In this extended issue of *ICOM News*, devoted to the ICOM General Conference of 1ˢᵗ to 6ᵗʰ July, 2001, held in Barcelona, Spain, you will find the Conference Keynote Speeches in their entirety; summaries of the Concurrent Session and Round Table discussions; and an overview of other key sessions (International Committee discussions, the Marketplace of Ideas), as well as ICOM's Resolutions for the next triennium and other significant moments of this major international event.

Official inauguration of the 19ᵗʰ General Conference and 20ᵗʰ General Assembly of ICOM, 1ˢᵗ July, 2001

Table of Contents

The opening ceremony of the 19ᵗʰ General Conference of ICOM was held on Sunday 1ˢᵗ July, 2001 at the Congress Palace in Barcelona, Spain. It marked the beginning of a week of activities and discussions centred around the theme "Managing Change: museums facing economic and social challenges." A number of political representatives from Barcelona and Catalonia and personalities from the world of Spanish museums and culture attended the ceremony. Rafael Feria, President of ICOM-Spain, Frederic-Pau Verrié, Chairman of ICOM 2001 Barcelona and Jacques Perot, President of ICOM, had the honour of welcoming the following personalities:

Joan Francesc Marcó
Provincial Councillor and President of the Barcelona Provincial Council Department of Culture

Marc Mayer
Director-General for Cultural Heritage, Generalitat of Catalonia

Fernando Checa
Director-General of the Prado National Museum

Mounir Bouchenaki
Assistant Director-General for Culture, UNESCO

Joan Clos
Mayor of Barcelona

Joan Rigol
President of the Parliament of Catalonia

The General Conference was attended by over 2,000 museum professionals specialising in a range of different fields, who travelled from all over the world to compare their findings and experience. Discussions and working sessions were held in parallel until the last day of the Conference, when all the participants came together again for the General Assembly. For the first time, the Conference set up Round Table discussions. This initiative, as Frederic-Pau Verrié stressed in his opening address, illustrates the desire of museums to involve themselves in the transformations taking place in society. These Round Table discussions, which provide an opportunity for a wider audience to hear important personalities from the world of culture and museums debating the topical issues and major concerns of museums today, were enthusiastically received. ■

Jacques Perot, elected for a second term (2001-2004) to the post of President of ICOM

The Museums We Aspire To

Jacques Perot, who has been President of ICOM since October 1998, was elected for a second three-year term of office during the ICOM General Conference. He began his inaugural address at the opening ceremony by thanking the Spanish Committee of ICOM and the ICOM 2001 Organising Committee, who had worked so zealously to ensure that this General Conference — the first of the 21st century — should be a great success.

In his speech, the President chose to alert ICOM members to the dangers threatening our common heritage. "*Where do these threats spring from? What is the source of these attacks? Who are these enemies of the heritage of mankind?*" he asked. "*Their names are Intolerance, Cupidity, Natural Disaster and Armed Conflict.*" He referred to the destruction of the Bamian buddhas as "*a deliberate attack on heritage of incalculable value, stemming from ideological and religious principles which refuse point-blank to take heritage into consideration*". However, he reminded his audience that it was vital to take action to protect moveable goods as well as monuments, notably in the case of the collections of the Museum of Kabul. "*Many items from its collection have been destroyed or dispersed and the latter are now appearing on the art market. These objects must be recovered and preserved until happier times return to the ravaged, war-torn lands they come from . . . and international organisations now need to authorise other museums to preserve, temporarily, the priceless works which bear witness to the rich past of this region*".

Using expressions such as "*intolerance*", "*blinded by ideology*", and "*spurious*

ethnic claims*", Jacques Perot made a point of commenting on the destruction in the Balkans and the attempts which have been made to efface history in the region. "*Let us say for all to hear,*" he went on, "*History exists, whether happy or unhappy. It cannot be swept aside or trivialised or rewritten. But wherever possible, the aberrations of history can and should be repaired. In this connection, I should like to say how delighted I am to see the efforts made in Europe and the United States to return goods stolen by the Nazis and other totalitarian regimes during the last century* ".

