the Executive Committee are to be elected by ballot by the members at their general conference and each shall serve for two years or until a successor has been elected at the next biennial meeting.

The Advisory Board consists of the Chairmen of all of the "National Committees for International Co-operation Among Museums" including those still to be organized as well as those that already have been. This Advisory Board elects its own chairman, who shall be ex-officio a member of the Executive Committee. One of the principal functions of the Advisory Board shall be to prepare a list of nominations for each biennial meeting of the Executive Committee and of the Council for re-nomination of officers or resignation of new officers.

In addition to the "National Committees on International Co-operation Among Museums" already established within the various nations, which will have important duties to perform in connection with the development of ICOM, there have also been established certain inter-

EDITORIAL

We are happy to present to our members this first, and double, issue of *ICOM News*, covering the four-monthly period from June to September. Since subsequent issues will be issued every two months, they will in consequence be limited to four or eight pages.

In as much as reference will be made from time to time to articles and items published in previous issues of *ICOM News*, it is suggested that members retain a file of all issues published.

We would welcome our members calling the attention of museums with which they are in contact, and also the attention of their colleagues, to *ICOM News*, to the end that many of them will take advantage of the privilege of becoming associate members of ICOM, thus lending their support to the accomplishment of the purposes for which ICOM has been organized.

Note: This edition of *ICOM News*, just as soon as it can be translated into French, will be printed in that language and circulated to our members.

national subject committees under the chairmanship of distinguished museum leaders in their specialized fields. These committees encompass within their respective jurisdictions:

1. Science museums and planetaria, health museums, museums of history of science and technology;
2. Museums of natural history, zoological gardens, aquaria and botanical gardens and educational activities in national parks and nature reserves;
3. Museums of ethnography, including folk art and open air museums;
4. Museums of archaeology and history and historical sites;
5. Museums of art and applied arts;
6. Children's museums and activities concerning children in museums.



Opening of the 1st biennial conference of ICOM at Unesco House.

The first issue of the periodical ICOM News, following ICOM's first General Conference, in 1948.

Inventories, a matter of priority. Statute reform strengthens the Organisation

Second General Conference, London, 1950

The second Biennial General Conference, with nearly 200 delegates, was held in London from 17th to 22nd July, 1950.

Among the subjects discussed were:

- **problems and methods of inventorying museum objects**
- **plans for national museum directories**
- **studying the effects of artificial and natural light on museum objects**
- **plans for international exchanges of objects from mainly natural history, archaeology and ethnology museums**
- **loans of specimens to schools.**

During the General Conference there was a long debate over the question of modifying the *Statutes*, with a view to affirming the professional nature of the Organisation and to increasing membership.

The question of free entrance for ICOM members to museums in different countries met with many difficulties.

Lastly, to contribute to the campaign for international understanding and against racial prejudice, a number of exhibitions were planned.

Problems of museums in developing countries

Third General Conference, Genoa and Milan, 1953

At the Royal Palace in Genoa, participants at the General Conference heard for the first time an Indian report on *Problems of Museums in Developing Countries*. The themes *Museum Architecture* and *Museums and Aesthetic Research* were also discussed.

In Milan, the General Assembly adopted resolutions on the exchange of museum personnel, lighting of museum objects, treatment of wood objects, and a study on the role of museums in the protection of nature. For the latter, the General Assembly recommended that natural history museums consider it one of their duties to take the protection of nature into account, and to educate the public on the subject.

In 1953 ICOM supported two major UNESCO projects: the creation of an International Study Centre for the Conservation and Restoration of Cultural Property, which was called the Rome Centre, and later renamed ICCROM, and the project for a Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in Case of Armed Conflict (Resolutions 7 and 8).

All roads lead to museums!

Fourth General Conference, Basle, Zurich and Geneva, 1956

The fourth General Conference took place in Basle, Zurich and Geneva in July 1956. More than 280 participants from 30 countries studied the main theme on *Natural History Museums in Today's World*.

The opportunity was taken to launch UNESCO's major International Museum Campaign with debates, posters, children's drawings, and also a film called *All Roads Lead to Museums*.

The General Assembly paid particular attention to international regulations on excavations, and the conservation of collections of archaeology and history museums. It supported UNESCO's draft *Recommendation on international principles applicable to archaeological excavations*.

ICOM resolved to continue its cooperation in this project, and emphasis was also placed on the importance of keeping good archaeological inventories, on the conservation of collections of museums of archaeology and history, and on their educational role.



A reception given by the King of Sweden with participants of ICOM's General Conference in 1959.



Increasingly ambitious projects and programmes

Fifth General Conference, Stockholm, 1959

It had become imperative to amend the *Statutes* and improve the running of ICOM. The Secretariat was crushed under administrative work and the heavy task of preparing meetings.

In 1959 the fifth General Conference was held in Scandinavia, with representatives from 30 countries focusing on a variety of subjects. But the growth problems and considerable development in ICOM's activities and sphere of influence meant that resources had become insufficient.

Projects positively rained down in Stockholm, resulting in a precise, full work schedule for publications. These included an inventory and international directory of museums of science and technology, as well as an international directory of museum laboratories and workshops. This work, the fruit of close cooperation with the Rome Centre, appeared in 1960 under the title *International Inventory of the Museum, Laboratories and Restoration Workshops*. The publication of an international directory of natural history museums and

their type specimens was also planned. The General Assembly resolved to set aside a budget to organise a meeting of experts in 1960 on *The Role of Ethnographical Museums in the Preservation and Diffusion of Products of Artistic Interest Made by Pre-industrialised Societies*.

The General Assembly approved a vast programme of inquiries on canvas supports of paintings, the ground in paintings, and the paint layer of pictures. In return for payment by ICOM, ICCROM was asked to carry out a *Study on the Situation of Mural Paintings in the Different Countries*. The General Assembly also agreed to an ambitious programme on the conservation of textiles, graphic documents, animal products, limestone, sandstone and brick, as well as the study of metals and alloys and the use of synthetic materials for the restoration of cultural property.

In 1960 a survey on the museum profession was carried out in difficult conditions in museums in Austria, France and the United States, and then continued in 1965 in Afghanistan, India, Japan, Pakistan, Poland, Thailand, the USSR and the United Kingdom.

Carrying out these in-depth, useful projects was bound to produce a positive effect on museums. But the expenses were extremely high. A subsidy was even granted to the Committee for Film and Television.

The trend to step up well-targeted actions was reflected in 1962 at the sixth General Conference which was held in the Netherlands.

Fifty-eight motions!

Sixth General Conference, The Hague and Amsterdam, 1962

Representatives from 22 countries focused on subjects to do with the theft of artworks and the conservation of cultural property in tropical and subtropical countries.

The General Assembly had begun to feel the difficulties and financial limitations due to the sheer scale of obligatory expenditures. It suggested reducing the number of meetings and symposiums. But in spite of this, provisions were made in the 1963-1965 Triennial Programme for organising meetings on the conservation of cultural property, the educational function of museums and the International Inventory of Systematic Collections of Zoology and Palaeontology.

Museums in developing countries made an appearance in the Triennial Programme with the pilot project for an international art exhibition in a country in tropical Africa. The Museums Association of Tropical Africa (AMAT/MATA), affiliated in 1961, grouped together museum professionals in the region.

And so the General Assembly finally adopted no less than 58 motions, a record! Five of the motions were administrative, to facilitate the proper functioning of ICOM's National and International Committees. There were 38 technical motions covering approximately every museum field. Technological implementation of these was entrusted on a cooperative basis to the UNESCO-ICOM Documentation Centre and to ICCROM. The two fundamental museum aims were considered to be conservation and education. Financial provisions in ICOM's budget grew larger and larger:

Six of the motions were on the audiovisual programme. Film and television were seen as precious aids to museums, *bringing the public into museums* and helping people understand and appreciate their heritage. Cooperation between museums, television and cinema was to be reinforced. The production of standard-films to help museums carry out their educational task was

to be encouraged. And so it was decided to set up an *international prize to be awarded to the best film and television programme on museums* as from 1965. Lastly, the ICOM Committee for Cinema Museums was established.

Among the 18 motions of a doctrinal nature, 12 aimed at favouring the expansion of museums in developing countries, and, with UNESCO's help, strengthening cooperation among museums and organising training for specialists in new States.

The heavy programme was full of bold initiatives leading to much higher spending than that of ICOM's previous triennial budget. It was up against even greater constraints as it had to meet urgent needs, particularly providing resources to reinforce the Secretariat. To a large extent implementing the programme meant being tied to increased aid, as much from UNESCO as from museums and funding institutions.



Georges Henri Rivière (on the right) on the platform during ICOM's sixth General Conference at The Hague and in Amsterdam (Netherlands), in 1962.

Training of personnel, a priority

Seventh General Conference, New York, 1965

ICOM '65 was a landmark: it was the first time a General Conference had been held outside Europe, clearly illustrating the geographical expansion of the Organisation. A charter flight originally planned to bring the European participants to the United States was, however, abandoned for fear of an accident that could have led to the disappearance of all the directors of European museums at one go. Nonetheless, there were 600 delegates from 60 countries, an outstanding attendance record. In Washington ICOM members visited the capital's museums and made contact with thousands of academics who had come to celebrate the bicentenary of the birth of the founder of the famous Smithsonian Institution.

The General Conference in New York bore a more pragmatic stamp than previous ones, with barely a mention being given to the many ambitious projects launched in 1962. The principle of twinning and exchange was reaffirmed: the question of foreign excavation missions was taken up to encourage research to help the training of scientific personnel from less developed museums. The museums of the countries involved were to have their due share of excavation results, in accordance with UNESCO's recommendation.

Participants adopted an Activities Programme for implementing research, conservation, presentation and educational projects. The creation of an ICOM Foundation was formally announced. Its aim was to provide ICOM with more financial resources given the very worrying situation. Much was expected of this godsend.

However, the most noteworthy result was the clarification of policy on *Training of Museum Personnel* – the theme of the General Conference.

Important recommendations were made on qualifications:

- **museum personnel should have a status corresponding to that of the academic profession**
- **a candidate for the post of museum curator should possess a university diploma and receive postgraduate training including both theory and practice**
- **conservation and restoration personnel should be recruited from university graduates**
- **specialised personnel were required in such areas as lighting, presentation, audiovisual techniques, documentation, security, etc.**

By stressing the qualifications of museum personnel, the General Assembly marked a new stage in the accession of museums to the ranks of the fundamental institutions of modern civilisations, serving the cultural and scientific heritage of mankind, as the *ICOM News* editorial stated in October-December 1965.

But ICOM was to go further. Museologists were to add a sizeable mission to the existing ones of museums: to be in the *Service of Man and Development*. This was a major goal, and one of the challenges of the coming General Assemblies.



The crisis years

1968
1977

ICOM's debts had become chronic, and over the decade beginning in 1968, the situation just got worse and worse (1). Adding to the effect of low membership dues, which had remained the same for eight years, and to the effect of inflation on the budgets, there was also much extra work, with more projects and expenses, and the Secretariat's activities had quadrupled. Lastly, a new kind of museum was beginning to take shape, with its role changing in contemporary society. In the early 1970s, ICOM was seriously called into question and its very life put at risk. The only solution was to increase the Organisation's own resources, its membership and corresponding dues, and to challenge a situation that was both unfair and outmoded.

The Statutes had to be revised. Up to then the number of active members had been limited to 15 per National Committee. At the General Conference in Grenoble in 1971 the idea took hold that ICOM should grant equal status to individual members, and a reform was adopted in Copenhagen in 1974 whereby active members and associate members formed a single category. The prevailing democratic spirit resulted in all members of the profession having the right to vote and stand for any ICOM function.

(1) ICOM's financial situation over the decade: 1968-1970 budgetary period, deficit of 5,000 dollars; 1971-1973, deficit of 32,000 dollars; 1974-1976, deficit of 68,000 dollars; 1978, balanced budget; 1977-1979, positive balance of more than 52,000 dollars.

Large budget difficulties

Eighth General Conference, Cologne and Munich, 1968

The General Conference sessions were held at the Deutsches Museum in Munich, bringing together 600 people from 64 countries. More and more developing countries were taking part.

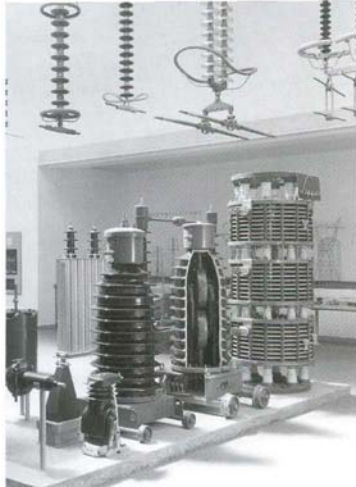
For the first time in ICOM's history, an international *Museum Equipment Exhibition* was held on the conference site, displaying show cases as well as lighting and conservation appliances.

The conference took place in a tense atmosphere. Was this because of a wind of revolt from May 1968 blowing over what were considered "undisciplined" debates? Or were the reactions those of professionals who were expressing their real worries? The fact remains that the theme *Museums and Research* was hardly examined. Discussions often continued overtime

to allow professionals to consult one another more particularly on training matters. People spoke a lot more about working conditions than research! Some participants formed a "spontaneous" group to study training for museum personnel and to present a draft resolution.

And so museums were seen as major institutions in the service of development. *ICOM states the principle that museums are intrinsically scientific institutions and that as a result any museum... must promote, encourage, undertake or develop scientific research depending on its collections and programme. Items preserved are often inexhaustible sources of information thanks to their authenticity.*

There was a recommendation to introduce computers which would favour accurate, reliable documentation.



Exhibition at the Deutsches Museum in Munich (Germany, former FRG), where ICOM's eighth General Conference was held in 1968.

The idea of standardising inventories and terminology was taken up again with a view to establishing modern, scientific criteria. It was stressed that museums should be open to research institutions, particularly universities responsible for teaching museology. In sum, the General Assembly asked participants to regard the museum as an institution that was truly open to research workers, and not as some supporters of the traditional "splendid isolation" theory would have it, as a sort of private territory!

The tense atmosphere of the General Assembly was also due to very serious budget difficulties. The ICOM Foundation had not managed to take off since its founding in 1965, and its capital in 1968 was barely 4,000 dollars! The deficit was such that on 29th June 1967 the Executive Council made an urgent appeal for extraordinary contributions, but the results were disappointing. The financial situation deteriorated further. Fortunately, in June 1968, the Ford Foundation agreed to a subsidy of 285,000 dollars over a period of six years, and so the problems were somewhat eased.

The ninth General Assembly ended with a feeling of general discomfort, a forewarning of the next General Conference, which was to be stormy, with participants determined to bring about change.

A revolt against the splendid isolation of museums

Ninth General Conference, Paris and Grenoble, 1971

600 participants focused on the theme *The Museum in the Service of Man: Today and Tomorrow; the Museum's Educational and Cultural Role*. However, during the tumultuous debates in Grenoble, a fearsome battle broke out between reformers and traditionalists.

The General Assembly's eighth resolution on the reorganisation of ICOM ran into opposition between those who wanted to keep the *status quo* and those who wanted a thoroughgoing overhaul of the Organisation.

Mounting tensions were being felt again in France so short a time after the events of 1968. Less than a third of the participants at the conference were "active" members of ICOM, because only fifteen members per country were allowed, and, when a substantial majority of those present found themselves denied the right to vote in the debates about the proposed declarations on the nature of museums and their role in modern society, consternation and controversy reached fever pitch.

It was clear that while some of the voting members wished to retain their privileged position the great majority of those present wanted ICOM to abandon what was, to be fair, the traditional pattern of an international organisation based on what was, in effect, a federation of nationally organised and controlled bodies.

As the conference was taking place in France—not long after the events of 1968, discussions centred on different concepts of democracy, both generally in relation to the role of the museum in the advancement of popular democracy, and specifically in relation to ICOM's structure and organisation. On the one hand, it was argued that ICOM's current membership and organisational structures followed in every way the principles of representative democracy, whether of the Western or Soviet tradition. The professional leadership of the museums of each country, it was argued,

remained primarily with the persons entrusted by the legitimate State authorities with the direction of the major national museums, and this leadership in turn necessarily represented their respective countries within ICOM. Wherever a national association of museums existed, it had the right to speak in its country's name at ICOM.

On the other hand, the legitimacy of arguments in support of this kind of representative democracy was seriously questioned. Others argued instead that ICOM should reject all artificial limits on membership, whether direct or indirect. The direct restrictions included the 15 member limit on "active" membership of National Committees and the membership limits imposed by most International Committees, while indirect limits were effected by practices such as the alleged extremely restrictive and limited view of the right of admission to even the non-voting "associate" membership on the part of many National Committees.

To end this Malthusian-like system, people proposed setting up a single category of ICOM membership, open to every legitimate museum professional across the world. This would mean outlawing the many alleged artificial limitations on ICOM membership, whether "active" or "associate" currently being applied by some National Committees themselves, by governments, or even, it was suspected, controlling political parties in some countries. But for the time being the most urgent step was to recognise the democratic principle of *one member, one vote*, with all existing associate members being given full voting rights within ICOM.

The new structure demanded by a very vocal body of associate and supporting members from such countries as Canada, the United States and the United Kingdom, firmly rejected the traditional exclusiveness of some of ICOM's National and International Committees.

However, if, as was now being demanded, "active" and "associate" members were to merge, and the *one member, one vote* rule were applied, the large number of "associate" members would immediately swamp the existing ruling body, the "active" members.

Moreover, National Committees were far from following the same policy, particularly when it came to "associate" members. Some Committees had allowed few to join, others none. Others still had on the contrary operated a very open approach, registering a large number of mainstream museum professionals, including many in more junior positions or from museum specialities other than curatorship in the traditional sense.

So there was a potentially explosive new problem if the *one member, one vote* principle that had applied to "active" members of ICOM since its founding a quarter of a century earlier were extended to all.

In theory at least, if a universal franchise were introduced, a small group of countries which had always been open to associate members, such as Canada and the United States, and perhaps to a lesser extent, the Federal Republic of Germany, the United Kingdom and some Scandinavian countries, might well have between them an absolute majority in General Assembly votes



Proceedings of ICOM's ninth General Conference, in Paris and Grenoble (France), in 1971.

and elections, to the obvious disadvantage of the National Committees of both smaller, less developed countries, and of those countries which had always restricted ICOM membership.

And so petitions were circulated in Grenoble and a great hubbub ensued. Several members suggested temporarily suspending the Standing Orders. After long debates, the active members themselves passed by 110 votes to 78 a resolution to suspend the *Statutes* and the Standing Orders of the General Conference, and then proceeded to adopt a decisive resolution by 117 to 53:

Review of ICOM Structures

Considering that the organisation of this Council must improve its ability to respond to the needs of the general membership,

Noting that the 10th general Assembly and the Executive Council have discussed the need for a thoroughgoing review of the structure, statutes, rules, programmes and services of ICOM,

Resolves the urgent necessity of such a review which must take into account the opinions and suggestions of the National Committees,

Resolves that a committee to conduct such a review be appointed by the President and be constituted of an equal number of active and associate members.

Among other matters under discussion at the General Assembly, was the first resolution which clearly stated the ideological challenges to the role of the museum.

The museum must accept that society is constantly changing.

There was good reason to reject a particular concept of the museum that limited it to merely preserving cultural and natural heritage:

Each individual museum must accept that it has a duty to evolve means of action specifically designed to serve best the particular social environment within which it operates.

To place this new insistence that the museum must be more than ever "in the service of society", one should

remember that in Europe and in the United States a double-sided social phenomenon that was both positive and negative had been taking place since 1968. Disputes focused on the need to integrate the museum into a rapidly changing social context by rejecting the elitist vision of the institution. People were shouting: *Put the Mona Lisa in the subway, not in the Louvre!*

The determining role emerging in favour of democratisation was being played by Jan Jelínek (ICOM's newly elected President), supported by Geoffrey Lewis (the new Chairperson of the Advisory Committee), and Hugues de Varine-Bohan (Director General), who had all understood the scale of the problems and the depth of feeling. They moved quickly to appoint a Working Group, including some younger associate members, to study new constitutional structures for ICOM itself and draw up broader definitions of the museum and the museum profession, two points that had been among the insistent demands of the ninth General Conference.

On the other hand, some members who had supported the demand for reform, and in particular the unofficial *Grenoble Manifesto*, faced severe admonition on their return home. They were accused of having criticised by implication the museum "establishment" in their own countries, as was the case of a Professor of Museology who was summarily dismissed from her post by the country's Ministry of Education and Culture.

And yet the period was also marked by a great influx of visitors in American museums. The thirty million in 1939 had grown to three hundred million in 1969. In Canada, 300 new museums were built between 1965 and 1970. All this success brought with it an inevitable economic management crisis in European and American museums, and, for ICOM, this meant increased services and diminishing resources. Financial crisis was inescapable!

At the end of 1970, the text for the *Convention on the Means of Prohibiting the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property* was adopted at UNESCO's General Conference.

A message of hope from Copenhagen

Tenth General Conference, Copenhagen, 1974

The tenth General Conference bore witness to the awareness amongst members that ICOM was going through a serious financial crisis. It showed the need to reform the *Statutes*, revise goals, and contemplate the future of professionals, basing this on better representativeness and equality amongst members.

It was also the first time that speakers other than those in the museum profession were accepted, such as ornithologists, philosophers, planners and architects. And so problems posed by the environment were brought up, as were socio-cultural troubles in towns with their attendant anguish and doubt. We should remember that the conference was being held in the country of Kierkegaard, where anguish and melancholy are familiar themes.

At last the great day arrives. The hall is resplendent with flowers, the participants are already in place, the red carpet is down and we await Her Majesty, Queen Margrethe II. She arrives escorted by Peter Seeborg amidst a respectful hush. She smiles and conquers all. Two young people carrying enormous bronze trumpets or 'lurs', genuine museum pieces 3,000 years old, advance and sound an aubade of shrillish tones...
wrote Sabine de Carné in *ICOM News*.

Few meetings have led to such a feeling of hope in spite of the problems of reform and the repercussions of the financial crisis. Participation was massive and active. Once again, people clearly expressed their confidence in ICOM.

From the legal standpoint, the eleventh General Assembly held the very future of ICOM in its hands. All the members were fully aware of what this entailed; the *Statutes* were archaic and no longer expressed ICOM's real goals, i.e. the equality and representativeness of both individuals and groups. Moreover, the reform of the *Statutes* proved to be exemplary – the proposals of all the members who had felt concerned were taken into account.

In sum, the 1974 changes to ICOM's administrative structure and *Statutes* led to unprecedented growth:

- membership increased by 25% from 1974 to 1977
- activities and International Committees developed
- the services of the Secretariat were reorganised; there was no longer a Director but a Secretary General in charge
- ICOM was recognised as adviser and partner to UNESCO and various governments.