"*Another insidious, destructive evil*" – the illicit trade in cultural goods – "*springs from cupidity.*" The President cited ICOM's campaign against illicit trade in cultural property "*in accordance with our* Code of Professional Ethics". However, he reminded members that campaigning against clandestine trafficking in cultural goods does not mean banning all circulation of cultural property: he drew attention to existing means of "*ensuring that objects protected by national legislation are seen in other countries, through deposits . . . exchanges . . . and co-operation,*" and said that museum professionals were capable of defining for themselves a positive, open-handed policy in this area.

He explicitly called for an improvement in ethical standards in the art market: "*Is it acceptable for certain specialist dealers to flout laws and regulations by arranging for illegally exported stolen works to circulate? Should it be standard practice for great auction houses to allow objects which are known to have been acquired by illegal means to figure in their sales catalogues? Surely not.*"

Taking as an example the earthquake in Peru on 23rd June, 2001, which led, amongst other things, to the partial destruction of the collections of the Museum of Contisuyo, Jacques Perot said that it was essential to try to protect cultural heritage in the event of natural disasters, and praised in this respect the important work of the International Committee of the Blue Shield.

Protection and conservation of heritage are two of the main tasks of museum professionals. But the President also emphasised their other tasks: "*Museums – whatever their size, their collections, their type of institution – often play a major role in the development of a city's policy. There is no sustainable development without cultural development. Rightly, the museum is in the service of society. . . . But how can we accomplish this duty? With whom? With what means? How?*" He voiced the anxieties felt by some professionals, faced with these uncertainties on the cusp of the third millennium. "*The drive to change and transform, the explosion of new media and technologies, the triumph of free market capitalism and the inexorable advance of globalisation have led to much painful soul-searching. . . . We need to reflect and perhaps question some of our ideas to adjust to a rapidly changing world. This is precisely the theme of our General Conference. . . . Can museums be seen as businesses? How cost-effective can they be? How can the various elements of society ensure that museums survive and develop? . . . These considerations deserve to be included in our calculations: we have to recognise that, whether we like it or not, the museum of yesteryear, which was purely a place of study and private pleasure, and was often inward-looking, has reached the end of its life-span, and our establishments will only survive if they place themselves at the heart of the community and are entirely open to it. Then, and only then . . . will the communities around them, whether we call them local authorities, sponsors, patrons or friends, provide museums with the means to develop. It is up to us to attract an entourage of potential supporters — and it is also up to us to develop our own resources.*"

Amongst the additional challenges facing museums, Jacques Perot cited new communications media, and especially Internet, as a way of "*communicating more effectively, be it with other specialists, for information, or for educational purposes*". He specifically mentioned the work undertaken by ICOM in association with the J. Paul Getty Trust, to create the top-level domain *.museum* – an initiative which will give museums "*new credibility*".

Jacques Perot ended his speech in Spanish, saying that Spanish would become ICOM's third official language, and that as an organisation, we needed to think about how we use languages, so as to achieve mutual understanding and preserve cultural diversity.

It was on a note of hope, with the aim of creating "*the museums we aspire to*" that the President of ICOM opened the proceedings of ICOM's 19th General Conference. ∎

Valérie Jullien,
Communications Officer, ICOM Secretariat

Museums in the Information Era

Cultural connectors of time and space

Manuel Castells

Former Professor of Sociology at Berkeley, California, United States.
Professor at the Open University of Catalonia, Barcelona, Spain.

My aim in this Conference is to situate museums in the context of the cultural and technological changes of the information era.

It goes without saying that museums can be virtual, present on and through the Internet. It is obvious also that the Internet is a major means of communication and expression in our lives and in all areas of society, just as it is obvious that museums form a part of this. Virtual museums are more and more common, and the articulation between the real and the virtual, the physical and the symbolic is increasingly developing new cultural hybrids that generate the renewal of cultural communication in the world, using new forms of information and communications technology.