The Working Group set up by the Executive Council adopted practically all of the reformist agenda, and reached broad agreement on all major issues. And so ICOM's new *Statutes* and the fundamental changes they entailed were supported by the Advisory Committee and the Executive Council, and were approved by an overwhelming majority at the tenth General Conference in Copenhagen in June 1974. The merging of the "active" and "associate" categories of members was announced to the huge satisfaction of all those who had been demanding this for the last few years.

These reforms were, in fact, the most visible expression of a much more momentous, though apparently dry and technical, change. Up until Copenhagen, ICOM had in constitutional terms remained unchanged from Chauncey Hamlin's 1946 original vision of a confederation of locally selected and controlled National Committees. ICOM now changed radically to become a truly independent Organisation in its own right, open to all of the world's professionals willing to pay modest yearly membership dues, and to museums and similar bodies wishing to join ICOM under the newly created institutional member category.

However, it was at the same time impossible to ignore the legitimate worry that with this new "openness", ICOM's policies and institutions might be dominated, or even taken over completely by the large number of individual members that had built up in just a few major

countries (largely "Western", in the contemporary terminology). The Cold War was at its height, causing strained East-West relations, while the so-called non-aligned nations, many of them former colonies that had recently become independent, were concerned about alleged attempts by the great powers to dominate international organisations for their own political purposes.

The agreed solution was to confirm that ICOM should be open to all qualified persons at the individual and institutional levels, to abolish all limits and restrictions. Firstly, Article 5 of the *Statutes* redefined the museum profession thus:

The museum profession consists of all the personnel of museums or institutions answering the criteria set forth in Articles 3 and 4, having received a specialised technical or academic training or possessing an equivalent practical experience, and respecting a fundamental code of professional ethics.

Then Article 9 defined eligibility for the new "open" membership:

Without any discrimination of any kind the following shall be eligible for individual membership of ICOM:

- (a) Members of the museum profession as defined in Article 5 above.***
- (b) Former members of the profession.***
- (c) Within the limit of 10 per cent of the membership of a National Committee, all persons who do not belong to the profession but would be formally co-opted...***

Lastly, Article 10 first declared that in all countries where a National Committee existed each individual member of ICOM was automatically a member of that National Committee, and then, gave each individual member the right to apply to join, if he so wished, an *International Committee of his choice subject to his acceptance by these Committees*. Though this last phrase (at least in the English version) might be read as permitting International Committees to reject an application from a *bona fide* member, the term "acceptance" meant no more than acknowledging and registering the member's

choice. Moreover, Article 27 regulating International Committees was unambiguous that they should (e) approve all applications for membership...

Though some International Committees continued to limit their membership, the successive versions of *Model Rules for International Committees* and the amendments of the *Statutes* made it clear that any member requesting to join an International Committee had to be registered, unless he or she was already a voting member of another International Committee.

However, these far-reaching changes in no way alleviated the fear that ICOM might one day be dominated or even completely taken over by a handful of National Committees with very large memberships. To deal with the problem, the solution chosen was to adopt a model of representative democracy in relation to voting rights. Under this, regardless of the number of its individual or institutional members, no National Committee could exercise more than five votes in General Assembly votes or elections for ICOM's officers or Executive Council. In the same way, and for the first time, in recognition of their increasing importance within ICOM, International Committees were given the right to two votes in General Assemblies and elections. (They were given five votes, the same rights as National Committees, in 1995).

The severe restrictions that many National Committees had traditionally placed on ICOM membership coupled with the lowering of annual dues for the growing number of associate members had seriously affected ICOM's finances, and UNESCO had also regularly reduced its subsidies. And so, when the *Statutes* were revised in Copenhagen in 1974, the opportunity was taken to streamline ICOM's administrative structure to increase efficiency and save costs. The Executive Council was cut from 26 people to 9, a reduction of about two-thirds of its members. It now consisted of a President, two Vice-Presidents, a Treasurer, five other ICOM members, and the Chairperson of the Advisory Committee in an ex officio capacity.

Substantial financial savings were also needed in the Secretariat. At the end of the conference in

Copenhagen, Hugues de Varine-Bohan resigned as Director General and the contract of Norman Pegden as Assistant Director General was not renewed. Luis Monreal was appointed Secretary General and entrusted with both functions. In addition to these changes the Activities Programme was reduced.

ICOM's recommendations were becoming more and more pertinent, in an endeavour to reflect the needs of society. A decisive resolution at the General Assembly in Copenhagen launched the drafting of ICOM's *Code of Professional Ethics*. There was also an awareness at the professional and governmental level of the need to decentralise museum institutions in each country's cultural policy. Site museums were a lot closer to the public and rural populations; museums had to develop to better adapt to the needs of the community. The General Assembly's other resolutions focused on making the public more aware of the problems linked to cultural property.

New security measures had become essential in the face of the increasing theft of artworks, vandalism and threats against museums. A handbook on risk preparedness was to be drafted.

Cooperation with UNESCO was, however, becoming increasingly positive. Consultations and technical advice were strongly appreciated by the Director General of UNESCO:

(1) Report by the Director General of UNESCO, 1977.

The programme on museums and standards could not progress without the continuous and dynamic contribution of ICOM. Through its wide network of professional contacts ICOM is always in a position to supply the Secretariat with vital information relevant to important questions of policy. Technical problems are also solved with the help of ICOM [which also provides] advice on the content of publications and assistance in the preparation of international standard-setting instruments (1).

Between late 1976 and mid-May 1977, ICOM and UNESCO had signed eleven contracts for missions, meetings, publications and exhibitions, such as UNESCO's travelling exhibition on *Latin American Art*.

Thanks to its new policy on membership dues, ICOM could now cover the running expenses of the Secretariat, the Documentation Centre and even the main projects in its Activities Programme. This positive reform showed the determination of ICOM members to depart from the beaten track and resolutely forge ahead in a new direction.



Ceremonious session of ICOM's tenth General Conference, with H.M. the Queen of Denmark, in Copenhagen in 1974.

ICOM opens onto the world

1977
1989

Four decisive conferences, in 1977, 1980, 1983 and 1986 enabled ICOM to fulfil two strategic goals that had long been maturing:

- the finalisation of a policy on museums in the service of society and of its development
- the adoption of a Code of Ethics, a veritable reference text.

ICOM and the need for cooperation

Eleventh General Conference, Moscow, 1977

ICOM was to enter a new era: its reform was over; the financial situation was improving, membership was growing and activities developing. Cooperation with UNESCO, ICCROM and ICOMOS allowed ICOM to restore its public image.

The theme of the General Conference, which brought together more than 1,500 participants from 89 countries, was *Museums and Cultural Exchange*.

This is the message from the Director General of UNESCO on the occasion:

I would like to talk about the concern for peoples who have been stripped of some of the essential components of their cultural heritage. Some have lost almost all the objects that made up a vital part of their collective memory and a message from their past. These peoples are asking us to understand the loss that they feel. They are asking us to agree to return the objects that have irreplaceable spiritual and historical value for them. At the last General Conference of UNESCO I was asked to mobilise public opinion and rally people's interest for the return of cultural property to its countries of origin.

I am therefore appealing to all members of the International Council of Museums to help countries that do not have the wherewithal to make up collections of their cultural heritage, and to

facilitate bilateral negotiations which their governments could undertake in this domain.

The General Assembly recommended setting up an ad hoc committee for the restitution and return of cultural property to its countries of origin. It also asked about measures to *protect national culture from forms of production which disseminate ideas of hatred and enmity between nations, war, violence and racism...*

Among the resolutions adopted, mention should be made of the new cultural approach to tourism:

- **Museums and Cultural Exchange:** an awareness of the role of museums to foster ideas of humanism, peace, friendship and accord among peoples
- **International Tourism:** museums should develop a programme to improve reception services for tourists
- **Protection of Cultural, Natural and Historical Heritage:** existing, often outmoded national legislation should be perfected to keep abreast of new developments
- **Institution of International Museums Day:** starting in 1978, International Museums Day should be held annually on 18th May.

This last idea had in fact been germinating in the minds of professionals since ICOM's fourth General Assembly in Milan in 1953. The eighteenth resolution

recommended the organisation of *an international museums day* and specified that an event of this kind, if sufficiently well prepared beforehand, could give rise to an exceptional revival of museums vis-à-vis society, and particularly children.

The first international museum campaign had in fact been launched in 1956, but it took more than twenty years before *International Museums Day* was announced and instituted. The twenty-two years of procrastination and hesitation remain a mystery. Fortunately, the tradition has been firmly rooted in the life of museums since 1978.

Lastly, the Moscow General Assembly resolved to improve exchange between ICOM members. By the end of the 1970s, there were 5,600 members from 109 countries.

In the service of society and its development

Twelfth General Conference, Mexico City, 1980

The theme of the conference, *The World's Heritage – the Museum's Responsibilities* was in fact a prelude to an important ideological debate on the new mission of the museum. Museums should be in the service of society and of its development. They should *constantly identify the needs of society and develop their services accordingly*. This was the renewed affirmation of the museum as a modern institution with an open-minded approach to the public, and heedful of new responsibilities towards the environment. The era of the museum as temple, as a sacred place of protection for masterpieces, was over. The museum was there for all heritage, putting itself in the service of a community and its development.

ICOM's General Assembly continued to express its determination to shake off any traditional, backward-looking yoke and to interest museums particularly in contemporary collections and exhibitions on protecting the natural environment. It recommended initiating programmes for all groups of people, particularly the handicapped, who should benefit from free entrance and appropriate facilities.

Mention was made of the need to fight against illicit traffic in cultural property, and to facilitate the return of objects to their countries of origin.

Training of personnel was seen as a constant concern. With regard to the absolute responsibility of conservation, the General Assembly in Mexico City reaffirmed *the independence of the museum profession* against all outside pressure. It concluded its resolutions by reasserting that this independence was *a necessary guarantee for the conservation of the natural and cultural heritage*.



ICOM's twelfth General Conference, in Mexico City (Mexico), in 1980.



Museums for a developing world

Thirteenth General Conference, London, 1983

During the Conference, the cultural dimension of development was seen as being closely linked to museums. Museums should respond to social and economic changes in today's and tomorrow's society. In low-income countries there is an average of one museum per three million inhabitants (a hundred times less than in industrialised countries). And so it is important to meet the specific needs of all populations, and provide a better understanding of museums.

To fight more efficiently against illicit traffic in cultural property many countries decided to update their national and regional legislation. In respecting international conventions, such as the UNESCO Convention of 1970, people came up against numerous political problems. The question of returning cultural property to its countries of origin was taken up more forcefully than in Mexico City, as the moral and cultural aspects of the issue were underlined. The decisions and positive examples on the subject given by some countries encouraged ICOM to cooperate on preparing inventories and scientific data, and so provide useful, reliable information to all interested parties.

The General Assembly asked members to initiate dialogues on returns with an open-minded attitude and on the basis of professional and scientific principles. The General Assembly also focused on cultural heritage in occupied countries, asking museums to *abstain from purchasing cultural objects from occupied countries, which in most cases will have been illegally exported or illicitly removed by the occupying power.* The 1954 Hague Convention was mentioned, as were the moral principles of the international community.

The Code of Professional Ethics Conference

Fourteenth General Conference, Buenos Aires, 1986

This conference emphasised interdisciplinarity. Nine committees covering concerns that were of interest to all museums – such as architecture and museum techniques, conservation, exhibition exchange, education and cultural action, training of museum personnel, and public relations – were chosen to lead debates and prompt suggestions for the Triennial Programme.

The "ideas market" formula that had worked so well in other conferences was used to share different experiences, projects and new ideas.

The theme *Museums and the Future of our Heritage: Emergency Call* was deliberately alarmist in order to give the highest priority to preserving cultural and natural heritage. Emphasis was placed on the fact that our natural environment is threatened by destruction and irreparable damage. Natural history museums, botanic gardens, parks and nature reserves were all urged to step up their efforts to preserve our precious heritage so as to pass it on to future generations.

ICOM's Code of Professional Ethics was adopted unanimously by ICOM's fifteenth General Assembly in

Buenos Aires on 4th November, 1986. This declaration of ICOM's official policy was the result of several years' reflection, consultation and discussion. It should be remembered that in 1970, the Advisory Committee had approved the conclusions of a Group of Experts on the rules for museums on the ethics of acquisitions, which recommended:

If a museum is offered objects, the licit quality of which it has reason to doubt, it will contact the competent authorities of the country of origin in an effort to help this country safeguard its natural heritage.

Gifts and bequests should only be accepted with a proviso that in the event of any object proving to have been illicitly exported from another country, the authorities of the museum should be empowered to take action as above.

We should underline the fact that large museums and powerful American institutions such as the Smithsonian Institution were amongst the first to give serious thought to the problem. In the early 1970s, experts bravely published their warnings and analyses and took a positive stand on the ethics of museum acquisitions. In 1974, in its second resolution, the General Assembly in Copenhagen asked a Group of Experts to prepare a draft code of professional ethics.

In 1981 the first meeting of the *ad hoc* committee took place to draft the *Code of Professional Ethics* which was then adopted by the fifteenth General Assembly. It set forth the basic principles for museum governance, for acquisitions and disposal of collections, as well as rules for professional conduct and responsibilities vis-à-vis collections, the public and the profession.



ICOM's fourteenth General Conference, in Buenos Aires (Argentina), in 1986.

An increasingly efficient, universal and representative ICOM

1989
1996

ICOM's financial situation became healthier and the deficit was absorbed in 1994. The fund-raising policy was paving the way for a promising future.

ICOM's good name and its action in different regions of the world had given it real representativeness. This was the happy outcome and just reward for half a century of battling and striving.

At a time when many international organisations were looking for a second wind and were confronted by financial and structural problems, ICOM had managed to keep the universality, flexibility and imagination that enabled it to meet the demands of the profession.

The recommendations of the latest General Assemblies expressed these concerns, and opened up paths towards cultural policy for the year 2000, in keeping with the idea that economic development and cultural factors were inseparable.

Museums as generators of culture

Fifteenth General Conference, The Hague, 1989

The 1,500 participants at the conference in the Netherlands expressed the vivacity and dynamism of a professional organisation that was alive and well in spite of its financial ups and downs. The ICOM Foundation decided to pay in all its resources, with one of its board members even making a personal contribution to make good ICOM's accrued deficit of 40,000 dollars.

The conference theme, *Museums: Generators of Culture* was reflected in the opening ceremony by recent technological developments in video and the first world performance of *Ventata* by Willem Jets.

Federico Mayor, Director General of UNESCO, highlighted cooperation with museums, which had sought to become *places of interactive culture, restoring the links between information and sensation, reverie, excitement, pleasure, provocation and even consternation.*

Speakers opened discussions on *New forms of Presentation, the Preservation of the Ecosystem, Museums and Schools, and Museums and the Human Condition.*

During ICOM '89, regional groups from Africa, Latin America, the Caribbean and Asia-Pacific met several times to discuss their particular problems and draw up their Triennial Programme.

Mention should also be made of the work by International Committees, especially ICOFOM, which had a bold and original theme, *Museology and Futurology*. This provocative subject attracted a lot of attention and gave rise to extraordinary talks!

The General Assembly adopted six resolutions, among which were:

- **Museums as generators of culture can and should contribute to education, cultural innovation, and to the preservation and shaping of cultural and environmental values. They should not attempt to determine the experience of the visitor.**
- **The training of museum personnel as a permanent concern. The General Assembly also**

focused on the need for reliable, scientific museum documentation, on the cultural dimension of development, as well as on where museums stand in government policy with regard to the allocation of funds.

Lastly, during meetings in The Hague, professionals of African museums attracted attention to the state of their cultural heritage and to the question they were all asking, *What Museums for Africa?* In 1991 meetings on the theme were organised in Benin, Ghana and Togo. This was the starting point for AFRICOM, a dynamic museum programme for the whole of the African continent.

It was during this conference that the approval won by the new *Statutes* gave ICOM a new lease of life.

Museums, the memory and conscience of society

Sixteenth General Conference, Quebec, 1992

Approximately 1,600 participants gathered together in the magnificent city of Quebec. This was ICOM's highest attendance, a record that has not yet been broken.

The provocative theme of the conference, *Museums: Rethinking the Boundaries?* focused once again on questions about the future of museums in a constantly changing society. In the face of serious environmental problems, economic disparity between countries in the North and countries in the South, threats of famine in some parts of the world, tension and conflict, and the spread of Aids, what role should museums play and how far can they go to raise awareness amongst their visitors? Museums have no boundaries other than those established by people themselves. These were pertinent issues that gave rise to many suggestions and proposals.

Speakers touched on the part played by museums in everyday life, and their role in making known social groups which up to then had been marginalised. One of the most intense and moving moments in the conference was when people gave reports on preserving and enhancing indigenous cultures.

The seventeenth General Assembly recalled that museums **represent both the memory and conscience of society, that they must break down barriers which isolate museums from the needs of the community, facilitate communication with institutions, interest groups and individuals and take into account multi-cultural or cross-cultural diversity.**

Curators were asked to work for the promotion of the protection of collections which represent a certain period, social group or point of view but which may not reflect the present situation. Lastly, ICOM was urged to continuously support museums which promote and respect cultural diversity, and preserve the cultural heritage of minorities.



During ICOM's sixteenth General Conference, in Quebec (Canada), in 1992, Saraj Ghose (second on the left) succeeds Alpha Oumar Konaré (in the centre) as President of ICOM.

To prevent threats to cultural and natural heritage, the General Assembly urged the countries that had not already done so to implement international legal instruments for the protection of cultural heritage. It recommended that ICOM provide moral and material support to museum professionals affected by cultural and natural disasters, and that it create a special fund to implement an emergency action plan should the need arise.

The ICOM Fund was set up by the Executive Council on 11th June, 1991. The Dominican Republic and Bosnia and Herzegovina were able to benefit from this for their museum activities.

The 1993-1995 Triennial Programme adopted by the General Assembly at The Hague included implementing projects for the encounter *What museums for Africa? Heritage in the future*, and a whole programme for fighting against the looting of African heritage.

The AFRICOM Programme mainly comprised:

- **the Museum Education Project of Africa**
- **inventorying and standardising collections in Africa**
- **a study on the autonomy of museums in Africa**
- **workshops on the fight against the illicit traffic in cultural property.**

In 1993, the Arusha workshop in Tanzania prepared a strategy for fighting against the looting of cultural property and its illegal export. The Bamako workshop, in Mali in October 1994, brought together specialists from North and West Africa. Police and customs experts and museum professionals consulted each other to propose measures to put an end to the massive loss of cultural heritage.

New challenges in the age of Aids, poverty and violence

Seventeenth General Conference, Stavanger, 1995

The privileged relations between museums and local communities in many countries, such as Norway, are characterised by direct participation on behalf of the public. People are very aware of their history and their cultural identity. Thus the choice of the theme for the conference, *Museums and Communities*, fully met participants' expectations.

The General Conference was inaugurated by Her Majesty Queen Sonja of Norway. Eminent speakers focused on:

- *the Role of Museums when the National State breaks up*
- *Creating a National Unity – the Role of Museums*
- *Museums and Cultural Diversity – Indigenous and Dominant Cultures*
- *The New Challenges for Museums in the age of Aids, poverty and community problems*
- *Museums and Otherness – the Ecomuseum, an instrument for fighting against racism and exclusion.*

These themes were reflected in the resolutions adopted by the General Assembly, which urged local and national governments to *recognise and support museums as cultural mechanisms in the service of communities, in the valorisation of their particular identities...*

The setting up of the *Blue Shield* (ICMS) emergency programme, supported by ICOM, the International Council on Archives (ICA), the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) and the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), came as an answer to concerns about safeguarding museums and their collections. The General Assembly suggested that concrete action be taken by the museum community to assist museums in distress in areas affected by armed conflict.

The General Assembly recalled the new UNIDROIT Convention on Stolen or Illegally Exported Cultural Objects adopted on 24th June 1995 in Rome, and urged governments to sign and ratify it.

As for new information technology, the General Assembly welcomed the establishment of ICOM's services on the Internet, and its policy for cooperation with the other international non-governmental organisations in the Tokyo Alliance for the protection of intellectual property rights of museums.

The General Assembly condemned all resumption of nuclear weapons tests and urged all governments to work towards a comprehensive and universal treaty banning the testing of nuclear weapons.

Among the different trends in the museum world, ICOM chose to set itself six major objectives for the 1995-2004 period:

- to support museums as instruments of social and cultural development
- to reinforce professional ethics and to promote national and international legislation for the enhancement and protection of cultural and natural heritage
- to enhance networks for regional and international cooperation
- to establish a mechanism for defence and advocacy of cultural and natural heritage
- to respond to economic liberalisation trends facing museums
- to expand and consolidate communication networks amongst and for museums.

This strategic plan for the coming decade was adopted in Stavanger after an open discussion taking into account the various sensibilities of museum professionals and museum users.

In sum, as Jacques Perot, Chairperson of ICOM's Advisory Committee, expressed so well,

Stavanger demonstrated more than ever just how universal and adaptable ICOM is... And we should not balk at bringing about radical changes in the museum world, doing so without lowering our ethical standards.

ICOM's next General Conference will take place in Melbourne, in Australia, in October 1998 with the theme *Museums and Cultural Diversity*. But that is another story, one that will usher in the next half-century in the long life of ICOM.



Ole Henrik Magge (Norway) on the platform during ICOM's seventeenth General Conference, in Stavanger (Norway), in 1995.



In the service of people and their development

conservation of heritage

educational and cultural role

ICOM's achievement

Chapter II

The resources of an ambitious policy

The immense achievement of ICOM over half a century of intense activity is undoubtedly due to two factors, on the one hand the skill and merit of its members and of those who have shaped its destiny, and on the other hand the efficiency of its management, advisory and executionary bodies.

The supreme governing body of ICOM is the General Assembly which is open to all members and is held every three years to define policies and elect the Executive Council. The Council is the keystone for the entire system governing the way the Organisation works. Under the authority of the President, it ensures that the decisions and resolutions made during General Conferences are given effect. It also receives recommendations from the Advisory Committee, which is composed of the Chairpersons of National Committees, International Committees and Affiliated Organisations. Lastly, to implement its decisions, it has a Secretariat, run by a Secretary General. The small though efficient team at the Secretariat provides services for thousands of members, co-ordinates activities for the various Committees, and manages the Activities Programme, and the Public Relations and Publications departments. It also runs the UNESCO-ICOM Information Centre, takes care of ICOM's finances, and provides logistical support at all important meetings.