Consequently, I am not telling you anything particularly new, and you know these phenomena better than I do. That is why, when we talk nowadays about the partial virtuality of museums, we are doing nothing but confirm the technological and cultural practice which is becoming the rule - and not the exception - in the world of museums today.

Since other presentations at this Conference will deal explicitly with this topic, I will concentrate on a more fundamental issue: what capacity do museums have to intervene in the significant cultural contradiction that is emerging in the information era?

This contradiction consists of the current alternative between, on the one hand, technological creativity and global cultural communication and, on the other hand, a strong tendency towards the individualisation of messages, the fragmentation of societies and a lack of shared codes of communication between particular identities. Put differently, on the one hand we see a network society, a society of hyper-communication emerging and on the other we see a rupture of communication between particular identities. If this situation continues, it could mean the end of society, for society is, first and foremost, a system of communication, plural and conflictual. If we do not communicate, we cannot live together and if we cannot live together there is no more society.

In homage to my original Cartesian training, I will first define the museum and culture, and then broach conceptually three features which I believe contribute to the division between global and individual communication. The development of cultural forms through the new electronic communications systems and the constitution of an electronic hypertext that leads to the fragmentation of sense, constitute the first feature. The emergence of a new type of temporality, that I call atemporal time, is the second feature. Lastly, the emergence of a new type of space, the space of flows that opposes and isolates the local from the global constitutes the third point. After analysing these three features and the problems raised by the new communications systems, I will present some examples of museological practice, to illustrate these ideas and the new role of museums in this cultural and technological context.

Firstly, museums are cultural institutions, that is, systems for the storage, processing and transmission of potentially interactive cultural messages, in and for a determined social context. As for the term culture, I use it in the classical sociological and anthropological sense

of a system of values and beliefs that inform the behaviour of people and that are articulated and expressed through social institutions.

The electronic hypertext and the fragmentation of sense

Let us now analyse the transformation of the technological systems through which cultural communication occurs and the emergence of a new type of culture that I call *real virtuality*. The basis of my empirical analysis is that a new system of communication is being organised in our societies, mainly through a multimedia system itself based on an electronic communications system. In other words, all means of communication can be linked up through the Internet, which makes for the socialisation of communication. The essential elements in the cultural expression of our society and its cultural experience are transmitted and linked up through an electronic hypertext in which figure television, radio, Internet, audio-visual systems, etc.

I call this culture *real virtuality* - not virtual reality as one usually says - because the concept of virtual reality implies that, on the one hand, there is a reality which is the truth, the reality which we live and, on the other hand, a virtual reality which is the reality of communication media and Internet, which we do not live. However, we receive most of our codes of cultural communication by electronic means. Much of our imaginary and our political and social practices are conditioned and organised by and through the electronic communications system. Consequently, a fundamental element, or even *the* fundamental element, of our society's cultural communication and transmission is carried out through this electronic hypertext. This is our reality and, consequently, reality is virtual and culture is a culture of real virtuality.

Here I would like to rectify a thesis developed in my book on the information era, to stress that different means of communication are not converging in the electronic system, they each retain their own specificity and particular form of expression: radio remains radio, television remains television and the Internet does not integrate everything.

The Internet has the effect of enabling us to connect selectively with different forms of cultural expression and different electronic communications systems and to assemble - according to what each of us desires, thinks or feels - different elements of this communications system, such that the hypertext lives in each of us. From these fragments we construct a specific and personalised communication system where elements from television, radio, Internet, the press and all other kinds of cultural expression cohabit. Thus, for every project we have, the Internet enables us to create a customised and internalised hypertext, whether we are an individual, a group or a culture.