As an associative movement that is now nearly 15,000 strong, ICOM would be nothing without its members. It is they who sustain and enliven the Organisation, and, through their knowledge and experience provide its intellectual and human support. The *History of ICOM* is therefore basically the history of its members, members who, through a network of some 145 countries have pooled their resources and ideas to produce astonishing results.

Throughout its fifty years' existence, ICOM has modified its policies to adapt to the ups and downs of a rapidly changing profession. The status of "member" has in particular undergone radical transformation.



The democratisation of ICOM

For a period of about twenty years, between 1950 and 1971, ICOM had to face a number of upheavals and insistent demands about the possibility of professionals joining the Organisation as "voting members" and the legitimacy of their status. We should remember that during this long period, the National and International Committees, Executive Councils and Advisory Committees were composed of directors from national museums, senior officials from Ministries for Culture, or even members chosen by the political parties currently in power.

Most museum professionals in specialised areas such as training, education or scientific research were consulted by International Committees on account of their expertise, but were refused membership of National Committees. And, conversely, museum professionals who had the privilege of belonging to their National Committees found they were refused access to International Committees.

In an effort to achieve greater openness, it was therefore decided to bring in two new member categories apart from the "active" members. These were "associate members" and "supporting members". All of them could attend General Conferences and ICOM meetings, including the plenary sessions of their own National Committees. They also received *ICOM News* and an international bibliography of museums free of charge, and they could use the UNESCO-ICOM Documentation Centre and work in International Committees (on the condition of course that they had been allowed to join).

By the time ICOM's ninth General Conference was held in Paris and Grenoble in 1971 demands for democratisation and a universal franchise within the Organisation had gathered momentum. This protest, as we saw earlier, took place after the 1968 events in France, in an atmosphere that was ready to challenge former concepts of democracy, museums and ICOM itself.

In 1974 the General Assembly in Copenhagen approved overwhelmingly to change the *Statutes* to merge the "voting" and "associate" members into a single category of

"active members". And so ICOM progressed from being a confederation of National Committees to become a democratic Organisation in its own right.

While in practice some National Committees continued to restrict membership of ICOM for administrative, professional or even party political reasons for many years, a growing number moved quickly to adopt the unambiguous principles enshrined in the new *Statutes*. This opened the path to a strong growth in membership which has continued ever since.

Such membership increases have been positive overall – significantly enhancing the exposure and credibility of ICOM around the world, and providing additional income from membership dues for setting up programmes in countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America. There has also been a boomerang effect with a raising of awareness about the role museums play in society, and this too has generated new membership.

The explosive growth in membership has inevitably had repercussions on the running of International Committees. They have been placed under great strain to manage the ever-increasing numbers, and this has emerged as one of ICOM's biggest challenges for the future.



ICOM and the museum boom

There are almost 60,000 museums in the world today. Though many were founded one or two centuries ago, the great majority are younger than ICOM itself. Indeed, it can well be argued that the second half of the 20th century has been pre-eminently the age of the museum and heritage. It is clear that ICOM both directly and through its association with bodies such as UNESCO has not only had a significant influence on the explosive growth in museums now found in every corner of the world but also on the policies that they have adopted.

Evolution of the museum concept

ICOM's successive definitions of the term "museum" over the past fifty years illustrate its preoccupations and constant interest in what constitutes its *raison d'être*. Professionals have taken account of the evolution of the concept and of the increasingly precise roles that the museum is expected to play in the service of heritage and society. As a result, the question of the museum's complex mission, whether in the service of collections, visitors, researchers, connoisseurs or society has often been brought up in General Conferences.

Already in 1895, even before the advent of ICOM, the museum was considered to be an institution for conserving works of art, archaeological collections and specimens of natural history.

In November 1946 the first definition drawn up in the Founding Resolutions of ICOM stated:

The word "museums" includes all collections open to the public, of artistic, technical, scientific, historical or archaeological material, including zoos and botanical gardens, but excluding libraries, except in so far as they maintain permanent exhibition rooms.

Then, in 1951, ICOM introduced explicitly for the first time the concepts of permanence and public benefit, as well as the educational and cultural role of the museum:

The word museum here denotes any permanent establishment, administered in the general interest,

for the purpose of preserving, studying and enhancing by various means and, in particular, of exhibiting to the public for its delectation and instruction groups of objects and specimens of cultural value: artistic, historic, scientific and technological collections, botanic and zoological gardens and aquariums.

Public libraries and public archival institutions maintaining permanent exhibition rooms shall be considered to be museums.

Exactly the same wording was used in the subsequent revision to the Statutes adopted in July 1956 and July 1959. In the revised version adopted by the Munich General Assembly in 1969, the definition was more condensed:

ICOM shall recognise as a museum any permanent institution which conserves and displays, for purposes of study, education and enjoyment, collections of objects of cultural or scientific significance.

However, much more radical changes to the role of museums and their place in society followed the 1971 General Conference debates in Paris and Grenoble. The Conference also saw the launching of Hugues de Varine-Bohan's newly invented word "écomusée", together with what was quickly termed "la nouvelle muséologie". This new approach to museums focused on their role in the physical and cultural environment, and on their integration

with the population. This was quite soon followed by the May 1972 UNESCO Latin American Round Table and the unambiguous demand in its concluding Declaration of Santiago de Chile that museums should seek to play a central role in the social and cultural development of the population they served. These radical, indeed revolutionary, views came very much to the fore in the new Statutes adopted by ICOM in the Copenhagen General Assembly of 1974, which included the following revised definition, stressing explicitly the role of the museum in the service of society and its development:

A museum is a non-profitmaking, permanent institution in the service of society and of its development, and open to the public, which acquires, conserves, researches, communicates, and exhibits, for purposes of study, education and enjoyment, material evidence of man and his environment. (I) In addition to museums designated as such, ICOM recognises that the following comply with the above definition:

- (a) Conservation institutes and exhibition galleries permanently maintained by libraries and archive centres.*
- (b) Natural, archaeological, and ethnographic monuments and sites and historical monuments and sites of a museum nature, for their acquisition, conservation and communication activities.*
- (c) Institutions displaying live specimens, such as botanical and zoological gardens, aquaria, vivaria, etc.*
- (d) Nature reserves.*
- (e) Science centres and planetariums.*

More than two decades on, this definition amended by ICOM has been very widely adopted professionally and administratively at the national level, and even incorporated into national law in some countries. Today, of the leading museum nations of the world probably the only exceptions to the national adoption and use of the current ICOM definition are the United States of America and the United Kingdom (2). The latest definition adopted in Stavanger in 1995 covers the following concepts:

A museum is a non-profit making, permanent institution in the service of society and of its development, and open to the public, which acquires, conserves, researches, communicates, and exhibits,

for purposes of study, education and enjoyment, material evidence of people and their environment.

(a) The above definition of a museum shall be applied without any limitation arising from the nature of the governing body, the territorial character, the functional structure or the orientation of the collections of the institution concerned.

(b) In addition to institutions designated as "museums" the following qualify as museums for the purposes of this definition:

- (I) natural, archaeological and ethnographic monuments and sites and historical monuments and sites of a museum nature that acquire, conserve and communicate material evidence of people and their environment;*
- (II) institutions holding collections of and displaying live specimens of plants and animals, such as botanical and zoological gardens, aquaria and vivaria;*
- (III) science centres and planetaria;*
- (IV) conservation institutes and exhibition galleries permanently maintained by libraries and archive centres;*
- (V) nature reserves;*
- (VI) international or national or regional or local museum organizations, ministries or departments or public agencies responsible for museums as per the definition given under this article;*
- (VII) non-profit institutions or organizations undertaking research, education, training, documentation and other activities relating to museums and museology;*
- (VIII) such other institutions as the Executive Council, after seeking the advice of the Advisory Committee, considers as having some or all of the characteristics of a museum, or as supporting museums and professional museum workers through museological research, education or training.*

This evolution in the concept of museum reflects both the context and the influences of the new needs in a society that is composed of a different, growing and motivated public. And so the notion of "delection" has less importance than in the past. Today, missions of "development" and "public service" have taken priority, and are being shaped without undermining the originality or *raison d'être* of the very first museion. The miracle of

museum terminology is that it can still unite institutions of an extraordinary variety, and professionals from such very different academic backgrounds and schools of thought.

It is interesting to note the extraordinary definition of the museum made by Georges Henri Rivière:

The museum? A pavilion that houses a lot of goods. Something that was old well before the world came into being. A collecting machine since the beginning of time. Its head moves forward in bold leaps and its tail is never-ending.

It is undoubtedly this terminological mobility that has given our original, open museums their strength and vitality.

(1) Between 1974 and 1992 the final phrase of the first sentence of the original French version of the ICOM definition, *de l'homme et de son environnement*, was translated literally in the English version as *of mankind and its environment*. The present "gender-neutral" English translation was adopted at the Quebec General Assembly in September 1992, though the francophone members considered no change was necessary in the French text.

(2) The United Kingdom Museums Association did in fact adopt the ICOM definition in 1975, and used and promoted it until 1984, when it was replaced by a much more traditional definition: *A museum is an institution which collects, documents, preserves, exhibits and interprets material evidence and associated information for the public benefit. The focus is once again on collections, and all references to the social and educational roles have been removed. However, practically all the other countries in the world have adopted the ICOM definition.*

Museums in the service of society

From its earliest days ICOM has sought to promote the role of museums in the wider society. In 1950, resolutions adopted in London recommended initiatives and activities for the young that were revolutionary for the time. This was because it was *urgently necessary that visits by young people to scientific and technical museums should be developed on a large scale.*

The 1956 General Conference held in Geneva stressed the need for a greater understanding worldwide of the remarkable Scandinavian experience of developing and modernising open-air museums.

The 1959 General Conference in Stockholm was even more explicit about this type of museum and the need to preserve the traces of

rapidly changing rural landscapes.

The General Assembly expressed the wish – that the term open-air museum be applied only to such collections of buildings [of historical value

exhibited with their appropriate furniture and equipment],

– that the experts and organizations responsible for the presentation of groups of sculptures in the open, in a spirit of comprehension, avoid applying the term open-air museum to these collections.

An even more ambitious programme for museums and the wider society was adopted at the General Conference at The Hague and in Amsterdam in 1962. This again addressed the issue of the local or, as it was becoming increasingly termed, "regional" museum:

ICOM Requests the ICOM Committee for Regional Museums to encourage relations with other ICOM Committees whose programmes have a bearing on their own (for instance, the Committees for Museums of Science and Technology, Natural History, Ethnology, Archaeology and History, Art).

With de-colonisation rapidly accelerating in some regions of the world, the General Conference at The Hague and in Amsterdam in 1962 addressed the question of what kinds of museums and museum activities were appropriate for newly independent countries, proposing that experimental *pilot museums* should be established in regions in the process of rapid development. The General



At the Pushkin Museum in Moscow (Russia), the educational role of the museum: learning how to remove a thorn from one's foot

Assembly expresses the wish that in countries where an interdisciplinary central museum is to be created, international and bilateral programmes of technical assistance encourage the establishment of pilot museums in which these methods are carried out.

The intense debates at the General Conference in France in 1971 questioned the nature, purpose and role of the museum in contemporary society. In the first resolution, under the unambiguous title of *The Museum in the Service of Man*, the General Assembly formally declared a new concept of the institution, another way of being in the service of all mankind:

- *the museum must accept that society is constantly changing;*
- *the traditional concept of the museum which perpetuates values concerned with the preservation of man's cultural and natural heritage, not as a manifestation of all that is significant in man's development, but merely as the possession of objects, is questionable;*
- *each individual museum must accept that it has a duty to evolve means of action specifically designed to serve best the particular social environment within which it operates;*

ICOM requests urgently that all museums:

- *undertake a continuous and complete reassessment of the needs of the public which they serve;*
- *through the medium of ICOM, undertake a programme of systematic study and research based on the results obtained and evolve methods of action which will in future more firmly establish their educational and cultural role in the service of mankind.*

A motion in 1962 looked at museums in relation to growing environmental threats, with the intention of covering what were defined as the four fundamental missions of museums, i.e. study, conservation of cultural property, education and visual pleasure and involving all the basic disciplines which are covered by ICOM (exact, natural and human sciences). This aspect of the new "green agenda", as it might be termed nowadays, was addressed in 1971, in the fifth resolution:

Aware that the pollution of air, earth and water and the defacing of man's visual and physical

environment is proceeding at an accelerated rate and is threatening to destroy not only man's cultural and natural resources but also life in general, Believing that all museums in the world are concerned with the gathering of documentation on the basic conditions of human existence and the preservation of the natural and cultural environment,

ICOM recommends:

- *that all national and international organizations and in particular the United Nations, UNESCO and all governments should recognize and fully employ the resources of museums and of ICOM in the furtherance of research and education in all measures designed to protect man's well-being and continued existence,*
- *that all museums should create special displays on the theme "Man and His Environment" and prepare comprehensive documentation on this subject as an information base for government agencies and industry.*

The next General Assembly in Copenhagen in 1974 reinforced the programme with the theme *The Museum and the Modern World*, concluding that:

- *In addition to the traditional and still essential functions of investigation, conservation and preservation in the service of a heritage, conditions of the modern world lead the museum towards assuming new commitments and adopting new forms;*
- *In order to answer these present needs, the museum must interpret the demands of the community in its cultural, environmental and demographic position;*

The debates of the conference have made evident the need for a more profound inquiry and reflection into the following points:

- *What can the museum contribute to the modern world?*
 - *What methods for evaluating the needs of society are available?*
 - *In what form are these needs reflected?*
 - *How can society defend the rights and independence of the museum?*
 - *How should the museum profession secure the independence of the institution in all circumstances?*
- Whatever answers might be given to the previous questions it seems imperative that members of the*



The Children's
Museum in Nashville
(United States).

profession keep in mind and take as principal criteria in their actions, the principle which has been so clearly emphasized in this conference namely that the museum, an institution in the service of society, in the modern world must be the reflection of that society.

The same leitmotif was taken up again at the General Conference in Mexico City in 1980:

Taking into consideration the increasingly recognized status of museums as institutions in the service of society and its development, The General Assembly of ICOM recommends: – That museums constantly identify the needs of society and develop their services accordingly.

The next General Conference in London in 1983 was also very concerned about making museums more accessible and more effective, and so made the following policy declarations:

Recalling that a museum is an institution in the service of society and its development, as stated in the ICOM Statutes, and that as a consequence exists to serve the community at large, The General Assembly of ICOM recommends that in view of the importance of museums to society, every effort should be made by the competent authorities in each country, region or local community to develop appropriate museums specifically planned to serve both rural and urban populations deprived of adequate access to the cultural and educational benefits of museums.

This new concern was stressed at the General Conference in Buenos Aires in 1986, where attention was drawn to the question of relations between museums and ethnic minority groups who should have easier access to museum activities and be better and more effectively portrayed therein.

The General Assembly recommends that:

– Museums which are engaged in activities relating to living ethnic groups, should, whenever possible,

consult with the appropriate members of those groups, and

– Such museums should avoid using ethnic materials in any way which might be detrimental to the group that produced them; their usage should be in keeping with the spirit of the ICOM Code of Professional Ethics, with particular reference to paragraphs 2.8 and 6.7.

Among the highlights of the 1995 Stavanger General Conference were presentations and demonstrations of the quite remarkable progress made by many museums, and by ICOM itself, in embracing the new information technologies that had become available over the previous two or three years due to two major factors. The first had been the opening up of the Internet to general use. It had previously been restricted to United States supported government, educational and military establishments. The second had been the massive increase in the processing and storage power of the personal computer coupled with a dramatic fall in its price. The decision of the Executive Council to develop a major presence on the Internet was enthusiastically endorsed in a General Assembly resolution on recent developments in information technologies.

Throughout its first half century ICOM has almost always stood for progress and innovation, not for their own sakes, but in order to serve better the fundamental truths and principles of museums and the museum profession. It is both typical, and most appropriate, that on the threshold of the new millennium ICOM is seeking to be in the service of society and its development by embracing the almost unimaginable opportunities offered by the forthcoming Age of Information, which seems certain to be at least as great an opportunity as the Industrial Revolution of the past two centuries.

Contribution to the development and ethics of the profession

Supporting and promoting the profession

Through its first half-century of activity ICOM's programme has varied significantly, and the museum world itself has developed and changed, but the basic priorities of the founding members have remained central to the Organisation. The status and training of museum staff were listed as a priority in the inaugural sessions on 19th and 20th November 1946:

As a general line of policy it was agreed that priority should be given to the training and exchange of students and curators, and National Committees were asked to report on training facilities within their own regions.

In 1950 the London General Conference passed the following points in the seventeenth resolution on The Museum Profession:

ICOM, considering that it is essential to know and compare the conditions of the museum profession in the various countries, Resolves:
- To establish a small committee, under the International Committee on Personnel, to study these conditions, with special reference to the following questions: (a) professional training, (b) qualifications, (c) salaries, compared with those of other professions, (d) time available for scientific work, (e) superannuation.

Following in the same spirit was a decision by the Milan General Conference in 1953 to develop exchanges of museum personnel.

The implementation of substantial exchange programmes as well as museum training and career development have remained priorities of ICOM International Committees though the hopes in this area have been largely unfulfilled.

The Geneva General Assembly in 1956 returned to the continuing concerns about the status and mission of the museum profession, declaring:

- That museums of archaeology and history study the organization along the following principles, according to the variety of possible solutions, permanent and temporary presentations destined for the general public:*
- Choice material grouped by themes; the restriction and arrangement of the presentations will facilitate their assimilation:*
- Logical arrangement: freeing the presentations from the routines of symmetry means interpreting more faithfully, to the public's benefit, the process revealed by the scientific study of the material:*
- Preponderance of the objects: it is their message that ought to be perceived and not that of a superfluous decoration:*



A restorer at the Hermitage in St. Petersburg (the former Leningrad, USSR), in 1967.

– A reasonable amount of documentation: an exhibition is not a book.

The report adopted by the New York General Conference in 1965 examined training needs and made recommendations on the status of museum personnel, whether in research, restoration or conservation.

– It is vital that museum personnel of all categories should have a status corresponding to that of the academic profession, since the required qualifications and responsibilities are similar. With the equal qualifications and years of service, a member of the staff of a museum should have the same status and salary as a professional in the teaching world or other learned institution.

– A candidate for the post of museum curator should possess a university diploma...

– Curators for all types of museums should receive a postgraduate training in a university or technical school covering museology in general... These postgraduate studies should receive the sanction of a diploma.

– Curators and other trained museum personnel should be provided with the necessary facilities and time to carry on research and scientific work independent of their regular museum duties.

Conservation and Restoration Personnel
Scientific laboratory personnel should be recruited from university graduates in chemical, physical or biological sciences and should receive complementary training in two fields:

– art history, ethnology, archaeology, archive or natural history according to the nature of the museum to which they will be attached;

– particular scientific problems relative to the conservation of cultural property.

Restorers of works of art and conservation technicians in general should have a basic knowledge of traditional techniques and sufficient knowledge of art history and of science in the field in which they are to specialize. Restorers of works of art should also possess the gift of artistic sensitivity.

Two years later the Executive Council set up the present ICOM International Committee for the Training of Personnel (ICTOP) as a new permanent international committee to develop and implement the programme

above. As a result, much of the research for the 1965 study and a recent survey of some current professional training programmes were published under the title *Training of Museum Personnel in the World: Actual State of the Problem*. At more or less the same time Georges Henri Rivière and Yvonne Oddon, who had both recently retired, constituted themselves as the ICOM Training Unit, giving their services voluntarily and serving as a secretariat and research unit for ICOM training activities. Two years later the first draft of the *ICOM Basic Syllabus for Museum Training* based on the previous studies of current syllabuses, and the more recent work of both ICTOP and the Training Unit was presented by Yvonne Oddon at a UNESCO training seminar held in Nigeria in 1972, and this was formally adopted by ICOM the following year.

Throughout much of the debate about museum training from the 1920s onwards in some countries such as Argentina or the United Kingdom, and within ICOM from the early 1950s, a recurring concern was that preparation for a professional museum career should be offered in universities as a fully recognised postgraduate level qualification. By the late 1960s there were at last signs that museology was increasingly being both recognised and taught as a high level university subject in a significant number of countries. The 1971 Grenoble General Assembly supported this as follows:

Recognizing the appreciable progress made in the last few years, particularly the increased number of museology courses in numerous countries, Requests governing authorities responsible for teaching and research to recognize museology as a scientific discipline of university level, Recommends most strongly that national and international organizations, museums and universities encourage and permit research on museology and the publication of this research, in that this is the most efficient method for the promotion and development of museology as a scientific discipline.

In 1983 the London General Conference went further, and stressed that training should not be seen as a once-in-a-lifetime preparation for a museum career; but should continue throughout working life. Recognising the increasing size and complexity of many museums, and the welcome trends towards granting museums and their staff much greater autonomy and responsibility for

managing the finances, staff, premises and services of museums, the General Assembly encouraged Career Development and Management Training:

Recognizing that the training, re-training and career development of museums staff should be regarded as an essential part of the policy and activities of every museum, however large or small, especially in the light of rapid social and technological change,

Noting the particular need for the development of advanced training programmes in museum policy and management for museum directors and senior staff, Stressing the need for the career development of museum staff at all levels, and acknowledging the significance of training as a sign of sound professionalism,

Urges all institutions in the museum field, including governing bodies, national museum organizations and international organizations to give proper priority and adequate resources to these essential fields, particularly by providing the means for staff at all levels to participate in training and career development activities, including opportunities for study visits to other museums,

Also requests the major museums and related institutions in developed and developing countries to take into consideration the needs of the staff of smaller museums, to assist with such training and career development.

Again, as part of ICOM's commitment to the further raising of professional standards, the 1989 General



ICOMAH members visiting archaeological excavations in Prague (in former Czechoslovakia).

Conference in The Hague requested strengthening policies for The Training of Museum Personnel, recommending that:

- Existing training courses be reinforced and new ones established for personnel at all levels of museum employment;
- Training programmes be developed which ensure an understanding of all aspects of the museum operation, having regard to the rapid development of new technologies and the increasing number of skills involved;
- Particular consideration be given to training needs in natural science preparation and conservation of biological specimens, and that
- Research be encouraged into all aspects of the museum operation and its technology.

In 1995 the General Assembly in Stavanger:

Encourages all training providers to recognize that museum training should not only address cultural and natural heritage, including environmental awareness, but accept as an ethical responsibility the need to take actions aimed at conserving and maintaining human society in balance with global resources.

It reminded training providers that training must recognize the importance of the global nature of the museological community by striving for an open dialogue and a free exchange of ideas, theories, and practices through all available media.

Will training be able to meet the challenges of the year 2000? With new media, and especially new trends in museology such as ecomuseums, cultural democratisation and even training for the universal museum (1)?

(1) Pierre Mayrand, "Pour une formation muséologique contextualisée à réinventer en permanence", *Cadernos de Sociomuseologia*, No. 6/1996, p.117.

For a professional ethic

The ethical dimension of the museum profession has always been given special attention. In spite of enormous difficulties, unfortunate setbacks and delays, ICOM has endeavoured to reach its ethical goal with admirable determination and persistency.

Members of successive Executive Councils and various National Committees have given priority to drawing up and applying ethical rules. The ethical aspect was at first primarily linked to the museum acquisitions and international circulation of cultural property that have taken place, and continue to take place, in unclear conditions. In many cases, antique dealers, art dealers, collectors and sometimes even museums are involved in these dubious transactions.

Working closely with UNESCO, ICOM has assisted in preparing and promoting various international declarations and, not least, the *1970 UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property*. This was supported more or less simultaneously by policy statements from the ICOM Executive Council on both the general ethics of acquisition and on ethical aspects of field and other collecting. The mould-breaking Paris and Grenoble General Conference of 1971 took positive action in this area also, with firm declarations of support for the Executive Council's decisions (through the second resolution):

Reaffirming the need for a code of professional ethics concerning the acquisition of museum objects, Recommends to all museum professionals:

– That they bind themselves to a moral obligation for collective action in establishing and adhering to a professional ethic as regards acquisition of objects the licit quality of which is not sufficiently established;

– That they adopt within their professional activities a policy which conforms to the ICOM resolutions of 1970 on this subject and strive to encourage the incorporation of this ethical code into the policy of all museums;

– That they urgently request the governmental authorities in their respective countries to comply with UNESCO's international recommendations on archaeological excavations (1965), and on the illicit transfer of cultural property (1964), and to ratify the International Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property, and to conclude bilateral and multilateral agreements aimed at the suppression of illicit traffic in cultural property.

At the same time the ICOM Working Group that had drawn up the 1970 Ethics of Acquisition statement was re-constituted to prepare a comprehensive Code of Professional Ethics. A requirement to "respect" the forthcoming Code was incorporated in the draft proposals for the new Statutes and membership conditions of ICOM for the Copenhagen General Conference in 1974, where the General Assembly demanded that the Executive Council designate a group of experts particularly qualified in this field to prepare a draft code of professional ethics to be distributed to all National and International Committees no later than 31 December 1976.

Unfortunately, due to changes in the personal circumstances of some members of the Working Group of experts appointed, it was not possible to proceed to the timetable set out, and no text was finalised at that time.

After a long period of uncertainty and hesitation, the London General Conference in 1983 returned to the theme of museum ethics, extending it to illicit trafficking, the ethics of acquisition and the return and restitution of important national treasures (1). It was also concerned about the fate of the cultural heritage in countries currently affected by war or military occupation, such as Cyprus, Lebanon and Cambodia. The importance of ethical issues was demonstrated by the fact that more than a third of the resolutions adopted by the 1983 General Assembly addressed these issues.

(1) This was partly due to the decision of the British Museum to hold one of the official receptions in honour of the Conference in the Elgin Marbles room of the museum. The marbles are the prestigious remains of the fabulous Parthenon in Athens. The Greek government has repeatedly asked for their restitution. Lord Elgin, the famous earl and British diplomat, had the marbles shipped to England, an action that has been severely criticised and condemned. The Greek delegates at the Conference, considering the choice of room to be provocative, expressed their surprise and their disapproval of the naming of the room, which they believe to be a serious case of disinformation.

The fourth resolution on illicit trafficking in cultural property urged ICOM members to adopt national codes of ethics. Furthermore, ICOM members were encouraged to initiate dialogues concerning requests for the return of cultural property to its countries of origin, and were requested to report to the authorities cases of illicit traffic in cultural objects from occupied countries.

These new concerns led to the appointment of a new Ethics Committee by the Executive Council in 1984. This reviewed over 50 existing ethical codes and submitted a draft to the National and International Committees whose many comments and recommendations were in turn examined by the Committee. The definitive *ICOM Code of Professional Ethics*, prepared initially in French, English and Spanish was adopted by the 1986 General Assembly in Buenos Aires, Argentina, which declared, in a unanimous vote that the *ICOM Code of Professional Ethics* be approved and adopted and that it be disseminated as widely as possible, both amongst the membership of ICOM and throughout the world museum movement.

Since 1986 the *Code of Professional Ethics* has been translated into and published in about twenty languages, and in addition has become the most widely consulted document on ICOM's Internet site. It is a reference tool for the whole profession, defining very precise rules, particularly concerning acquisitions to museum collections. Its application is overseen by a high level permanent standing committee of ICOM to which members may refer for complex or litigious cases.

Backed up by the *Code*, the ICOM Secretariat is raising awareness amongst museum professionals about the damaging effects of illicit traffic through its section on "Thefts reported to ICOM" in *ICOM News*. The excellent publications *Looting in Angkor*, *Looting in Africa* and *Looting in Latin America* in the "One Hundred Missing Objects" series support this policy, with a wider distribution aimed not only at art dealers but also, through press coverage, at the general public. The publications have met some of their goals by being instrumental in the spectacular return of certain objects to their countries of origin.

To reinforce the fight against illicit traffic in cultural property ICOM has also supported efforts to urge countries to ratify the UNESCO and UNIDROIT

exemplary cooperation

When UNESCO was founded, Sir Julian Huxley, the first Director General and an ardent supporter of strong partnerships between the intergovernmental and non-governmental sectors, decided to establish close collaboration with the museum world through ICOM. UNESCO's first General Conference approved of this initiative and agreed to place the documentation centre under ICOM's responsibility, calling it the UNESCO-ICOM Documentation Centre.



Philea (Egypt): UNESCO's campaign for safeguarding the monuments of Nubia.

Conventions on cultural property, and the mobilisation of police and customs officers in conjunction with INTERPOL and the World Customs Organisation (WCO).

Policies on acquisitions of artworks and archaeological artefacts are currently undergoing serious revision in many countries in America and Europe. Indeed, there is a difference in the behaviour of museum professionals, archaeologists, researchers and directors of cultural institutions, which demonstrates the positive changes that have come about recently.

The following year the two parties signed an agreement to define the details of cooperation. Increasingly close-knit, efficient and lasting ties then grew between ICOM and UNESCO, and since then UNESCO's valuable material and moral support has never failed. The history of this fifty-year-old collaboration has seen a series of joint activities and initiatives for museums, professionals and society as a whole.

The following is a series of particularly positive and decisive undertakings that were launched by UNESCO and systematically co-organised or supported by ICOM:

- preparation of the file on Cultural Property and International Exchange for UNESCO in 1947;*
- the international Museum Crusade campaign in 1951;*
- the international seminar in Brooklyn in 1952 and Athens in 1953 on the Role of Museums in Education;*
- the founding of the Rome Centre for the Conservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (which became ICCROM) as an intergovernmental organisation in 1959;*
- the campaign for safeguarding the monuments of Nubia, launched by UNESCO in 1960 and supported by ICOM;*
- the symposium in Neuchâtel in 1962 on the Problems of Museums in Countries Undergoing Rapid Change;*
- the regional seminar in Jos in Nigeria in 1964 on the Role of Museums in Contemporary Africa;*
- the international round table held in Paris in 1969 on the Role of the Museum in the World Today;*
- the decisive round table on the Importance and Development of Museums in the World Today organised in Santiago de Chile in 1972;*
- the study on The Protection of Cultural Property and the drafting of a Handbook of National Legislations entrusted to ICOM by UNESCO in 1974;*
- the international conference of experts on Museum Reserves, held in Washington in 1976 with the collaboration of ICOM and its committee from the American Association of Museums;*
- the regional symposium in Colombo in Sri Lanka in 1977 on Traditional, Rural and Tribal Cultures in Asia;*
- ICOM's contribution to several UNESCO publications, and in particular compiling Museum in the late 1970s and early 1980s;*
- close coordination for organising workshops on illicit traffic in cultural property in Africa and Europe in the 1980s and 1990s;*
- ICOM's regular participation in UNESCO's General Conferences, Executive Council sessions and World Heritage Division meetings between 1992 and 1995;*
- synallagmatic contracts between UNESCO and ICOM to maintain cooperation in personnel training (as in the case of the Nubian Museum), expert fact-finding missions and documentation (in Niger and Albania) between 1993 and 1996.*

The battle for safeguarding heritage

The museum community has often had to face dramatic situations created by the insecurity, violence and armed conflict that no longer spare any continent. The increasing scale of illicit traffic in cultural property has become a world phenomenon, affecting both third world and developed countries. Many museums, and cultural property in general, periodically fall victim to the tragic conflicts and wars that break out across the globe.

The experience of Lebanon, the Gulf countries, former Yugoslavia, Afghanistan, Burundi, Rwanda and the Congo bear witness to the precarious situation of both people and property where the cultural heritage is a valuable factor.

ICOM has constantly drawn the attention of the public and the authorities to the need to protect heritage and to take preventive measures in the face of the seriousness of the situation and the sheer scale of the dangers threatening natural and cultural heritage.

The increasingly worrying state of the natural environment led participants at the Buenos Aires General Conference in 1986 to raise the alarm:

The Threat to Our Natural Heritage

Whereas there is a grave and immediate threat of the loss of a great proportion of our people's natural heritage through the rapid destruction and degradation of our natural environment... and

Whereas the quality of life of all peoples is reduced and endangered by the continuing indiscriminate and unplanned elimination of great numbers of plant and animal species
The General Assembly of ICOM urges natural history museums and zoological and botanical gardens and nature reserves throughout the world to work together and with both public and private entities to train young scientists in the essential research of documenting the earth's biological diversity and to develop mechanisms for preserving sufficient habitats for this diversity to continue to exist and flourish for future generations.



Poster for International Museums Day created by ICOM's Spanish National Committee in 1997, on the theme of illicit traffic in cultural property.

Towards an international convention for the protection of movable cultural property of universal interest

The awareness of the value of heritage, whether cultural or natural, movable or immovable, religious or "secular", has led the specialised institutions, communities and national and international organisations concerned to combat the ever greater dangers that threaten it.

In 1972, a UNESCO International Convention was adopted to identify, save and promote the elements of the world's natural and cultural heritage that represent an exceptional value for humankind as a whole.

To improve the protection of cultural heritage, some ICOM members have moved quickly to restate the problem of heritage in its universal dimension, and to reconsider the artificial divisions between the different types of cultural property (movable, immovable and intangible). Whereas in principle, heritage is unique, the distinction made rightly or wrongly between several types of heritage is increasingly felt to be "discriminatory".

The balance between protecting famous cities, monuments and sites and precious objects in museum collections, however small, as well as other movable or intangible cultural property has to be re-established (1).

It was at Rio de Janeiro in 1990 that the participants in TRIOMUS 3 launched the idea of extending the 1972 Convention on immovable heritage to include museum collections and movable heritage of universal interest. ICOM's Executive Council then set up a Working Group to examine the issue. The Group set out to think about a system that could, on the legal, technical and scientific levels, take care of movable cultural property of universal interest. Since its 73rd session, the Executive Council has been periodically monitoring the progress of the work, results of which are communicated to UNESCO. In 1991 at the UNESCO General Conference, the question was raised of the advisability of extending the 1972 Convention to movable heritage.

(1) The concept of intangible cultural property is establishing itself increasingly as a key element of heritage through the survival of customs, traditional know-how and popular symbols. This idea was born in Japan in 1950, reached Korea in 1964, the Philippines in 1973, Thailand in 1985 and Algeria in 1997. In 1993 the Executive Council of UNESCO made a recommendation on the subject.

The International Committee of the Blue Shield



Since 1968 ICOM has been concerned about the dangers that conflicts bring to people and their heritage. The Stavanger General Assembly in 1995, increasingly worried by the scale of damage caused by the wars raging through

Eastern Europe, Africa and Asia, strongly condemned any deliberate destruction of the cultural heritage during armed conflict; and expressed its concern for the National Museum and its collections in Sarajevo and its solidarity with museum colleagues working there under hazardous conditions to protect the remaining collections (including invaluable and irreplaceable scientific material) for the benefit of future generations.

In 1996 the International Committee of the Blue Shield (ICBS) was founded to co-ordinate the efforts of four non-governmental organisations concerned about the protection of cultural heritage. These are: the International Council on Archives (ICA), the International Council of Museums (ICOM), the International Council on



Gallery at the Zmajski Musej in Sarajevo (former Yugoslavia) after bombing, in 1996.

Museums and Sites (ICOMOS) and the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA).

This initiative is primarily to respond to emergency situations created by armed conflict and natural disasters. Indeed, museum directors call upon ICOM at such times, drawing its attention to the tragedies they are witnessing:

This war has destroyed the Congolese movable and immovable cultural heritage. Several cases of theft and looting have been reported in museums in Kinkala, Owando and Brazzaville. So far we do not know whether these objects have left the country (1).

The Blue Shield's objectives also include promoting measures for risk preparedness in the face of destruction, theft and looting. The four organisations work together to collect information, and also encourage and coordinate action and solidarity at the local, national and international levels.

The International Committee is still relatively young, and looks likely to strengthen its impact, action and effectiveness.

(1) Extract from a letter to ICOM by the Chairperson of the Congolese National Committee in July 1990.

The complexity of the task is such that for instance, one has to estimate the likelihood of the durability and lifetime of the work to be classified, taking into account the case of objects that are physically too fragile or ephemeral. The great diversity of national legislation should also be considered.

In the early 1990s the group of ICOM experts began a feasibility study by consulting International Committees and specialists from the UNESCO Heritage Division. Attention was focused on defining the objects eligible for classification, the criteria for selection, the type of legal instrument to recommend, and, in the event of classification, the determination of conditions for management, promotion and technical assistance.

Three main focuses were clearly established:

- **criteria for selection based on the object's authenticity, its representativeness and its outstanding value;**
- **a system for international protection dependent on the drawing up and adoption of an international convention on cultural property following the example of the 1972 Convention, which would simply be extended to movable heritage – a possibility that, however, seems difficult and untimely;**
- **means of developing public awareness, and participation on behalf of researchers and professionals.**

The last point includes an original campaign for drawing up, with the National Committees concerned, examples of cultural property that could feature on a world heritage list. An illustrated catalogue or book, or even a documentary could form the beginnings of an extraordinary virtual planetary museum made up of invaluable collections to be discovered, made known, and kept safe for future generations.

Contribution to the evolution of museums in developing countries

ICOM's relations with museums in developing countries reveal a complex series of ties, by turn loose and distant, or close and supportive. This development follows that of the political, economic and social context of an eventful half century marked by the end of colonial domination and the emergence of all manner of crises. There is an ever widening gap between rich countries and poor countries. The latter sink into under-development that gives rise to inevitable delays in the progress of education, training and development. Their debts amount to billions of dollars.

ICOM and third-world countries: timid and selective early exchanges

The fact that the early conferences focused little on cooperation with the third world can be explained by the absence of many countries that were still under colonial domination. However, in 1950 Mexico and Iraq took an active part in drawing up an exchange programme for objects from museums of natural history, archaeology and ethnography.

In Paris a large exhibition of painting from the Museu de Arte de São Paulo was held in 1953 thus enabling people

to discover the riches of Latin American heritage. In ICOM the problems of museums in developing countries were not really discussed until the third General Conference in 1953, thanks to the representative from India. For the first time reference was made to *aid of museums in countries undergoing development*, and an exchange programme was set up.

Museums in the North and Museums in the South:

a frightening difference

As far as museums are concerned, there is a frightening gap between most of those in northern countries and those in southern countries. All the museums on the entire African continent account for barely two per cent of the world's museums, and less than half the number of museums in some European countries, such as the United Kingdom, France or Germany.

Over the last fifty years many countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America have gone through very difficult times to bring about economic progress. In spite of their riches, the museums inherited from the colonial era often bear a western stamp far removed from local reality and national aspirations. Fortunately, original and often successful methods have been found for museum projects which take available resources and local needs into account. Among other countries, Mexico, India and Niger have worked minor miracles in this respect. Undoubtedly, the holding of ICOM's First Interim Conference in Mexico City in 1947 was a strong, early symbol. ICOM was created on generous foundations, in the optimism of the post-war period, and very slowly opened up to third world countries. It was not until the 1990s that its representation had become both effective and universal.

The advent of newly independent countries

One of the "statutory objectives" fixed by ICOM in 1946 was to build up a representative foundation on a world scale. But it was not until 1962, with the advent of newly independent countries, that museums in the third world were mentioned. In his report on 11th July 1962, the Director of ICOM declared that:

We should encourage and systematise brotherly cooperation amongst museums in developed countries and museums in countries undergoing rapid change. He concluded by assuring newly independent countries that ICOM was stretching out a friendly hand to them.

In the 1960s ICOM saw a much greater participation on behalf of newly independent third world countries. Following the 1959 General Conference recommendations and the 1962 colloquium in Neuchâtel on *The Problems of Museums in Countries Undergoing Rapid Change* an important work was published on promoting museums, and particularly on creating science, technology and industry museums. The colloquium aroused keen interest in a review of the role museums played. During the event the Museums Association of Tropical Africa (AMAT/MATA), which was founded in 1959, asked to join ICOM.

In 1965 eight out of ICOM's nine new National Committees were African: Algeria, Ghana, Malawi, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Chad and Uganda. In his report, Hugues de Varine-Bohan mentioned that only a third of the countries in Africa, a quarter of those in Asia and half of those in Latin America were represented at ICOM. He concluded by saying, *We still have a long way to go before our Council comes up to the representativeness required.* During ICOM's 1965 General Conference in the United States three work sessions under the chairmanship of the Director of the New Delhi National Museum were held with the International Committee for Museums of Science and Technology (CIMUSET). Participants examined new possibilities for international cooperation in developing countries.

The General Assembly debated the urgent needs of museums in developing countries as far as inventorying and documenting national cultural heritage were concerned.

There followed a long, critical period of trial and error, and sometimes stagnation. The 1968 anti-establishment movement had considerable repercussions within ICOM. Tension mounted during stormy General Conferences

when the often heated debates revealed what really underlay the intentions of those who, under the pretext of an apolitical stand, were in fact trying to maintain a disposition for domination of, or intolerance towards, the members representing developing countries. Once again, rivalry between conservative traditionalists and reformers or avant-gardists was very intense. However, in the end, and for the first time, the 1968 General Conference agreed to regional meetings being held amongst delegates from Asia, Africa and Latin America. From then on ICOM began a process of cooperation with developing countries by integrating increasingly ambitious and effective activities into its programmes.

Increasingly close-knit cooperation

Yet it was not until 1977 that ICOM actually began engaging in more meaningful activities in developing countries.

A resolution adopted in Moscow in 1977 decided on:
assistance for the developing countries of Asia, Africa, and Latin America in training museum personnel and restorers, considering the requirement in qualified museum personnel and in conservation

specialists, and making every effort to promote the creation and circulation of teaching aids and materials for conservation training.

A request was made to UNESCO to step up efforts to facilitate the organisation of training courses for professionals in African, Asian and Latin American countries.

During the General Conference in 1986, the Executive Council and Advisory Committee were requested to:

examine ways and means of increasing the opportunities for members from developing countries to participate in future General Conferences, General Assemblies, meetings of International Committees and meetings of the Advisory Committee.

Recognising the significant role played by regional organisations such as the Organisation of Museums, Monuments and Sites of Africa (OMMSA), ICOM's 1986 General Assembly invited the Secretary General to cooperate more closely with them.

The first Regional Assembly of the Secretariat for Latin America and the Caribbean took place in Guadalajara in Mexico in 1987.

Enhanced ICOM action for museums in developing countries and the blossoming of regional programmes

In fact it has only been over the last decade, with National Committees reaching maturity, that ICOM has been able to launch an irreversible and extremely positive process of decentralisation by creating and developing its Regional Organisations. This persevering reorganisation policy has been based on specific projects for personnel training, standardising inventories, and campaigns for fighting against illicit traffic in cultural property. The planning of programmes on a regional scale fits in with a process of decentralisation that is particularly beneficial for continents that are subject to all manner of threats and economic crises.



Training on the Handbook of Standards. Documenting African Collections at the National Museum in Bamako (Mali), in 1997.

Decentralisation and regionalisation of ICOM in Asia-Pacific

Asia is the cradle of several very old and lasting civilisations with many communities that keep a jealous eye on their cultural identity and the extremely valuable collections in their 3,000 museums. It was in the eastern part of the continent, and thanks to the offer of an office in New Delhi made by the Indian National Committee that ICOM's Regional Agency for Asia and Pacific (ASPAC) was created in 1967. It began to function first as a pilot project.

The dynamic activities initiated by Grace Morley, the head of the Agency, resulted in numerous contacts, meetings, colloquiums, and round tables mainly to improve national legislation on protecting heritage and to control the export of cultural property.

However, it was not until 1975 that cooperation really began between ICOM's Regional Agency and the National Committees in Asia. The same year some thirteen countries participated in training courses in museum architecture in New Delhi (Bangladesh, Burma, India, Indonesia, Iran, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka and Thailand). During the Regional Assembly of ICOM's Asian National Committees the same year the Indian National Committee was asked to carry out a needs analysis for training in the region in conjunction with ASPAC.

The most important meeting of Asian National Committees was organised by ASPAC in Tehran in November 1976. Its annual programme was devoted on the one hand to preparing documents on museum subjects, and on the other to seeking the means and methods that would enable the Agency to provide a more effective contribution.

In the mid-1980s two regional UNESCO-ICOM seminars were held in Seoul on *Public Oriented Museum Policies in South-East Asia* and on the *Means for integrating Museums in the Community in Asia*.

ICOM's committees in Asia decided to help museums in



ASPAC's Regional Assembly, with Soraj Chuse, President of ICOM, in Manila (Philippines), in 1997.

the countries in the region that were too small to have their own National Committee.

A programme of training courses for museum professionals in mid-career was held in India in 1990 and 1992.

ICOM took part in the regional workshop on illicit traffic organised by UNESCO for the application of its 1970 *Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property*. This was held in Jomtien in Thailand, in February 1992. The same year ICOM participated in a second workshop on illicit traffic in Phnom Penh in Cambodia, from 20th to 24th July. A report was made to UNESCO on the measures to take for safeguarding heritage and for improving security at museums and sites in Cambodia. *Looting in Angkor*, the first volume in the "One Hundred

Missing Objects" series, came out in 1994. The same year ASPAC published the *Directory of Museums of the Asia-Pacific Countries*.