Since every subject, whether individual or collective, constructs their own hypertext, there ensues a fragmentation of sense. Since each of us has his or her own text, the question becomes: how does this text communicate and articulate with the other texts produced by other subjects or cultures? How is communicability guaranteed? How can communicable codes exist? It is the same old problem in a new technological context: how can the communicability of cultural codes be assured in the context of the fragmentation of sense and cultural expression?

Generally, throughout history and even today, it is through shared experience that we learn to communicate and to translate our different systems of communication into each other: we live together, we understand what the other wants to say and we deduce codes of communication from this shared experience. However, we are in a situation where there is not only this fragmented, personalised hypertext, but social developments as a whole are tending towards the generalised individualisation of our lives, our social practices and our work, the fragmentation of social groups, and the generalisation of a private individualised perception separated from the common references of society - whether this concerns the crisis of political

legitimation or our capacity to choose within mass communications systems. For, as we all know, mass communication belongs to the past and nowadays each of us selects his or her own communication systems. So, since shared experience is less and less shared, and we live in a society structurally destined to an ever increasing individualisation of communication processes, we are witnessing the fragmentation of communication systems and of the codes of cultural communication existing between different individual and collective subjects.

Communication protocols and art

A possible response to this would be the search for what I call *cultural communication protocols*, an expression based on the computing term, *communication protocol*, that is to say, the system's capacity to translate from one code to another. What are these cultural communication protocols? History shows us the fundamental importance of the protocols that allow us to pass from one culture to another through the community, through human experience. It appears that art (in all its expressions) plays a key role in these protocols. Art has always been a tool for building bridges between people from different countries, cultures, of different gender, of different social class, ethnic group or position of power. Art has always been a protocol of communication capable of restoring the unity of human experience beyond oppression, differences and conflicts. The paintings that show powerful people in their human misery, the sculptures that represent oppressed people in their human dignity, the bridges that link the beauty of our environment with the inner hell of our psychology - as in Van Gogh's landscapes - are all mediating forms of expression that go beyond the inevitable suffering of life in order to express happiness, the meanings and feelings that unite us, and which make this planet, beyond its atrocities and conflicts, a shared one. More than ever, this is the role that art must play in a culture like ours, characterised structurally and technologically by the fragmentation of sense and the potential lack of codes of communication, a culture in which, paradoxically, the multiplicity of cultural expressions in reality decreases the capacity to share sense and, hence, to communicate.

The lack of communication and of common codes of communication is, in reality, a direct cause of alienation, in the specific sense that the other, the *alter*, becomes an expression of what cannot be communicated and, therefore, of what is not human, in a world where everyone speaks a different language based on a personalised hypertext, in a world of broken mirrors, made of texts that cannot be communicated. In this world, art, without having any institutionally assigned role, without trying to do anything special, but by the mere fact of being art, can become a communication protocol and a tool for social reconstruction. Art as an hybrid expression of physical and virtual materials in the present and the future, can become an essential element in the building of bridges between the Net and the self. So this is my first point concerning the tendency to fragmentation and the possibility of reconstituting codes of communication.

Atemporal time and the time of the museum

The second element is the transformation of time. Culture and cultural expression are produced materially through an articulation in space developed through time. This development in time and space is how systems of cultural codes are constituted. What happens when time disintegrates and space is globalised?

Time disintegrates through the emergence in our society of what I call *atemporal time*. As we know, time, like everything else, is relative - both in society and in nature. The time of the industrial era, chronological time, sequential time, is disappearing in social practice. It is disappearing in two ways simultaneously: the compression of time and the destruction of time sequences due to this compression. This

happens, for example, on the global financial markets that try to suppress time or reduce it to fractions of a second in order to perform huge investments and accelerate the movement of capital. Another example of time compression: developed countries with high levels of technology attempt to reduce the time-span of wars - which were previously of 100 years, then 100 months and more recently of 100 days or even 100 hours - using technological systems that inflict devastating damage to the enemy in just a few hours.