1997 was marked by a seminar on *Multiculturalism and the Role of Museums*. An exhibition exchange programme began in 1995 with the *Path of Buddha* in Mongolia and Singapore, and continued in 1996 with a presentation of the relics of Buddha in South Korea and in Thailand and an exhibition of contemporary Japanese artists in New Delhi. There was also an exchange of experts, particularly with Belgium.

ICOM has around twenty National Committees in the Asia-Pacific region which account for almost 7% of the Organisation's membership. Some of them, including the Australian, Chinese, Indian, Japanese and Korean National Committees have carried out a series of intense activities either within ASPAC or within their own programmes, with meetings, conferences, seminars and the publishing of directories.

Fifty years of ICOM in Latin America

Countries in Latin America welcomed the birth of ICOM with enthusiasm. The personal participation of two Brazilians, Mario Barata and Oswaldo Texeira, in ICOM's first meetings in November 1946, together with the unconditional support from Argentina, Chile, Haiti, Nicaragua and Peru, and the almost immediate formation of National Committees in Cuba, Mexico and Peru meant that countries from the Latin American and Caribbean region were dynamic and constructive participants. It is interesting to note that ICOM's first General Assembly was held in Mexico City, within the framework of UNESCO's second General Conference, from 17th to 19th November, 1947. This resulted in a series of recommendations on information exchange programmes and the exchange of personnel and material.

However, it took many years before a fruitful, lasting relationship was established between the General Secretariat and the National Committees.

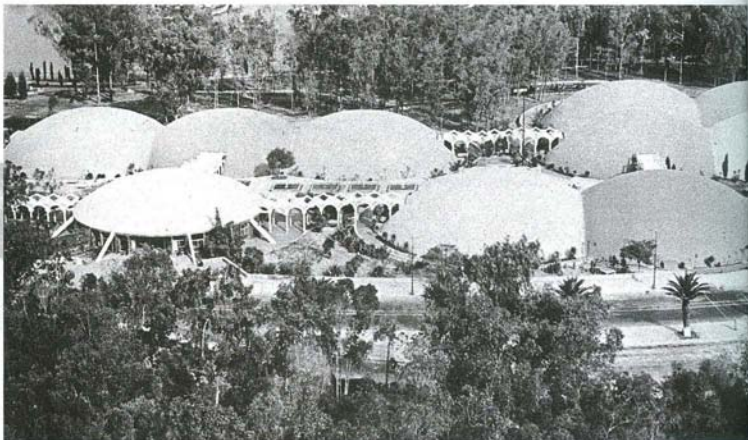
Over the years, the lack of active museum societies in the region has markedly affected the relationship between local museums and ICOM. The rare societies that do exist have proved themselves by bringing together specialists and raising the professional level in the country. Such is

the case of the Asociación Colombiana de Cultura, which has played a vital role in editorial and educational work. Many of its activities are signed ACOM/ICOM demonstrating the coordination between the two bodies. Indeed, in Latin America, ICOM has been called upon to compensate for the absence of professional organisations.

Centres for personnel training have been another other weak point on the museum horizon. Brazil, where a chair of museology has been in existence for almost fifty years, Argentina and Mexico stand out for their work in this field with their many courses and seminars. When the "great explosion" of museums reached Latin America it brought with it much thought on new museum modalities on both a theoretical and a practical level.

The limited participation of Latin America in ICOM's early international activities was offset to a certain extent by the emergence in 1950 of the Dissidents, a group of artists in Venezuela. The group promoted a change in the arts reflected by the appointment of a new director to the Museum of Fine Arts, who was in tune with the artistic movements of the time, and by a renewal in the orientation of the museum, with the creation of the Society of Friends of the Museum, the Library and the journal *Visual*. A few years later, the painter Miguel Arroyo

The Natural History
Museum in Mexico
City (Mexico), in
1975.



took over and went on to represent Venezuela at ICOM with interest and efficiency for some time.

However, for most of the countries, there was no significant change in the situation until 1959 when UNESCO and ICOM jointly organised the International Museums Campaign. The most important event in the campaign was undoubtedly the Regional Seminar on the Educational Function of Museums, known as the "Rio Seminar", led by Georges Henri Rivière, and by Raymonde Frin from UNESCO's Museums and Monuments Division. It achieved maximum effectiveness coming after five round tables organised in Peru, Paraguay, Panama, Cuba and Guatemala. One of the resolutions that arose during the meeting requested *that in the member states of UNESCO, laws be announced aimed at preserving and enriching the archaeological, cultural and historic heritage and that a register of traders in archaeological and artistic species be tailored in order to control the exit of these pieces to foreign countries.* Another resolution mentioned strengthening ICOM's Peruvian National Committee. This marked the beginning

of an awareness about, and the reporting of, illegal traffic in cultural heritage. ICOM was held at a distance from all this because the National Committees were government dependent and provided little real support for museums. ICOM's biggest problem was how to break this vicious circle, which, ironically, was imposed by the fact that as an organisation of a non-governmental nature it had little influence.

In the 1960s a new sector linked to the looting of cultural property began to emerge in Latin America with its own networks and mechanisms. Monumental sculptures were sawn into slabs and objects were torn from burial grounds by professional looters supplying the international market. In reaction to this massive destruction of cultural heritage, museum professionals and Latin American heritage institutions implemented a series of protective policies.

The Rio Seminar triggered a series of concerns, reflexions and practices that would crystallise into concrete proposals for museums. A new vision of the museum

began to emerge, bringing about a radical change in the work of professionals.

This impetus was reinforced in 1962 by the creation of the Regional Project of Cultural Heritage and Development (PNUD/UNESCO), which gave decisive support to several Latin American projects for museums, and personnel training for the restoration of movable property. A year later when Hugues de Varine-Bohan toured Latin America and took stock of the regional reality, new contacts were made with young Latin American museum specialists. The results of these initiatives were apparent when in 1964 the former Secretary General of UNESCO, Jaime Torres Bodet, who was visiting Mexico, inaugurated almost simultaneously the Museo Nacional de Antropología, the Museo Nacional de Arte Moderno, the Museo Nacional del Virreinato, the Museo de la Ciudad de México and the Museo de Historia Natural de la Ciudad de México. The following year the panorama was completed by the inauguration of the Museo Nacional de las Culturas.

Important meetings took place in Latin America attended by Georges Henri Rivière, Director of ICOM. Among them were the 1968 Meeting on Museum Architecture, in which Franco Minissi, the Italian architect, and Pedro Ramírez Vázquez, who designed the National Anthropology Museum of Mexico, took part. A Seminar on Museology was organised in Havana by the Cuban National Committee.

The presence of many of the specialists who had attended the Regional Seminars had a significant impact on the commotion that disrupted ICOM's ninth General Conference in Paris and Grenoble. In 1971 a Regional Meeting on Conservation Problems in Latin America was organised by ICOM in conjunction with UNESCO in Cuba, and resulted in the opening of the Centro Regional Latinoamericano de Estudios para la Conservación y Restauración de Bienes Culturales in Churubusco, in Mexico. This centre, along with those of Santiago de Chile and COLCultura in Bogotá were to train museum staff in the coming years. Unfortunately their ceasing to be UNESCO Regional Centres has resulted in a loss of influence.

Another landmark in the history of Latin American museology was the Santiago de Chile round table, when

museum specialists and professionals gathered together, restless and moved by the events of the previous General Conference. The major result of the round table was to declare the museum as being in the service of society. This philosophy was to mark and characterise Latin American museology, which in the words of Hugues de Varine-Bohan **has led to the deepest collective reflexion on museums and museology in the last twenty years.**

The founding of the Asociación Latinoamericana de Museos (ALAM) in 1974 grew out of the turmoil of excitement that had followed a long period of lethargy on behalf of the National Committees in Latin America. The impetus given by ICOM had encouraged the region to create its own museum structure. Unfortunately, the association did not get under way, mainly due to a lack of communication between its members and the other museums in the region, a serious problem that prevails today.

ICOM's eleventh General Conference, held in Moscow in the former USSR, in 1977, saw the beginning of a much closer relationship between ICOM and Latin America. That year a travelling exhibition was organised on *Latin American Art*, and International Museums Day was celebrated in different countries throughout the region.

It was at ICOM's twelfth General Conference, held in Mexico City in 1980 on the theme *The World's Heritage - the Museum's Responsibilities* that ICOM's Regional Organisation for Latin America and the Caribbean (ICOM-LAC) took its first steps. The theme of the conference, which was closely linked to the problems in the region, and the presence of many Latin American colleagues made the occasion appropriate for breathing new life into ALAM. On 30th October 1980, during a meeting at the Museo de las Culturas, the participants from the region (Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Puerto Rico and Venezuela) analysed the urgent need to be in contact, to exchange information and to form a group of museum professionals in the region.

During the General Assembly, Fernanda de Camargo Moro from Brazil was elected member of the Executive Council, and a resolution was passed to form a 'regional

linking body" with the ICOM General Secretariat. At the invitation of the Venezuelan National Committee a meeting was held in Caracas under the chairmanship of Hubert Landais with representatives from the region from 15th to 20th November 1982. It was a historic meeting that saw the birth of a Latin American body **to unify the efforts and potentials of the ICOM National Committees and other related bodies, with a view to enhancing and strengthening the collaboration between UNESCO, ICOM and ICOMOS, and the international cooperation in the Latin American region, and to optimise the resources available.** And so ICOM-LAC was formed.

The Regional Organisation's second meeting was held during ICOM's thirteenth General Conference on the theme *Museums for a Developing World* in London in 1983. A tentative programme was drawn up for carrying out work in sub-regions in Latin America.

The following year Marta Arjona, Chairperson of the Cuban National Committee, called a third meeting during which the London agreements were reviewed. The use of Spanish as the working language was proposed again, as it had been at an earlier date in Mexico, and ICOM's Secretariat was congratulated on the publication of its newsletter in Spanish, *Noticias del ICOM*. An activities programme was agreed on, taking up points raised since the creation of ICOM: personnel training, item documenting and cataloguing, and setting up a regional documentation centre. Ever since then ICOM-LAC has been meeting every year, reinforcing professional contacts in the region.

At the same time regional Work Groups were set up in some International Committees, including Regional Museums (ICR), Museology (ICOFOM), and Education and Cultural Action (CECA). The representatives of these committees in Latin America took on the role of promoters of new ideas in their countries.

On acquiring greater awareness as a regional grouping, Latin America embarked on a new, more mature and professional era. This was borne out by ICOM's Regional Colloquium for Latin America and the Caribbean which was held in Guadalajara, Mexico in 1985, the first of its kind to be designed by, and for, the region.

For the first time in its history ICOM's General Conference (the fourteenth) and General Assembly (the fifteenth) were held in the Southern hemisphere, in Buenos Aires in Argentina, in 1986. The theme, *Museums and the Future of Our Heritage: Emergency Call* reflected the region's concern about its heritage. During the conference, which gave a boost to museums in the region, the Chairperson of the Argentine National Committee stressed the need to link museums definitively to cultural development. The General Assembly took the decision to translate the *Code of Professional Ethics* into Spanish.

In 1988 during ICOM-LAC's annual regional meeting in Santo Domingo, in the Dominican Republic, a new programme was set up. Given the pressing need to disseminate ICOM's work in the region, it was decided to include a workshop on a specific theme in each of the annual sessions. Motivated by the same wish for inter-communication between the Latin American countries, the first issue of the newsletter *Chaski* appeared, a publication that is still in circulation ten years after its creation.



Creation of the Regional Organisation for Latin America and the Caribbean, in Caracas (Venezuela), in 1982.

Ratification of the admission of Spanish as an official working language was obtained at the sixteenth General Assembly, held at The Hague in 1989. Lucía Astillo from Ecuador was elected Chairperson of ICOM-LAC and continued the work of consolidating the Regional Organisation by bringing out a new triennial publication called *Revisión-Review*. After painstaking preparation ICOM's Cuban National Committee published the Directory of Latin American and Caribbean Museums.

International Committees that had previously concentrated their activities and meetings in Europe on account of the large European membership now began to hold meetings in Latin America. ICAMT and ICME set a precedent by meeting for the first time in Mexico City in 1990, and the movement towards decentralisation continued.

To commemorate the Santiago de Chile round table that had taken place twenty years earlier, the Venezuelan National Committee and the UNESCO Regional Cultural Office held an ambitious meeting in Caracas, Venezuela, in 1992. Participants discussed the development of museums in relation to the development of society.

1995 was marked by a meeting in Barquisimeto on the theme *Museums and Tourism* organised by the Venezuelan National Committee, and by a regional workshop on illegal traffic in cultural property held in Cuenca, Ecuador, in the framework of ICOM's Triennial Programme.

Over the years communities in Latin America have reacted strongly when testimonies to their civilisations disappear. Such was the case with the Coroma, a community from the high plateaux of southern Bolivia, who took initiatives to curb the trade in their fabrics, and managed to have 43 ceremonial textiles returned in 1992. This alarming situation motivated ICOM to publish a new volume in its "One Hundred Missing Objects" series, *Looting in Latin America*. The book gives a representative selection of items stolen from museums, religious monuments and public buildings, as well as excerpts of national legislation forbidding illicit excavations and the export of objects of national heritage.

Relations with the ICOM Secretariat have strengthened over the last few years thanks to the activity of the



Meeting of ICOM's Latin American section in Quito (Ecuador), in 1993: a positive initiative for decentralisation.

National Committees. The Peruvian National Committee, chaired by Luis Repetto, has for instance set up a number of programmes that include ICOM in the country's official activities, like *Museum Week*. In the same way, the ICOMSUR group comprising countries in the MercoSur commercial treaty (Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay) have built up fruitful cooperation.

The "museological ideology" that was born in the 1970s, gained strength in Mexico in 1980, was consolidated in Caracas in 1982, and structured in Cuba in 1984 has matured professionally in Latin America, becoming one of ICOM's most fertile and original areas of work.

In sum, as Hugues de Varine-Bohan stated, in 1950 and 1960, museums were made on the basis of cultures founded on the written word, learning and decoding. Latin American museology with its focus on the social service that the museum offers, and the fostering of interdisciplinary work as the basis of study methodology, has helped to establish a new world museology, one that is more flexible, rich and multifaceted. This original and dynamic movement is undoubtedly indebted to ICOM's presence in Latin America.

Promoting regional activities in Africa

If there were only one continent in the world that was concerned about building its future by preserving its past, it would be Africa! (1).

The affirmation of the cultural identity of African communities in the 1960s, and the important role of heritage and museums in the face of social, economic and cultural problems created a vast museum movement across the continent. ICOM then took new initiatives to concretise the generous ideas of young professionals from the region's institutions:

When one considers the cultural riches of Africa, and the important role which African museums can play in scientific research, the preservation of the cultural heritage and the education of the general public, one realises how essential it was that an effort be made to encourage and coordinate a policy for museums at the continental level and in accordance with the requirements of the world today (2).

The Museums Association of Tropical Africa (AMAT/MATA) had succeeded in creating ties amongst the professionals on the continent as from 1959.

Two seminars were organised as a part of ICOM's programme:

- Museums and the Educational system in Africa today, in 1972;

- Problems of Conservation and Professional Training in African Museums, in 1974.

It was not until 1978 that the Organisation of Museums, Monuments and Sites of Africa (OMMSA) held its Constituent Assembly, with support from ICOM.

ICOM and OMMSA then set the following mission:

- to assess the situation regarding the preservation and protection of cultural heritage (legal, administrative and technical aspects);

- to promote an African museology adapted to the requirements of social and cultural development;

- to define professional training needs and encourage the authorities responsible in various countries to recognise training as a university discipline.

The Southern African Development Community Association of Museums and Monuments (SADCAMM), which is affiliated to ICOM, was created in the early 1990s to represent Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Mozambique, Malawi, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.



The Swedish-African Museum Programme (SAMP) set up in 1989 by the Swedish National Committee has opened up new possibilities of personnel exchange between Northern Europe and Africa.

(1) Final declaration at the Pan-African Festival, 1969.
(2) ICOM News, August 1974, Vol. 17 No. 5.

Alpha Oumar Konaré, President of ICOM (on the left), during the meeting in Bamako (Mali), in 1992.

AFRICOM and the development of African museums

Decisive changes came about with the meetings in Benin, Ghana and Togo organised by ICOM in 1991. The subject was *What Museums for Africa? Heritage in the Future*. These meetings were a great success and had extremely positive repercussions thanks to the AFRICOM Programme which aimed to develop exchanges between African professionals and those in other parts of the world. AFRICOM's main areas of focus were defined as follows:

- **encouraging museums to be autonomous;**
- **reinforcing networks for cooperation;**
- **fighting against the illicit traffic in cultural property;**
- **training specialists.**

To develop museums in Africa, ICOM recommended holding regional seminars in conjunction with International Committees on a yearly basis. This was concretised by the creation of Regional Organisations such as CIAO for West Africa and ICOMAC for Central Africa. At the same time two workshops were organised on illicit traffic in cultural property. The first took place in Arusha, in Tanzania, in September 1993, and the second in Bamako, in Mali, in October 1994. They were followed by a whole series of initiatives in the same spirit. The Arusha workshop, prepared by ICOM and SADCAMM, brought together sixty participants from East Africa and resulted in the launching of the *Arusha Appeal* intended for the international community. The first step in the AFRICOM Programme was completed by the publication of a study on the *Autonomy of Museums in Africa*.

In 1996 action continued for museum personnel training, and a second edition of the *Directory of Museum Professionals in Africa* was compiled.

The current phase in the AFRICOM Programme has managed to achieve ever greater involvement by African museums and professionals in coordinating projects and programmes. Priority has been given to museum training to meet the regional needs of both museums and the cultural and natural heritage. The ongoing battle against illicit traffic has proved itself efficiently through workshops in East, West and North Africa, for which ICOM has benefited from support by UNESCO, customs

departments and INTERPOL. The general public, museum professionals and art dealers have been made more aware of the problem thanks to a joint information campaign.

A "Red List" of African artefacts that are particularly vulnerable to international trafficking was drawn up at the end of the AFRICOM meeting in the Netherlands in 1997:

- ▲ Nok terracotta statuettes from the Bauchi Plateau, and the Katsina and Sokoto regions (Nigeria).
- ▲ Terracotta and bronze heads from Ifé (Nigeria).
- ▲ Stone statues from Esie (Nigeria).
- ▲ So-called Djenné terracotta statuettes, bronzes and pottery from the Niger Valley (Mali).
- ▲ Bura System terracotta statuettes, bronzes, pottery, and stone statues (Niger, Burkina Faso).
- ▲ Stone statues from northern Burkina Faso and neighbouring regions.
- ▲ Terracotta statuettes from northern Ghana (Koma-Land) and Côte d'Ivoire.
- ▲ So-called Sao terracotta statuettes (Cameroon, Chad and Nigeria).

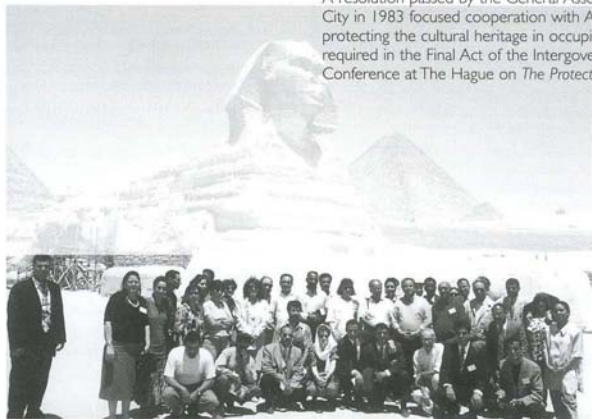
This Amsterdam "Red List" demonstrates the close cooperation between African professionals and ICOM on ethical matters. Significant exchanges of viewpoints have resulted in researchers and those in charge of African collections in Europe and the United States being involved from now on in all issues related to acquisitions, collecting and studies.

The Arab countries and the birth of their Regional Organisation

The enormous legacy of the great civilisations that have blossomed in the Arab world have enabled the creation of prestigious museums with prodigious riches, but these have always posed problems for safeguarding, restoring and enhancing their collections. In 1956 ICOM began to take an interest in the museum situation in the Near East (Egypt, Iraq, Iran, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and Turkey). Since then both International Committees and experts have been paying ever greater attention to professional training, museum catalogues, and archaeology, natural history and science museums.

Syria, whose archaeological riches are known throughout the world, raised questions on the international regulation of excavations and the conservation of archaeology and history collections during ICOM's General Conferences in the 1960s. The interdependence of local cultures and the reinforcement of cooperation with museums in the Near East all contributed to the development of museums in this part of the world.

A resolution passed by the General Assembly in Mexico City in 1983 focused cooperation with Arab countries on protecting the cultural heritage in occupied countries (as required in the Final Act of the Intergovernmental Conference at The Hague on *The Protection of Cultural*



Participants at the
ICOM-ARAB meeting in
Cairo (Egypt), in 1996.

Property in the Event of Armed Conflict) and on help for publishing museum works in Arabic. There followed a decade of continuous inactivity – the detachment of Arab National Committees had become alarming. In fact, while between 1980 and 1990 Latin America and Asia-Pacific had managed to energise their activities, the African continent and the Arab countries in particular were fading more and more into the background. There were only three remaining Arab National Committees in ICOM out of the twenty countries concerned.

In conjunction with the Department of Antiquities in Jordan, ICOM organised an important meeting on the theme *Museums, Civilisation and Development* for professionals from Arab countries, in Amman, in 1994. The occasion gave professionals the opportunity to organise themselves and to consolidate their position within ICOM. The *Arab Museums Newsletter* appeared for the first time.

At ICOM's instigation, the Arab National Committees undertook to organise seminars and training courses for their members themselves. They decided to energize exchanges not only in the region but also at an international level, and to strengthen the network of professionals (through exhibitions, training courses and the exchange of personnel).

At UNESCO's request the ICOM Secretariat set up a training programme for the personnel at the Nubian Museum in Aswan in Egypt.

The Regional Organisation for the Arab Countries (ICOM-ARAB) was formally announced during ICOM's General Conference in Norway in 1995, following the example of other Regional Organisations of museum professionals in the developing countries in Asia-Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean, Africa and Maghreb.

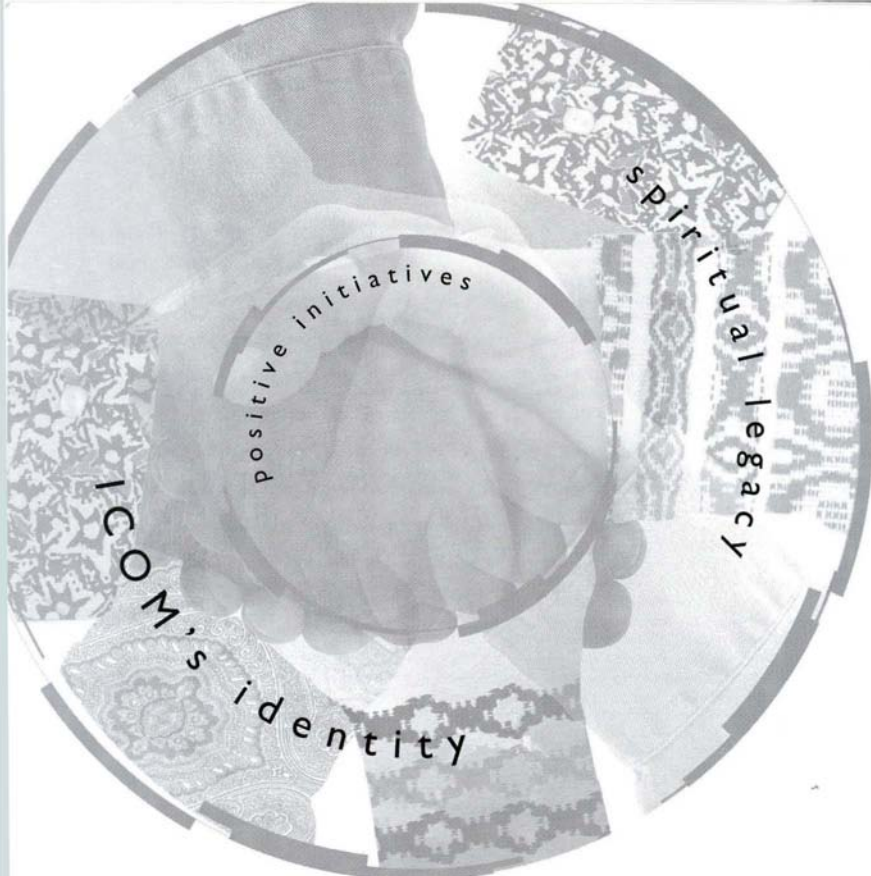
ICOM-ARAB held meetings in Cairo in Egypt, in May 1996. These enabled Arab professionals to become more familiar with the activities carried out by the various National Committees since the founding of the Regional Organisation, and to evaluate the progress in the 1995-1998 Triennial Programme. During the event, on the proposal of the President of ICOM, participants

supported the idea of holding a workshop on illicit traffic in cultural property at the next meeting planned in Tunisia.

The Egyptian National Committee agreed to publish the *Directory of Museums in the Arab Countries* and the Algerian National Committee took responsibility for the *Directory of Museum Professionals*. ICOM-ARAB and ICOM-MAGHREB are continuing their work on updating these publications and are carrying out a study on legislation in countries in the region.

The workshop organised by AFRICOM in Morocco in 1995 brought together professionals from Arab countries who were interested in the training so as to be able to revise the Arabic translation of the *Handbook of Standards* carried out by a Tunisian team. The final version was published in 1997 and distributed to all the museums in the region where it will serve as a valuable working document and reference book. Lastly, the workshop planned on illicit traffic in cultural property was held in Hammamet, in Tunisia, in 1998.

The future of ICOM-ARAB will depend on the current revival, new membership and ICOM's new Activities Programme. ICOM has recommended that all the regional programmes take into account the former experiences of the Asian, African and Latin American Regional Organisations and adapt them to the specific situations in each country. All the programmes include reinforcing inter-regional projects and developing activities for raising awareness about heritage.



positive initiatives

spiritual legacy

ICOM's identity

Personalities who have influenced ICOM's history

Chapter III

The Presidents, Directors and Secretary Generals

Chauncey Jerome Hamlin 1946-1953

Founder and
first President
of ICOM



ICOM, which has kept its acronym for half a century in English, is the creation of the President of the Buffalo Museum of Science, the famous American Chauncey Jerome Hamlin. This energetic man *with grey hair but with the superb youthfulness and radiant optimism characteristic of some great men in the United States, visited most of the world's major museums and with their directors in each country launched close cooperation amongst museums.*

This is how Chauncey Hamlin remembered this marvellous adventure:

When in 1945 I first met with Georges Salles, Director of the Musées de France, to propose organizing the International Council of Museums, his enthusiasm was immediate. He agreed to sign a letter inviting all the world's most eminent museum leaders to an international meeting at the Louvre in November 1946. With his consent I was then able to secure the support of the Director of the British Museum in London...

Chauncey Hamlin, the founder and first President of ICOM, was born in 1881 in Buffalo in the United States where he completed brilliant studies in law after graduating from Yale University. Throughout his life "Chan" Hamlin (1881-1963) had a penchant for music (he was President of the Chamber Music Society in Buffalo and Director of the town's Philharmonic Society). This is an

interesting detail and a strange coincidence as Georges Henri Rivière, his first colleague at the head of ICOM, also had a passion for music and was well-known for his gift as a pianist.

In 1912 Hamlin campaigned for the election of President Theodore Roosevelt. During the First World War he took part in several offensives near Verdun, in France. On his return to the United States he became Vice-President of the Buffalo Society of Natural Sciences (in 1919) and then its President from 1920 to 1948. His great interest in museums resulted in his becoming President of the American Association of Museums from 1923 to 1929.

After the Second World War he travelled extensively and kept up a methodical correspondence to promote his museum project. On 4th September 1946 he sent out a circular letter *To Leaders in Museum Work in Various Countries throughout the World* asking them to set up National Committees.

As President of ICOM, Chauncey Hamlin devoted all his energy to building a solid Organisation, one that would develop international cooperation amongst museums in various countries in the world. From 1946 until the end of his term in 1953 he made periodic trips to Paris where he would stay for almost six months a year running ICOM activities and organising National and International Committees. His pragmatic approach facilitated UNESCO's approval, and in 1947 an agreement for cooperation was signed by both parties. As a result

ICOM benefited from grants, headquarters in Avenue Kléber in Paris, and a Documentation Centre.

The goal had been reached: ICOM existed.

***Chauncey J. Hamlin was
made an honorary member on
11th July 1953.***

Georges Salles

1953-1959

President of ICOM

At the end of the 1953 General Conference in Genoa, Milan and Bergamo in Italy, Georges Salles from France succeeded Chauncey J. Hamlin and became the second President of ICOM. He had in fact worked beside Chauncey Hamlin since the founding of the Organisation, and was one of the small group of people who at the end of the Second World War felt the need to take on what the former International Museums Office had been unable to do, namely create cooperation between museums in various countries in the world.

Georges Salles devoted his entire life to science, museums and humanism. His charm and equanimity won over all those who came into contact with him and were able to discover his openness and wide cultural knowledge.

He was born in 1889, the grandson of the famous man who built the Eiffel Tower in Paris. With a degree in the arts and in law, he frequented both the artistic and literary worlds. As a collector and specialist in Oriental and Far-Eastern civilisations, he first worked with the Musée du Louvre, then became Chief Curator at the Musée Guimet in 1941, and lastly Director of the Musées de France from 1945 to 1957.

While working with Chauncey J. Hamlin he became Chairperson of the Advisory Board in 1948. He was President of ICOM from 1953 to 1959, setting two goals for the Organisation:

- ICOM had to fully serve museums and the profession;
- ICOM had to strive constantly to adapt to the evolution of museums.

This devotional legacy has been followed faithfully by ICOM for half a century, and is probably the key to the Organisation's extraordinary destiny.

Lastly, Georges Salles recognised the vital importance of international contacts. He worked closely with ICOM's forty-five member countries to prepare meetings and General Conferences, and in 1955 he organised an exhibition on French art in Tokyo which attracted more than a million visitors.

In 1959 Georges Salles was elected honorary member of ICOM during the fifth General Conference in Stockholm. On the occasion Chauncey Hamlin paid him the following tribute:

For thirteen years Georges Salles has been continuously devoted to furthering ICOM's interests... All our Board and Committee meetings in Paris have been held in the Louvre, thanks to him... Georges Salles has always endeavoured to maintain ICOM's highly professional quality and its international scope.



Georges Salles (on the left) and H.M. the King of Sweden.

Sir Philip Hendy

1959-1965

President of ICOM

Philip Hendy was born in Carlisle in the United Kingdom in 1900. He graduated from Oxford, wrote the catalogue for the Wallace Collection in 1968 and then went to the United States where he became Curator of the Art Gallery of Boston. He returned to England to head the Leeds Museum and became Director of the National Gallery in London in 1946.

As an art historian he was entrusted with the reorganisation and restoration of paintings that had been hidden in the reserves during the Second World War. Critics reacted violently, and it took him a year to reply. He had to face another ordeal when a painting by Goya was stolen in 1961, but found again later.

He was, however, a great organiser and an outstanding specialist in art and restoration. He was knighted by the King in 1950, and then as Sir Philip Hendy devoted six years of his life to ICOM. His elegance, fine manners and dynamism won over the world of museum professionals. He was elected President at the General Assembly in Stockholm in Sweden in July 1959, an honour that was renewed in Amsterdam in 1962.

Interestingly, it was during these two General Conferences that the most resolutions were recorded: forty-two in 1959 and fifty-eight in 1962 (while other Conferences have never had more than thirty). It was also during Sir Philip Hendy's term that ICOM drew up and implemented a specific programme on the treatment of paintings (inquiries on canvas supports and the paint layer of pictures, as well

as a study on the situation of mural paintings in different countries). Several specialist meetings on the treatment of paintings and multilateral art exhibitions were organised between 1961 and 1963.

In 1962 Sir Philip Hendy was the first person to launch the idea of planning a three-year programme for ICOM. He took several decisions to reorganise the National and International Committees and give them greater autonomy and freedom. He followed the international survey on the museum profession with great attention, asking for as much information as possible to be recorded on the way the profession was practised in different parts of the world.

At the end of his Presidency of ICOM in 1965 Sir Philip Hendy retired from the National Gallery and published several books and articles on art. He then became Adviser to the Israel Museum in Jerusalem, from 1968 to 1971, and continued to take part in ICOM meetings.



Arthur van Schendel

1965-1971

President of ICOM

Arthur van Schendel, a great specialist in art museums and restoration, was elected President at the New York General Conference in 1965. The Organisation was going through a decisive phase of rapid change and the new President was entrusted with the difficult task of seeing it through. He was also Director of the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam and former Chairperson of ICOM's Advisory Committee.

Arthur van Schendel faced the eventful period between 1965 and 1971 with determination, patiently arbitrating clashes and finding sensible solutions to the many problems generated by the Organisation's growth.

Hugues de Varine-Bohan described thus Arthur van Schendel's engaging personality, which was hidden beneath his seemingly austere and distant exterior:

The huge responsibilities that he had taken on in the Netherlands enabled him to contribute enormously to the rapid development in research and exchange among the various disciplines. He attended all the important meetings, directing discussions with a sound and skilled instructive sense, without ever imposing his point of view. He was fair though severe and demanding, and always asked for a maximum of documentary and psychological preparation before proposing any decision, preferring to postpone an urgent though poorly prepared debate rather than having a resolution adopted by one of those sleights of hand that international organisations are so

good at. He spoke many languages, was a good-humoured host and knew how to listen, replying to questions by using a methodological approach rather than proposing authoritarian or stereotyped solutions.

There has never been a major event in the museum or cultural heritage world in the post-war period that Arthur van Schendel has not been connected with. Wherever anything has been going on, from Melbourne to Mexico, Leningrad to Madrid, he has been present. Arthur van Schendel believed deeply in international cooperation, in the duties that his position imposed on him, and the need to consult his colleagues.

We should remember the way he dealt with ICOM's tenth General Assembly in Grenoble in 1971. He was in the chair when a movement that had sprung from the mass of members sought urgently to reform the Organisation's structures and working methods, in spite of the views of the statutory bodies and the wording of the *Statutes*. Legally, it would have been possible for him to oppose the proposition. Many

influential members were urging him to do so. But he refused to take the conservative view, and no doubt struck by the soundness of some of the arguments, did in fact become the architect of a reform that came into effect three years later.

Arthur van Schendel was made an honorary member of ICOM in 1977.



Dr Jan Jelínek, the anthropologist, researcher and world authority on science, was elected President of ICOM by the six hundred delegates from fifty countries at the Paris and Grenoble General Conference in 1971. This was the first time a citizen of a socialist country had headed the Organisation.

Jan Jelínek was born in Brno in former Czechoslovakia in 1926. He became a Doctor of Anthropology, and then Director of the Moravia Museum in Brno in 1958. He founded the Anthropos Institute and set up its famous exhibition on the origins and evolution of man. He has been Head of the Museology Department at Brno University since 1962.

He was Chairperson of ICOM's International Committee for Regional Museums (ICR) from 1964 to 1971, and Chairperson of ICOM's Advisory Committee from 1965 to 1971. He founded and became editor of the international journal *Anthropos* and also wrote a masterly work on *Prehistoric Man* published in 1973.

During his presidency of ICOM, Jan Jelínek had to face the worst crisis the Organisation had experienced in its half century of existence (1946-1996). He inherited a situation of chronic deficit, large debts, and delays in finding solutions to the problems with personnel. And yet, paradoxically, these were the extraordinary "museum boom years".

During Executive Council meetings Dr. Jelínek devoted the main item on the agenda to analysing museum development in the world and major

trends in new museology. He tried to reflect, and make all his colleagues reflect, on methods that could improve the situation:

The Executive Council, he said, is more than a board of directors, it is a laboratory for analysing weaknesses and for thinking about the positive means and initiatives to use to save ICOM and make it adapt to a rapidly changing world.

He was particularly concerned about the need for a code of ethics on acquisitions of museum objects.

After a meticulous, in-depth examination of ICOM's structures and rules, together with the Executive Council, and to the great relief of museum professionals, he decided to reform the *Statutes*. This would democratise ICOM, enabling each National Committee to increase membership and breathe new life into its activities.

Little by little these efforts produced extremely positive results. In 1974 the Copenhagen General Assembly announced the radical transformation of ICOM and the role of the museum. Museums were more than ever called

upon to be "in the service of society", as it is from society that museums spring.

President Jelínek confronted all these ordeals with unruffled calm, except perhaps the day of the opening of the decisive Copenhagen Conference. But his minor signs of stage fright were in fact simply because he had to welcome Her Majesty, Queen Margrethe III!

Apart from anything else, it is greatly to Jan Jelínek's credit that he managed to preserve the essential activities of the Documentation Centre, the Secretariat and the much debated National Committees.

In 1977 as Chairperson of ICOM's International Committee for Museology (ICOFOM) he continued organising seminars on museological analysis, using the scientific approach that he had always favoured.

-Jan Jelínek was made an honorary member of ICOM in 1977.



Hubert Landais

1977-1983

President of ICOM

Hubert Landais was elected President by the 1,300 delegates at the twelfth General Assembly in Moscow in 1977. ICOM was in a difficult position, with a Secretariat reduced to a minimum after the financial crisis of the 1970s, the Organisation's international prestige shaken, by a drastic reduction in its programmes, and difficulties arising from the growth in membership.

At the closing session in the Kremlin the new President announced the goals of his new policy, which was described as "realpolitik", and founded on the principle of "relentless pursuit", as he himself said. In fact his decision was as simple as it was bold: because ICOM couldn't balance through the use of austerity measures, an attempt had to be made to implement an ambitious programme that would generate both possibilities and financial resources. This new strategy proved to be fruitful. Hubert Landais had all the experience required, experience that he had gained during a particularly brilliant career.

He was born in Paris in 1921, graduated with an arts degree, became an archivist and paleographer with a Diploma from the Ecole du Louvre, was made Curator of the Musées Nationaux Français in 1948 and became Deputy Director of the Musées de France in 1962. By 1977 he was skilfully running all the administrative, personnel and cultural aspects of the 1,200 or so museums in France.

He was therefore able to face the crises that museums were experiencing at the time, including those of the Louvre in the aftermath of the

"revolution of May '68", and all this thanks to solid optimism, extremely hard work and... forty cigarettes a day!

His closest colleague in ICOM, Luis Monreal, who was Secretary General, underscored the contribution he made during his term at the head of the Organisation:

Under the Presidency of Hubert Landais, ICOM was the only non-governmental organisation connected with UNESCO that was involved in operational projects in its own field of professional interest.

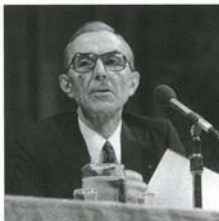
In October 1980 during ICOM's twelfth General Conference which took place in Mexico City, Hubert Landais ended up with the responsibility of managing an annual budget that was no longer in deficit but amounted to one million dollars.

Under his presidency ICOM gained new prestige worldwide. Its reputation was that of an efficient Organisation that could deal with the complex problem of museum planning. In this respect it turned out to be an ideal partner for UNESCO. This was a

period of liberal leadership, with the emphasis on respecting each person's opinions and interests, and having a strong consensus for decisions. To a certain extent Hubert Landais played the role of catalyst, bringing about a homogeneous intermixing of all the ingredients in the museum world across the globe. By the end of his second and last term as President he had laid the foundations for ICOM's long-term development.

As Hubert Landais himself said,
it has always seemed to me that ICOM's essential interest has not only been to facilitate meetings amongst museum personnel so that they can share their experience, but also to stress the professional side of those who have been responsible for the collections, of whatever kind, that are available to the public. May we never lose sight of the last point.

During the 1989 General Assembly at The Hague Hubert Landais was made an honorary member of ICOM, and President Alpha Oumar Konaré entrusted him with the chairmanship of the Ethics Committee.



Geoffrey Lewis, who is British, was born in Brighton in 1933. He holds a Master's degree from the University of Liverpool for research in prehistoric archaeology as well as the Diploma of the Museums Association (United Kingdom), of which he was President in 1980-81 and is currently an honorary fellow.

His career began at the Worthing Museum and Art Gallery where he was assistant curator from 1950 to 1960. He was Deputy Director and then Director of the Sheffield City Museums from 1960 to 1972. He was Director of the Liverpool City Museums and of Merseyside County Museums (now National Museums and Galleries on Merseyside) from 1972 until 1977 when he became Director and head of the Department of Museum Studies at the University of Leicester until his retirement in 1989. He continues to advise on museums matters.

This is his account of his role in ICOM:

My role was often that of catalyst with a hand on the ship's wheel to prevent her from going too far off course! I would not, therefore, wish you to identify the contribution of the time to the office of Presidency, but to emphasise the team prevailing during this period as it was an important philosophical element in the development of ICOM as a more democratic institution from 1974.

I joined ICOM in 1965 because of a concern about standards of documenting museum collections and a wish to explore alternative methods, including the then relatively novel computer techniques for this purpose. I was not alone in this and we soon had a working group of the Documentation Committee

considering the matter. During the 9th General Conference, 1971, I became the first chairperson of ICOM's International Committee for Documentation.

The new Statutes were approved at Copenhagen in 1974 and much to my surprise I was approached to become Chairman of the Advisory Committee. My concern at that time was to establish a very clear understanding of the roles of the different elements of ICOM's organisation and provide a forum where, between each General Assembly, members could make their views known. The Advisory Committee provided that forum and at the first meeting after my election we established its policy formulation and advisory role leaving executive action to the Executive Council. It was vitally important that the presence of two decision-making bodies within the ICOM structure did not result in a Janus-like organisation with confused and divided loyalties among members and Secretariat. This, then, was the basis on which I attempted to conduct the Advisory Committee's business during the six years of my chairmanship.

In 1983 I was elected President of ICOM. One concern was to see

ICOM develop more as a truly international organisation. In that we were able to hold the General Conference of 1986 in the southern hemisphere for the first time in ICOM's history and that my successor in 1989 was a very distinguished African, there may have been some movement towards that goal. It was heartening also to find that for the first time non-Europeans exceeded 40% of the membership towards the end of this period.

During the financial crisis in the 1980s it was only through the voluntary contributions of National Committees, the ICOM Foundation and eventually UNESCO itself that a major crisis was avoided. In order to avoid the impact of future currency fluctuations, ICOM has budgeted in French francs since 1989.

Another factor of deep concern to me was the maintenance of ICOM's identity as an independent, professional, non-governmental organisation. There were two aspects to this. Firstly, because of its close and important collaborative relationship with UNESCO, ICOM was often mistaken as a part of that governmental organisation. Secondly, it was vitally important that ICOM operated at the highest professional level, independent of any political and governmental considerations, as a basis to obtain the confidence of all the countries of the world; it could not otherwise have been regarded as a truly international, non-governmental organisation.

On the eve of ICOM's Fiftieth Anniversary, Geoffrey Lewis was appointed Chairperson of the Ethics Committee.



Alpha Oumar Konaré

1989-1992

President of ICOM

For the first time in ICOM's history a man from the third world, the African Alpha Oumar Konaré, was elected President of the Organisation. This appointment at The Hague in 1989 was certainly ICOM's best symbol of democratisation, maturity and representativeness. The choice was also made on account of the personality of the man of culture and action who had won the admiration of museum professionals through his frankness, intellectual courage and dedication to the museum cause.

Alpha Oumar Konaré was born in Mali in 1946. He became a Doctor of History and Archaeology at Warsaw University in Poland in 1975, and was then appointed Heritage Director in Mali from 1975 to 1978. He was Minister for Youth, Sports, Arts and Culture from 1978 to 1980. He then became Professor at the Institut Supérieur de Formation et de Recherche Appliquée in Bamako and Lecturer at the Ecole Normale Supérieure du Mali. He published several studies on museums, became Chairperson of ICOM's Malian National Committee in 1982 and from then on played a leading role in the Regional Organisations of Africa. He was elected Vice-President of ICOM from 1983 to 1989.

Museum professionals in developing countries immediately saw in him a man of action and reflexion, someone who was committed to energising ICOM, particularly in favour of third-world countries. His tireless activity during meetings and General Conferences made him a highly regarded leader, a man who was

appreciated for his relentless defence of a lively, democratic and universal museology. As President of ICOM from 1989 to 1992 he launched an ambitious programme that was backed up by all his colleagues and included a series of activities and reorganisation policies.

Scientific rigour, intellectual honesty, tolerance, and the ability to listen are all qualities that the men and women in ICOM have, he said, and he himself embodies these to the highest degree.

During his term in office ICOM's Secretariat was totally reorganised and became more efficient. ICOM reinforced its presence in Africa, Asia and Latin America. Thanks to his charisma and enthusiasm he managed to bring about an unprecedented mobilisation of African museums in 1991, and launched the AFRICOM programme.

We at last have the feeling, he said recently, that all our attempts to get closer to colleagues in the North are bearing fruit, and that

they are now more inclined to meet us on our home ground.

His policy was based on two principles, on the one hand universality and legitimacy, and on the other compliance with professional ethics. ICOM can only show its importance through healthy management, and full membership that should truly represent the five continents and so ensure its universality and legitimacy. Furthermore, ICOM will have to pay careful attention to the rapid changes of our times.