Time is compressed, it disappears, and this is why everything is accelerated. But how can we say that time is disappearing when we cannot stop looking at our watch? The reason is that we try to pack more and more activity into the same time-span. Consequently, we behave as the financial markets do, compressing time because we believe we have the technological ability to do so. Time then goes faster, but this acceleration is in fact a race to make chronology itself disappear through altering temporal sequences: instead of going from one to two, then to three and four, time goes directly from one to five and can then come back to two, breaking the sequence and hence chronological time as we know it. This break in temporal sequences is evident in society through such features as the disappearance of the concept of life stages. There is no longer childhood, adolescence, maturity, older people, each with their specific activities. At present, the sequence of people's lives is being totally transformed as regards what we can do at any specific time. For example, we can have children at different ages, in different ways, using different techniques and involving different relations between the sexes. Similarly, the professional career is no longer sequential and predictable. The time when one would be hired by a company and would progressively climb the ladder until retirement - a retirement as one would wish it - is a thing of the past. The life-cycle rhythm - whether biological or professional - has been profoundly transformed. The rhythm of cultural transmission takes place in an electronic atemporal hypertext in which history, the past and the present are all mixed together in the same sequence. That is why, when we destroy temporal sequences in our perception of culture, we also destroy chronological time. In other words, post-modern culture is a constant effort to make collages out of different cultural forms and different historical times that, consequently, break the cultural historical sequence.

This is the structural tendency which, from the subject's point of view, gives rise to a plurality of temporalities which each individual constructs. Time is not imposed on us; on the contrary, we build our own perception of time. But when historical and sequential perspectives are lost, the temporalities of each one of us become incommunicable. We therefore end up facing another gap: communication is out of step with the perception of time. Here again, communication protocols can be envisaged in our society, and museums can play a role in this.

Museums are repositories of temporality. They constitute an accumulated historical tradition or a projection into the future. They are thus an archive of human time, lived or to be lived, an archive of the future. Re-establishing temporalities in a long-term perspective is fundamental to a society in which communication, technological systems and social structures converge to destroy time by suppressing or compressing it, or arbitrarily altering time sequences. For instance, in the San Francisco area, where I lived for 22 years, a group of friends - Stewart Brand among them - has created the *Long Now Foundation* in an effort to re-establish the concept of millenary time. They have built a millenary clock with a hand which moves forwards every year and which chimes every one hundred years - and even more so every thousand years - and which is programmed for ten thousand years. A time museum, a library and a seminar series have been set up around this clock, to reintegrate into our society which destroys time, the perspective of where we come from, where we are going and the confirmation that we are indeed a millenary species. This is a direct, rather than metaphorical, example of the role that museological structures have to play. The big challenge is how to articulate the

archives of the present and the projections of the future within the living experience of the present. For if there is no articulation here, and museums are merely archives and projections, they lose contact with life. They are mausoleums of culture and not means of communication. Hence museums, as reminders of temporality, must be capable of articulating living culture, the practice of the present, with cultural heritage, not only as far as art is concerned but also as regards human experience.

The space of flows and the built environment

I come now to my third point, which concerns the appearance of a new dominant space, which I call in my research the *space of flows*. It is the space in which the major activities of our society take place. For example, financial activity is carried out in physical places such as the stock exchanges of Madrid, Barcelona, Paris, Frankfurt, the City of London and Wall Street, where information is processed. But all these stock markets are connected through an electronic system, which is where decisions are really taken, money circulates and investments are really made.

All major economic and cultural activities are carried out through this connection between different places in the world. These places, along with others, form part of a space, a single hyper-space organised in electronic communication flows and rapid transport systems which join these places into a real network. These places are far more connected to this system than to their immediate environment, as the expression "Tokyo global city" suggests. Similarly, the main universities of the world are connected through an electronic communications system and therefore constitute elements of a global metacampus where science and technology are really concentrated. All the activities which are centrally and strategically important in our societies arise in this space of flows, whereas it is in the space of places, the space we have always known, the space of physical closeness that identity is constituted and experience expressed. This space will either become isolated and a refuge for particularisms or it will be subordinated to whatever occurs in that other hyper-space.