He insisted on ICOM's compliance with the Code of Professional Ethics, saying that *if we were to embody a single value, this would be the most important one for me.*

It was with a deep feeling of nostalgia and pride that on hearing of his election as President of the Republic of Mali in 1992 his friends and colleagues at ICOM understood the greatness of his merits and the grandeur of his destiny.



ICOM's General Assembly in 1992 elected as the new President yet another illustrious figure from the third world, Saroj Ghose. He was already familiar to, and appreciated by, museum professionals as Chairman of ICOM's Indian National Committee (1980-1992). For many years he had personally and expertly seen to the high standard of the newsletter *ICOM News* and had maintained its publication on a regular basis. His courtesy, wisdom, great knowledge and modesty have enabled him to head the Executive Council of ICOM with outstanding efficiency and energy. More than this, he has always striven for a *spirit of openness and tolerance*, with a constant willingness to listen to ICOM's members and institutions.

In defining his strategy, he has based it above all on the vital role played by National and International Committees and Affiliated Organisations. ***Their daily work constitutes the professional wealth of our Organisation; their activities ensure ICOM's good name.***

Through their presence in all the countries of the world, we can be receptive to all problems called to our attention and attempt to respond to them to the best of our ability...

In controlling both very complex and very delicate situations, he has found the most efficient way to smooth out problems, calling upon his prudence, lucidity and great intelligence.

His experience has also played an important role. As Director General of the National Council of Science Museums in India he manages a network of twenty-two interactive science centres and vast popularisation

programmes throughout the country. His remarkable university career covers a first class honours degree in Electrical Engineering, a Master's degree from Harvard and a PhD in Engineering. He was Director of both the Nehru Science Centre in Bombay and the Birla Industrial and Technological Museum in Calcutta. He was awarded the highly distinguished Padmashree prize by the President of India for his work for science popularisation.

During his long career in ICOM he has held a number of positions including that of Vice-Chairperson of the International Committee for Education and Cultural Action (CECA) from 1974 to 1980, and Vice-Chairperson of the International Committee for Museums of Science and Technology (CIMUSET) from 1983 to 1989.

It is without doubt this competence and long experience that have enabled him to manage, develop and promote our Organisation. In his Activities Report for the 1992-1995 Triennial Period, President Saroj Ghose described the rich programme that was carried out, emphasising new membership, the strengthening of

ICOM on a universal scale, its good name, and the promotion of professional ethics.

Probably for the first time in the history of our Organisation, ICOM can list, at the end of a triennial period, not only a large number of professional activities, but also a significant increase in membership and a healthy financial situation. Thus we can look towards the future with confidence and greet the dawn of the 21st century with optimism.

Indeed it is with the optimism gained through the equanimity of President Saroj Ghose that ICOM will proudly and resolutely begin the second half century of its existence.



Georges Henri Rivière

1948-1965

First Director of ICOM

Without doubt the person who has marked ICOM the most is Georges Henri Rivière, who was its first Director, from 1948 to 1965, and Permanent Adviser until his death in 1985. He was a man of art and culture, and his life followed an extraordinary course – passionately interested in music and the piano, he proved to be an outstanding ethnologist and museologist, who in the end devoted all his genius and fervour to ICOM and its museums.

I feel first and foremost a musician, and I have transferred my musical vocation to science and museology, he explained. The result was a superb mixture of a refined aesthete and an innovative man of uncommon action and reflexion, who was gifted with a prodigious talent combining elegance and rigour, refinement and realism.

Georges Henri Rivière was born in Paris in 1897. He discovered the fascinating world of museums in the late 1920s, when alongside the anthropologist Paul Rivet he reorganised the famous Musée de l'Homme in Paris. He then set about founding the great French Musée Nationales des Arts et Traditions Populaires. This monumental work was a long undertaking (1937-1967) during which he renewed museum design, adapting the latest techniques to the displays. From then on he established himself as the initiator of a modern museology that broke with the fixed tradition of the "museum of masterpieces" that were chosen for an elite.

In his capacity as Director of, and Permanent Adviser to, ICOM he

constantly defended the need to pay attention to modern progress and to introduce new technical and scientific disciplines into a profession that was traditionally conservative.

He was truly instrumental in shaping our Organisation, fostering international cooperation amongst museums and professionals. He set up National and International Committees, colloquiums and General Conferences, as well as the Documentation Centre (run by the highly efficient and devoted Yvonne Odden), and also compiled the early publications. He consulted members of the profession from countries worldwide, making ICOM a meeting place and forum for policies on conservation, research and the educational role of the museum. In the 1960s he bravely launched into the battle of decolonising old museums that were "quaint and outdated", to make them worthy of their cultural identity and more respectful of it. It was thanks to him that museology became a university discipline. He taught museology himself, and was responsible for the new "ecomuseums" that developed in France and spread to other countries in the late 1960s.



I have created, he explained, museums where the relationship between man and nature should express itself both diachronically, from geological times to the present day, and synchronically; museums live on.

Ecomuseums continue to inspire Latin American museologists, particularly museums that form a wholly integrated site(1).

His ideas on museums "moved mountains of conformism" and paved the way for the role of a real museum institution.

A museum's success, he wrote, cannot be calculated in numbers of visitors but in the number of visitors who have learned something from it. It cannot be calculated in the numbers of objects it displays but in the number of objects that have been perceived by visitors in their human environment. It cannot be calculated in surface area but in the amount of space the public can reasonably cover to really benefit from it.

Georges Henri Rivière gave of his best to ICOM, and in the first few decades of the Organisation's existence was its "soul and genius".

(1) Examples include the experimental models of the Brazilian Museum Centre for Sustainable Development and Global Protection of the Environment, and also the Bousaada Museum in Algeria.

Hugues de Varine-Bohan was born in 1935. After post-graduate studies in history and archaeology he was Assistant Director of ICOM from 1962 to 1964 and then Director from 1965 to 1974. He was first entrusted with the mission of Chargé d'Etude for the French Ministry for Culture, and then from 1982 specialised in large socio-economic projects for local and community development. He was a disciple of, and assistant to, Georges Henri Rivière, and was able to assess the heavy task of planning conferences when he took part in ICOM's General Conference at The Hague in 1962.

He was an energetic and relentless worker with a great sense of organisation. The material and technical coordination of the General Conferences in the United States in 1965, in France in 1971 and in Denmark in 1974 were thanks to him.

To better understand museum problems throughout the world and to promote ICOM he travelled the length and breadth of nearly every continent, showing colleagues his support and communicating his enthusiasm and dynamism. We should remember the positive results of his missions in 1966, 1969 and 1970 in South and South-East Asia, where he successfully launched ICOM's Regional Agency. He also visited Latin America in 1967, and then tropical Africa, North Africa and the Middle East, where he advanced the idea of decentralising ICOM's activities. Other tours of North America and Europe enabled him to further his initiatives in education, conservation, personnel training and ethical issues.

This role of universal development was not always understood or appreciated at the time, and yet today everyone clearly agrees that it was thanks to him that the policy of decentralisation came into effect, with increased membership the world over.

Ideas about modern museums being able to adapt to the present and to progress in society, drew this from him:

*It is better to disappear while
adapting than to lock oneself away
with proud intransigence into the
most splendid mausoleum.*



Luis Monreal

1974-1985

First Secretary General
of ICOM

Luis Monreal was born in Barcelona in Spain on 7th November 1942. He studied at the Universities of Barcelona and Valencia, and was Curator of the Art Museums in Barcelona. He took part in several archaeological missions in Egypt and Sudan, publishing his findings in the *San Jorge* journal in 1963. He also published articles on Nubia and the Masmara Necropolis in Upper Egypt in 1964. In 1975 he began editing a series of books on paintings in the world's great museums. In 1985 he was appointed Director of the new Getty Conservation Institute in Los Angeles.

He arrived at ICOM in 1974 when it was going through a crisis. It was decided that a Secretary General should succeed the Director. Having already run museums and been the Secretary of the First Congress of Friends of the World's Museums in Barcelona in 1972, he very skilfully and with Mediterranean optimism managed to breathe new life into the work of the General Secretariat during his ten-year leadership. He specified very clearly how the Secretariat should be run, and since then this tradition has been firmly rooted amongst the personnel in the Rue Miollis in Paris.

The Secretariat is firstly a coordinating factor amongst members, dispensing the material resources that are needed to carry out the work and the various activities. The responsibility of administrative management and the services that ICOM renders can be either positively or negatively affected by the efficiency of the Secretariat. In a way, the Secretariat, its personnel and the

premises all make up the image of ICOM. The impression made by the work carried out there and the welcome extended to members all form a part of their idea of ICOM. I know that the quality of these relationships depends to a large extent on the skill of the Secretary General.

But Luis Monreal had to face chronic financial difficulties. This time they were due to a decrease in the subsidies from UNESCO, which itself was going through a crisis in the face of the devaluation of the French franc.

In this difficult environment Luis Monreal's initiatives gradually began to gain new ground. There were various publications, among them a Spanish edition of the *Museum Security Handbook* in 1980, the *Directory of African Museums* in 1981, *Museums: An Investment for Development* for a seminar in Madrid in 1982, and the *Directory of Asian Museums* in 1983. Membership services were stepped up and membership increased. The thirteenth General Conference was organised in London in 1983, and there were important colloquiums and

seminars, including one on Rock Art in Italy in 1981, Museum Planning in France in 1982, and Public Oriented Museum Policies in Indonesia in 1985.



Patrick Cardon, a French-American citizen, was born in Algiers on 17th October 1947. He began his career at the Department of Classical and Egyptian Art at the Brooklyn Museum from 1967 to 1976. He studied Art History at New York University, graduating with a Master's degree in 1976 after having obtained a Certificate in Art Management from Harvard University. The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York entrusted him with setting up exhibitions on Egyptology. He specialised in relations with Egypt, and was Deputy Director of the Brooklyn Museum from 1984 to 1985. He published a study on the statue of Aha and on a XIXth Dynasty royal Egyptian head.

On becoming Secretary General of ICOM in 1985 he successfully prepared the fourteenth General Conference, which took place in Buenos Aires in Argentina in October-November 1986. As a specialist in Egyptology, and in conjunction with the Egyptian Antiquities Organisation he set up the training programme for the personnel at the Nubia Museum in Aswan and at the National Museum of Egyptian Civilisation in Cairo in November 1986-April 1987. This was part of UNESCO's International Campaign for the establishment of the two institutions. He paid particular attention to ICOM's role as a partner of UNESCO *to carry out its programme and in so doing create considerable repercussions in the museum world*, as he explained.

He was especially interested in UNESCO's programme on large international exhibitions (for instance

the Silk Route) and campaigns for preserving sites and monuments.



Elisabeth des Portes

1992-1997

Secretary General
of ICOM

Elisabeth des Portes, who is French, was born in 1948, and was Secretary General of ICOM from 1990 to 1997. She was the first woman to hold this position since the Organisation was founded half a century ago.

She has a university background with an *Agrégation* (highest competitive examination for teachers in France) in Classics and she is also a specialist on the writer Marcel Proust. In 1981 at the Direction des Musées de France she was made Head of Cultural Projects for the country's thirty national museums. She concentrated mainly on programmes for young people and the disabled.

From 1986 to 1990 she was first Assistant Secretary General of ICOM and then acting Secretary General.

Her first major test in ICOM came in 1991 when she organised the important meetings that took place in Africa on the theme *What Museums for Africa? Heritage in the Future*. She obtained considerable international funding for the initiative. The three meetings were crowned with success, and led to the launching of the AFRICOM Programme.

With the same skill and at the expense of great persistence and personal effort she managed to set up a similar programme in the Arab countries. She also contributed significantly to ICOM's influence and good name in other parts of the world and in so doing ensured its full geographic representation and universality.

During her term ICOM took an active part in the fight against illicit traffic in

cultural property. Thanks to the regional workshops she organised and to the publications on stolen objects, the Secretary General also effectively promoted the *Code of Professional Ethics*, a project she cared deeply about.

Elisabeth des Portes put a lot into helping colleagues in countries in difficult situations created by armed conflict, and contributed to the founding of the International Committee of the Blue Shield (ICBS) in 1996. She brought ICOM into the era of the Internet in 1995 by creating a web site to serve as a forum for members.

The great merit of the Secretary General was that she managed to stabilise the Organisation's financial situation. The chronic deficit was absorbed in 1994 thanks in particular to budgetary rigour and a fund-raising policy.

Elisabeth des Portes was able to develop a communication policy with updated information that was available to everybody, thus creating a vast network of partners who were

increasingly interested in ICOM's projects and activities. We should also stress her good management of human resources leading to a better organisation of the General Secretariat, which through its commitment and efficiency dealt with an increase in membership of more than 20% between 1992 and 1995.

These are the valuable qualities that Elisabeth des Portes brought to ICOM with a mixture of charm and elegance, reliability and rigour.



Honorary Members of ICOM (1946-1996)

The category of honorary members was instituted when ICOM was founded. This is how it was defined in the Constitution in 1946 (Article III, Section 2), and in the 1951 Statutes (Article IV, d):

Honorary members may be elected to the Council from among those persons who shall be deemed by the members to have rendered conspicuous service in the interests of the Council.

The 1974 General Assembly in Copenhagen made the following amendment:

Honorary membership may be granted by the General Assembly, upon the motion of the Executive Council, to persons who have rendered exceptional services to the international museum cause or to ICOM. The number of honorary members shall not exceed twenty.

By the end of its Fiftieth Anniversary ICOM had 39 honorary members, including a king, museum directors, archaeologists, museologists, ethnologists, artists and UNESCO officials.

ABDUL HAK, Selim (1913-1992)

Nominated in 1980

Director General of Antiquities in Syria, Head of UNESCO's Museums and Monuments Division, Member of the Executive Council of ICOM between 1959 and 1962.

ALLAN, Alexander Douglas (1896-1967)

Nominated in 1962

Doctor of Law, Director of the Royal Scottish Museum in Edinburgh (United Kingdom), Chairperson of the British National Committee.

ALTHIN, Torsten (1898-1982)

Nominated in 1962

Director of the Tekniska Museet (Sweden), Organiser of ICOM's fifth General Conference in Stockholm, Chairperson of CIMUSET.

ANGELIS D'OSSAT, Guglielmo (de)

Nominated in 1965

Graduated from the Faculty of Architecture at the Degli Studi University in Rome (Italy), Director General of Antiquities and Fine Arts in Italy (1953-1956), Chairperson of the Italian National Committee, Vice-President of the Executive Council of ICOM (1959-1962).

ANTONOVA, Irina

Nominated in 1992

Director of the Pushkin Art Gallery in Moscow (Russia), Vice-President of ICOM in 1989, then acting President in 1992.

ASHTON, Leigh (Sir)

Nominated in 1958

Director of the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, Member of the Executive Committee of ICOM, Chairperson of the Second Biennial Conference.

AUER, Herman (1903-1997)

Nominated in 1992

Chairperson of the National Committee of the Federal Republic of Germany (1969-1992), Treasurer of ICOM.

AZEREDO PERDIGÃO, José (de) (1896-1993)

Nominated in 1980

President of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation in Lisbon (Portugal).

BACESCU, Mihai

Nominated in 1977

Director of the Grigore Antipa Natural History Museum in Bucharest (Romania).

BARATA, Mario Antonio

Nominated in 1995

Curator of the Art Gallery of Rio de Janeiro (Brazil), History Professor and Professor Emeritus at the University of Rio, Founder member of ICOM.

BENOIST D'AZY MOLTKE, Marthe

Nominated in 1962

First Executive Secretary of ICOM (France).

CAIN, Julien (1887-1974)

Nominated in 1961

Administrateur Général of the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris (France), Director of the Musée Jacquemart-André, Paris.

DAVID-WEILL, David (1871-1952)

Nominated in 1950

President of the Conseil Artistique des Musées Nationaux in Paris (France), first Vice-President of the Musée du Louvre, one of the world's greatest collectors.

EYO EKPO, O.

Nominated in 1980

Director of the Lagos National Museum, Director of Museums and Monuments in Nigeria.

H.M. KING GUSTAF VI, Adolf of Sweden (1882-1973)

Nominated in 1947

Honorary President and founder of ICOM.

GYSIN-LAUBER, Frédéric

Nominated in 1962

Director of the Swiss National Museum, Chairperson of the Organising Committee for ICOM's fourth General Conference, member of the Executive Council, Chairperson of the Advisory Committee.

HAMLIN, Chauncey J. (1881-1963)

Nominated in 1953

A lawyer and politician at the beginning of his career, he then placed himself in the service of the community and the museum cause. President of the American Association of Museums, President of the Buffalo Society of Natural Sciences (New York State, USA), Honorary President and founder of ICOM.

HUME, Thomas A. (1917-1992)

Nominated in 1983

Director of the Liverpool Museum (United Kingdom) from 1960 to 1972, Director of the London Museum (1972-1977), member of the Museums and Galleries Commission (1977-1986).

JELÍNEK, Jan

Nominated in 1977

Director of the Ústav Anthropos Moravska Muzeum in Brno (Czechoslovakia), Chairperson of ICR (1964-1971), Chairperson of ICOM's Advisory Committee (1965-1971), President of ICOM (1971-1977).

KURT, Martin (1899-1975)

Nominated in 1965

Director General of the collections of paintings in the State of Bavaria. Member of the Executive Council, founder and Chairperson of the National Committee of the Federal Republic of Germany.

LANDAIS, Hubert

Nominated in 1989

Director of the Musées de France. President of ICOM, Chairperson of the Ethics Committee.

LÉVEILLÉ, André

Nominated in 1959

Honorary Director of the Palais de la Découverte in Paris (France), Treasurer of ICOM, Chairperson of CIMUSET.

LORENTZ, Stanislaw

Nominated in 1977

Director of the Narodowa Museum in Warsaw (Poland).

MC CANN MORLEY, Grace (1900-1985)

Nominated in 1977

Doctor of Arts (Université de Paris), Head of UNESCO's Museum Section, Director of the Art Gallery of San Francisco, Head of ICOM's Regional Agency for Asia in 1967.

MILLIKEN, William

Nominated in 1958

Director of the Cleveland Museum of Art, Ohio (USA), Vice-President of ICOM, member of the Executive Council of ICOM.

MOSTNY, Grete

Nominated in 1983

Director of the National Museum of Natural History in Santiago (Chile), Chairperson of the Chilean National Committee.

NAQVI, Sayed

Nominated in 1983

Director of the Heritage Division at UNESCO. Member of the ICOM Foundation.

POTROVSKI, Boris

Nominated in 1960

Director of the Hermitage in St. Petersburg (Russia), Member of the Executive Council of ICOM.

PLENDERLEITH, Harold (1898-1997)

Nominated in 1965

Director of the Research Laboratory of the British Museum (1949-1959), Director of ICCROM.

RIVET, Paul (1876-1958)

Nominated in 1958

Renowned French anthropologist and scientist, founder of the Musée de l'Homme, Chairperson of the Commission de la République Française to UNESCO, Member of ICOM's Executive Council.

RIVIÈRE, Georges Henri (1897-1985)

Nominated in 1983

French ethnologist and museologist. First Director of ICOM, first Permanent Adviser on museums.

SALAS BOSCH, Xavier (de)

Nominated in 1977

Director of the Prado Museum in Madrid (Spain). Chairperson of the Spanish National Committee, Chairperson of the Advisory Committee, member of the Executive Council and member of the ICOM Foundation.

SALLES, Georges (1889-1966)

Nominated in 1958

Director of the Musées de France. President of the Conseil Artistique de la Réunion des Musées Nationaux. Founder member of ICOM, second President of ICOM.

SANDBERG, Willem (1898-1984)

Nominated in 1980

Graphic designer, Director of the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam (The Netherlands), founder of the Tel Aviv Museum (Israel).

TANAHASHI, Gentaro

Nominated in 1957

Director of the Japanese Association of Museums, member of the Japanese National Committee (1952-1955).

VAN DER HAAGEN, Jan Karel (1902-1966)

Nominated in 1962

Head of UNESCO's Museums and Monuments Division, Secretary of the Royal Commission of Museums of The Netherlands, Director of the Nubian Monuments Department at UNESCO in Paris (France).

VAN SCHENDEL, Arthur (1910-1979)

Nominated in 1977

Director of the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam (The Netherlands), President of ICOM (1965-1972).

ZACKS-ABRAMOV, Ayala

Nominated in 1977

Graduated from the Sorbonne and the London School of Economics. Member of the International Board of the Museum of Modern Art in New York. Worked with the Art Gallery of Ontario and the Israel Museum in Jerusalem. Active member of ICOM's CIMAM and the ICOM Foundation.

ZAMOCHKINE, Alexander

Nominated in 1977

Director of the Pushkin Museum in Moscow (Russia). Chairperson of the Soviet National Committee.

The history of ICOM

Conclusion

A prodigious adventure

An eventful but remarkably positive path of cooperation, ethics and professional solidarity, such are the results of fifty years of activity. Ever since its founding ICOM has endeavoured to institute and to comply with a certain ethic, and a tradition of peace and cooperation amongst peoples. In all, its development has been unusual for a modest non-governmental organisation, one that is made up of professionals who have often lacked solid financing, and who have had to battle with a variety of difficulties to manage very different types of museums. Many of the museums have nothing in common as far as management, organisation, research systems and visit and display methods are concerned. Some people wonder whether the firmly established relationship among ICOM members is not solely due to museum professionalism.

ICOM against elitism, resistance to change and mediocrity

ICOM's exceptional capacity to change, adapt and create has meant that it has not only survived acute crises (financial, structural, political and ideological) but has picked up again to forge ahead. Rather than assessing the results or hypothesising about the future, we should underline the fact that during the first few decades ICOM progressed slowly and seriously, yet during the 1970s it went through a real revolution with the democratisation of members and working rules.

This reform had countless repercussions on the Organisation's representativeness and efficiency. However, the dominating role played by the directors of large museums was brought to a sudden halt. Most of them loosened the reins on the boards and committees that they had been controlling for a quarter of a century. They gradually lost interest in ICOM, which was unfortunate for them and for the other professionals. At the present time, there is every reason to reactivate a cooperation that could be fruitful and beneficial for everyone. Special programmes and meetings with important directors are a real possibility, and would do much to further our cause.

Strategically, the role of the museum is now global. The museum's mission to be in the service of society, as set forth in ICOM's *Statutes*, is universally accepted and features in texts on museum goals and functions. After having first enthusiastically espoused this idea, the United States and the United Kingdom unfortunately returned to the traditional concept of the museum in 1985, and do not now mention the social objective.

Europe stills leads in terms of the world's museum heritage, with Europeans accounting for 75% of ICOM's membership. An age-old tradition, together with outstanding achievements and educational and cultural action, continue to reflect the heritage. Admittedly, in the early 1990s a certain amount of torpor and individualism began to creep in. In Eastern Europe recent political and ideological upheavals have brought about enormous changes in museums. The courage and energy of so many professionals there suggests there will be a powerful and promising museum reaction. The new Regional Organisation for Europe is a part of the need people feel to get to know colleagues, share knowledge and experience, and exchange points of view. A museologist from Northern Europe admitted that he had no contact with museums from neighbouring countries but knew his colleagues from Ghana, India, Egypt and Jordan far better.

While in the past there have certainly been difficult periods, these have been outnumbered by the Organisation's successes, and we can pay tribute to the many officers and members who have done so much. Members of the Executive Council, the Advisory Committee and the General Secretariat have continued to serve ICOM with reliability, sacrifice and sometimes even passion. Special mention should also be made of the Directors and Secretary Generals who have successfully carried out their particularly heavy responsibilities and delicate mission. It is through their dedication, hard work and love for the Organisation that they have safeguarded and perpetuated the ICOM spirit.

The strategic role of the Secretariat is such that it ensures that the programmes and administrative and logistical tasks are carried out effectively. Over the last decade, the Presidents and members of the Executive Council have seen fit to give the Secretariat more prerogatives and resources to help it develop the ever growing institution. Any other attitude would have run the risk of paralysing ICOM and seeing it condemned to unthinkable mediocrity.

The Code of Ethics: a difficult undertaking but an admirable reference text

ICOM's *Code of Professional Ethics*, which took a lot of patience to draft, has won unanimous approval and is now distributed worldwide thanks to its publication in some 23 languages. From now on more weight should be given to the Ethics Committee so that more "recommendations" can be imposed, and attention drawn to the seriousness of attacks on museum collections and cultural property:

- the illicit traffic in cultural property
- theft and destruction in museums and on archaeological sites
- the unfortunate, though luckily rare, reactions of some museum officers who have no qualms about using cunning or committing irreparable offences.

The fact remains that ICOM's role in the restitution of museum pieces can only be symbolic, and yet when this does happen the impact is spectacular. The reality is that the protection of museum objects is far from satisfactory. Should we not make new appeals for a vast movement of solidarity to help museum professionals who are destitute? Some have lost all their resources (and some in the third world are not paid for months on end because of the economic crisis).

An idea that was launched by members of the Executive Council at the beginning of the decade is gaining ground. It is a question of continuing to study a project on the protection of movable cultural property, and particularly on museum collections, whether public or private. Specialists are drawing up selection criteria for classifying lists of works to be registered as universal heritage. Their action would thus guarantee the feasibility of a legal instrument similar to that of UNESCO's 1972 Convention on World Heritage.

In spite of excellent material and moral support from UNESCO, with whom ICOM has had ties since its infancy, we have to think about extending the system of cooperation to cultural organisations, agencies, foundations and specialised institutes. Fund raising, which has produced good results for regional programmes, training and the fight against illicit traffic, is without doubt the solution to the huge needs of museums today.

International Committees have reached a watershed

The 25 International Committees make up an immense network, and with the additional thousands of new members their whole future is at stake. Should their numbers, structure, way of working, and autonomy be reviewed? Sooner or later the exceptional growth in membership will require reform. Some Committees would already like to convert to affiliated associations to benefit from a certain amount of autonomy and direct subsidies. Wouldn't it be better to consider mobilising part of the Secretariat to work for them? Results would perhaps be quicker and more positive.

Without a doubt, many of ICOM's goals as far as exchanges, professional training and most of the specialised interventions are concerned have been met and will continue to be met thanks to the International Committees. The General Assemblies, Executive Council and the Secretariat are fully aware of the need to include the Committees more in designing and carrying out their programmes, and while continuing to support their own activities, to ask them for help through consultation, studies and evaluations. In return, greater mobilisation on their behalf would be a very good thing. International Committees would benefit by calling upon the many professionals in different parts of the world who seem to know little about their activities, or are disappointed that their attempt at active participation has failed. Some Committees have, however, taken the commendable initiative of decentralising the places they choose for their annual meetings. Even so, we should remember the distressing remark made by a member of ICOM's Executive Council:

Unfortunately, all too few members from developing countries accede to positions of Chairperson or member of the Secretariat in International Committees. Between 1992 and 1995, only one member [out of 50], in this case a Latin American, was elected Secretary. Let's hope that this situation will change in the near future.

A new era and "post-Melbourne" challenges

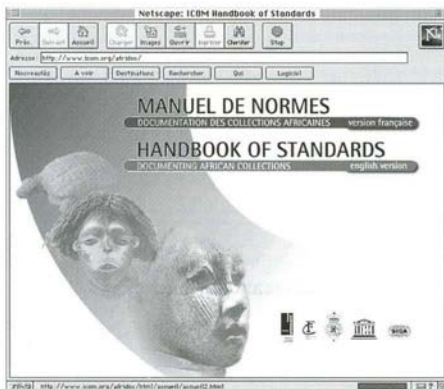
ICOM has embraced the vast possibilities offered by new communication technologies to adapt to today's multimedia phenomena. While the Internet is often accused of digging the museum's grave, and people raise the spectre of deserted galleries abandoned by visitors who prefer to watch countless inexpensive audiovisuals at home, in actual fact the virtual will never replace the real. The public tends to follow the good sense expressed in the famous words of St Thomas Aquinas, *I only believe what I see*.

Moreover, museologists today are optimistic. Rather than discouraging visits to museums,

in the emerging landscape of online images, the appetite for the original will only deepen... The crux of the matter is that... digital encounters... cannot provide the visceral thrill of being in the presence of the original (1).

The Internet provides invaluable advantages for researchers and professionals. ICOM has used the medium to launch its global presence, and was already advising members to take advantage of the information, documentation, communication and research facilities in 1995.

(1) Maxwell Anderson, Director of the Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, Canada, "Moving Museums beyond Technology", ICOM News, Special 50th Anniversary issue/1997, Vol. 50.



ICOM's site on the Internet, created in 1995, makes documents available to a growing number of museum professionals.

One of the objectives for the end of this millennium and the beginning of the next is to respond to difficulties resulting from the economic liberalisation confronting many museums. Their very survival is sometimes threatened.

The World Bank has created an international network of Cultural Heritage in Development, placing greater value on the conservation of cultural property and on educational action. ICOM is now a partner of the Bank, and in 1998 contributed to an exchange of information and cooperation by presenting various programmes, particularly the AFRICOM and ICOM-Arab initiatives.

The 1998 General Conference in Melbourne is opening up new horizons. The current geopolitical situation, and social and cultural transformations require urgent reforms in museums, or at least new types of management and organisation, and probably a different approach to museums' educational and cultural role.

The increasingly active participation of African, American, Arab and Asian members is creating considerable potential for exchange and cooperation. The new and outstanding contributions by Japanese professionals today, and those by China in the future, will increase ICOM's representativeness and scope, as its goals and challenges become global.

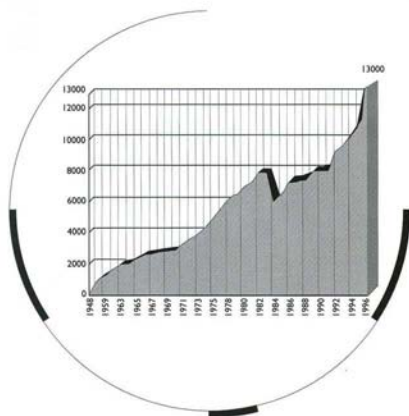
It is up to ICOM to develop its regional programmes, reinforce its publications policy, its public relations and communication activities, and especially expand its Activities Programme team, which has to fill an increasingly vital role. This is how ICOM will once again take up the challenge, and ensure the continuity of all the humanism and universality that this exceptional Organisation stands for:

This continuity will but confirm the will of ICOM's founder, Chauncey J. Hamlin, who had already declared in 1948 that ICOM had the opportunity of contributing to the cause of:

co-operation and friendship amongst the peoples of the world, thus helping to build the structure of permanent peace.

Statistics

Membership
1948-1996



Geographical distribution

of members
and National Committees
as at 1st January 1996

REGIONS	Membership as a% per region	Number of National Committees per region
Africa	3.44 %	28
Asia and Pacific	7.53 %	20
Europe	74.3 %	40
Latin America and the Caribbean	5 %	18
North America	9.73 %	2

ICOM's Regional Organisations

ICOMAC

ICOM Regional Organisation for Central Africa

ICOM-ARAB

ICOM Regional Organisation for the Arab Countries

ICOM-ASPAC

ICOM Regional Organisation for Asia & Pacific

ICOM-CIAO

ICOM Regional Organisation for West Africa

ICOM-EUROPE

ICOM Regional Organisation for Europe

ICOM-LAC

ICOM Regional Organisation for Latin America and the Caribbean

ICOM-MAGHREB

ICOM Regional Organisation for Maghreb

ICOM's International Committees

ICOM achieves its main objectives through its International Committees: exchange of scientific information at an international level, development of professional standards, adoption of rules and recommendations, and realisation of joint projects.

The history of the International Committees has followed the evolution of the museum profession. Seven Specialised Groups were set up during ICOM's first Assembly in Paris, in November 1946. Some formed the basis for certain International Committees today. Others only lasted a few years, while others have merged, and still others have splintered into several Committees.

The following is a brief history and description of today's International Committees. At the end of 1995, five International Committees had over 400 voting members: Conservation (ICOM-CC), Education (CECA), Modern Art (CIMAM), Archaeology and History (ICMAH), and Documentation (CIDOC). Four International Committees had fewer than 70 voting members: Glass, Literary Museums (ICLM), Egyptology (CIPEG) and Numismatics (ICOMON). The last one is the youngest, having only been created in 1995.

1948

CECA – Education and Cultural Action

During the first General Conference in July 1948 two Committees were created which were to join together in 1953 to form an International Committee for Education. This was then dissolved in 1962. On 5th July 1963, in Paris, a new Committee was created with its present name of the International Committee for Education and Cultural Action. The new Committee included pedagogues and sociologists and had a wider field than the old, covering not merely education but a whole new sphere of cultural action. CECA's members include museum educators and other museum professionals with an interest in education. They come from museums of all types and are concerned with all aspects of museum education – research, management, interpretation, exhibitions, programmes, media and evaluation. The committee's aims are to exchange information and ideas about museum education at an international level, to ensure that museum education is part of the policy, decisions and programmes of ICOM, to advocate the educational purpose of museums around the world and to promote high professional standards in museum education.

CIMUSET – Museums and Collections of Science and Technology

CIMUSET, originally the International Subject Committee for Science Museums and Planetaria, Health Museums, and Museums of History of Science and Technology, was created during ICOM's first General Conference in Paris

in July 1948. CIMUSET is composed of museum professionals from the fields of science and technology. The committee is not only dedicated to traditional museums of science and technology, largely historical and collection based, but also to contemporary science centres, working primarily to popularize and promote science and technology among children and young people.

ICAA – Museums and Collections of Applied Art

ICAA, originally the International Subject Committee for Museums of Art and Applied Art, was created during ICOM's first General Conference, in Paris, in July 1948. ICAA is devoted to museums and collections of applied and decorative arts conserved in museums, houses, castles and historic monuments. The committee is interested in historic interiors, applied art collections and contemporary design.

ICAMT – Architecture and Museum Techniques

ICAMT, originally the International Subject Committee of Museum Techniques, was created during ICOM's first General Conference in Paris in 1948. It held its first meeting in Stockholm, in Sweden, in 1950. ICAMT offers a forum for the exchange of ideas and expertise for all those interested in museum architecture, planning, construction and programming or in any aspect of exhibition production and design. The committee discusses everything from the basic materials used for

exhibition construction to the philosophical aspects of interpretation.

ICMAH – Museums and Collections of Archaeology and History

ICMAH, originally the International Subject Committee for Museums of Archaeology and History and Historical Sites, was created during ICOM's first General Conference at the Louvre in Paris in July 1948. ICMAH is dedicated to museums of archaeology and history. As the interpreters, mediators and repositories of cultural heritage, these museums illustrate man's complex relationship with the society and environment in which he lives. ICMAH is concerned with the interpretation of history and works to develop various research methods in a multidisciplinary framework. The committee also considers archaeology as an essential aspect of historical research. It offers museums of archaeology and history an opportunity to communicate with each other, providing them with advice and information.

ICME – Museums and Collections of Ethnography

ICME, originally the International Subject Committee for Museums of Ethnography (including folk art and culture), was created during ICOM's first General Conference in Paris in July 1948. ICME is devoted to ethnographic museums and collections from local, national and international cultures. The committee is concerned with the challenges facing ethnographic museums and collections in a changing world.

NATHIST – Museums and Collections of Natural History

NATHIST, originally the International Subject Committee for Museums of Natural History, Zoological Gardens, Aquaria and Botanical Gardens, and Educational Activities in National Parks and Nature Reserves, was created in Paris in July 1948. NATHIST is concerned with the conservation of biological diversity in museums collections as well as in the natural environment, the scientific study of the world's natural heritage and the education of the wider public through museum displays, conferences and field trips.

1950

CIDOC – Documentation

The International Committee for Documentation was created during ICOM's second General Conference, in London, in 1950. CIDOC is dedicated to the documentation of museum collections. The committee provides curators, librarians and information specialists interested in documentation, registration, collections management and computerisation with the opportunity to collaborate. A number of active working groups have been set up on data standards (for general as well as specific aspects of cultural heritage), multimedia and the Internet.

1959

GLASS – Museums and Collections of Glass

The International Committee for Museums and Collections of Glass was created during ICOM's fifth General Conference, in Stockholm, in 1959. Its Secretariat is based in Liège in Belgium. The International Committee for Museums and Collections of Glass is dedicated to the study of hollow glass from all countries and periods. Its members are curators and restorers whose primary field of study is glass.

1960

CIMCIM – Museums and Collections of Musical Instruments

CIMCIM was created as an International Committee in Paris, in 1960. It succeeded the Museum Music Commission. CIMCIM promotes and organises professional activities related to collections and museums of musical instruments of all kinds and from all countries. Working groups focus on Communications, Conservation, Documentation, Education and Presentation, Traditional Instruments, Training, and the *International Directory of Musical Instrument Collections*.

1962

CIMAM – Museums and Collections of Modern Art

CIMAM was created during ICOM's sixth General Conference, at The Hague, in 1962. CIMAM is a forum for the discussion of issues concerning the collection and exhibition of twentieth-century art. Composed essentially of the directors and curators of modern art museums, CIMAM focuses on the practical, ethical and philosophical problems confronting museums of modern art.

COSTUME – Museums and Collections of

Costume

The Costume Committee was created during ICOM's sixth General Conference, at The Hague, in 1962. The Costume Committee of ICOM is a forum for museum professionals committed to the study, interpretation and preservation of all aspects of apparel. Participation in the committee is open to those who wish to share their expertise in research projects, exhibitions, conservation, and storage techniques.

ICR – Regional Museums

ICR came into being during ICOM's sixth General Conference, at The Hague, in 1962. ICR was created for regional museums that are amongst the most numerous in the world. They exist in both small and large regions. ICR is interested in the role of regional museums in their community with respect to culture, history, environment, social development and language. It is particularly concerned with the challenges, philosophy, methodology, and international co-operation of regional museums in a period of social and political change that has affected the fundamental identity of millions of people.

1967

ICOM-CC – Conservation

The International Committee for Conservation was created with the merging of the Committee for Scientific Museum Laboratories and the Committee for the Care of Paintings, in Brussels, in September 1967. With its 23 working groups, ICOM-CC offers conservators, scientists, curators and other professionals the opportunity to collaborate, study and promote the conservation and analysis of culturally and historically significant works. Approximately 1000 professional papers have been presented and published in the past decade.

1968

ICTOP – Training of Personnel

ICTOP was created in Cologne during ICOM's eighth General Conference, in 1968. It succeeded the International Committee for Administration and Personnel, created in 1953. ICTOP's primary aim is to promote training and professional development and to establish standards for museum personnel throughout

their careers. ICTOP works closely with other ICOM committees to achieve this aim. It also acts as an advisor for the establishment of syllabi for personnel training.

1974

ICMS – Museum Security

ICMS was created in Copenhagen in 1974. The need for this Committee developed at an ICOM Symposium on Museum Security held at Saint-Maximin in France in 1973. ICMS includes professionals and specialists from the fields of security, fire protection and disaster preparedness. The objectives of ICMS are to provide education, training and assistance and to protect persons and cultural property from theft, vandalism, fire and destruction. ICMS has established working groups on Physical Security, Technical Security, Fire Security, Disaster Preparedness, Training, Publications and Rules. The Committee acts as the principal advisor to ICOM and its membership in matters of security, fire protection and disaster preparedness.

1976

MPR – Marketing and Public Relations

ICOM gave formal approval for the MPR Committee in 1976. The idea for this Committee originated in 1974 at ICOM's tenth General Conference in Copenhagen, when eighteen delegates formed a Museum Public Relations Group. MPR is composed of museum professionals working in marketing, communications and development (fund-raising). MPR provides its members with the opportunity for professional growth, works to develop good communications and marketing practices, and encourages professional networking amongst colleagues. It acts as an advisor to ICOM when required.

1977

ICLM – Literary Museums

ICLM was created during ICOM's eleventh General Conference, in the former Leningrad (now St. Petersburg) in 1977. The establishment of such a Committee had been recommended by many literary museums, in order to bring about an overall promotion of this type of museum, and to further international cooperation. ICLM's principal aim is to develop activities such as research, publishing, exhibition and education for

literary historical/biographical museums and composers' museums. Its members include curators from the aforementioned museums.

ICOFOM – Museology

ICOFOM was created during ICOM's eleventh General Conference, in the former Leningrad (now St. Petersburg) in 1977. It is the main forum for worldwide museological debate. In its broadest sense, museology is concerned with the theoretical approach to any individual or collective human activity related to the preservation, interpretation and communication of our cultural and natural heritage, and with the social context in which a specific man/object relationship takes place. Although the field of museology is much broader than the study of the museum itself, its main focus remains the functions, the activities and the role in society of the museum as a repository of collective memory. ICOFOM also studies the various museum professions. An important topic is the interrelationship between theory and practice. Practical aspects of museum work are referred to as museography or as expography.

1980

ICFA – Museums and Collections of Fine Arts

ICFA was created during ICOM's twelfth General Conference, in Mexico City, in 1980. At the time, there existed an International Committee for Modern Art (CIMAM), yet none for museums of Fine Arts. ICFA's membership is made up of professionals who work in museums and art galleries that collect old master and nineteenth century oil paintings. Subjects recently considered have included collections in Eastern Europe, museum design and architecture, and illicit traffic in artworks.

1983

CIPEG – Egyptology

CIPEG was officially recognised as an International Committee during ICOM's thirteenth General Conference, in London, in 1983. It had originally been created as an *ad hoc* Committee for Egyptology in 1981. The mission of CIPEG is to promote collaboration among colleagues for the preservation of Egyptian collections, monuments and sites. In addition, it supports collections of Egyptian art and archaeology, particularly smaller collections, within the framework of ICOM and in close co-operation with the International Association of Egyptologists (IAE). CIPEG has developed an international cataloguing project of Egyptian objects in museum collections, *Corpus Antiquitatum Aegyptiacarum* (CAA), and a multilingual Egyptological thesaurus. Members of CIPEG also support museological projects in Egypt. These include the development and promotion of educational programmes for children and adults. CIPEG also seeks to promote collaboration between museums, universities and research institutes.

ICEE – Exhibition Exchange

ICEE was created in Paris as a Working Group in 1980 and then recognised as an International Committee during ICOM's thirteenth General Conference, in London, in 1983. ICEE is a forum for the dissemination of knowledge and experience about exhibitions. The committee deals with many different aspects of exhibition development, circulation and exchange. It also collects information about potential as well as existing travelling exhibitions.

1989

INTERCOM – Management

INTERCOM was created during ICOM's General Conference at The Hague in 1989. INTERCOM works toward the development of sound museum management throughout the world. The committee's main concerns are the managerial aspects of policy formulation, legislation and resource management. It also watches over the implementation of ICOM's *Code of Professional Ethics*.

1991**AVICOM – Audiovisual and Image and Sound and New Technologies**

AVICOM was created in Paris in 1991. AVICOM is composed of two working groups. The AVICOM Working Group on Photography is devoted to the still image, the basis of all audiovisual products. This working group is currently in the process of compiling information for a thematic directory of art and documentary photograph collections in museums and cultural establishments the world over. The AVICOM Working Group on Multimedia is devoted to the moving image and covers such areas as cinema, video, multimedia and the Internet. It offers evening workshops for students and the general public in order to introduce them to new technologies. This working group also organises the International Audiovisual Festival on Museums and Heritage (FAIMP) which promotes and disseminates multimedia products created by museums and cultural heritage institutions, and awards prizes for the most original productions.

1995**ICOMON – Museums and Collections of Numismatics**

After a preparatory phase beginning in 1992, ICOMON was finally recognised as an official International Committee during ICOM's General Conference in Copenhagen in 1995. ICOMON was created for museums of numismatics (either as completely independent institutions or as part of larger and more general collections) and museums of financial and economic institutions or companies. ICOMON is exclusively dedicated to the museological problems of its members and is a forum of discussion for problems regarding the acquisition and conservation of objects, theft, management, educational projects, conceptual questions, presentation and display, and control of climatological conditions.

**ICOM's International
Affiliated Organisations**
AEOM

Association of European Open-Air Museums

AIMA

International Association of Agricultural Museums

AMOI

Association of Museums in the Indian Ocean

CAM

Commonwealth Association of Museums

IAMAM

International Association of Museums of Arms and Military History

IATM

International Association of Transport and Communications Museums

ICAM

International Confederation of Architectural Museums

ICMM

International Congress of Maritime Museums

MAC

Museums Association of the Caribbean

MINOM

International Movement for a New Museology

SADCAMM

Southern Africa Development Community Association of Museums and Monuments

SIBMAS

International Association of Libraries and Museums of the Performing Arts

Select Bibliography

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As a non-governmental organisation, ICOM maintains formal relations with UNESCO and has a consultative status to the United Nations Economic and Social Council.

This *History of ICOM* retraces a prodigious adventure, an eventful but fascinating journey during which the International Council of Museums has carried the torch for the museum profession the world over. From a small grain of sand ICOM has grown over decades of activity into a sparkling diamond of competence, dynamism and renown. Three eminent experts from different academic backgrounds and cultures give an analytical account of this extraordinary development.