This situation issues in a dissociation between, on the one hand, global, cosmopolitan culture, based on the dominant networks of the space of flows, and, on the other hand, multiple, local identities based on particular codes drawn from local experience. As the archived tradition, for instance the museological tradition, becomes increasingly cosmopolitan, particular identities are forced to become standardised in order to circulate globally as commodities. But these specific identities do not recognise themselves in the global culture. Hence museum culture is divided between the culture of a global elite and, on the other hand, the affirmation of specific signs of identity. From this point of view, museums, far from being communication protocols, could emphasise this cultural affirmation which is incommunicable outside of its own system of reference and, consequently, could increase the cultural fragmentation of societies in our globalised world (leading to an opposition between network museums and museums of identity).

As regards spatial structures themselves, a new form of urbanisation has emerged. The information era and new technologies have not dissolved cities, as futurologists forecasted. On the contrary, we are in the most intensive phase of urbanisation known to human history. Over 50% of the world's population is currently urban. The phenomenon is gaining momentum and it is predicted that, in approximately 25 years, two thirds of humankind will live in cities. Cities will be of a new kind: they will be megacities, huge undifferentiated spatial extensions of nameless urban developments, juxtaposed agglomerations of different functions - residential spaces, shopping malls - situated along communication routes, motorways in North or South America, and increasingly rapid trains in Europe. In this extended urban space, there are, on the one hand, significant urban cultural centres and, on the other, vast stretches of territory

without identity, nameless conurbations. Museums, which are powerful symbolic cultural institutions, tend to be associated with the dominant, central and significant space (even if there are also museums on the outskirts of cities - but these are in the minority).

The problem we face is knowing to what extent museums can become architectural and urban forms capable of restoring signs of spatial identity to an undifferentiated conurbation. How and in what form can museums - not solely as contents but also as "containers" - become a new expression of the urban monument in a world desperately lacking in monuments, that is to say, in signs of spatial identity?

This transformation of space and this separation between the space of flows and the space of places leads to another fragmentation. On the one hand, global elites are integrated into a common system of reference and into a common system of communication while, on the other hand, local societies fragment into individual projects and specific communities. In order to overcome this separation between the articulated global dimension and the disarticulated local one, public spaces in cities have become essential elements for coexistence. These public spaces could be based around cultural institutions such as, among others, museums, whose role in the reconstruction of public space is increasingly important, as is evident today in various cities around the world.

Museums, cultural connectors of time and space

Essentially, then, how can compatible codes of communication - or, in my vocabulary, communication protocols - be created, and what form should they take, in a network society where communication is fragmented in the electronic hypertext, and where temporalities and forms of spatial coexistence are also fragmented? Can museums act as communication protocols in this society so lacking in communication? For the multidimensional transformations brought about by technology in the information era have led to connections being made on the global level and disconnection on the local, the destruction of a common temporal horizon and the emergence of a culture of virtual reality organised in an electronic hypertext, whose fragments are recombined individually into texts that are almost incommunicable. Our societies oscillate between instrumental hyper-communication and lack of expressive communication, between global cacophony and local individualisation.

In this context, museums can become communication protocols between different identities, by communicating art, science and human experience; and they can set themselves up as connectors of different temporalities, translating them into a common synchrony while maintaining a historical perspective. Lastly, they can connect up the global and local dimensions of identity, space and local society.

However, not every museum can do this. Only those which are capable of articulating virtual flows in a specific place - for communication and culture are global and virtual, but also require spatial markers; those which are capable of synthesising art, human experience and technology, creating new technological forms of communication protocols; those which are open to society and hence are not only archives but also educational and interactive institutions, which are anchored in a specific historical identity while also being open to present and future multicultural currents. Lastly, together with other cultural institutions, museums must be able to become not only repositories of heritage but also spaces of cultural innovation and centres of experimentation. One could say that they should play the same role in the field of cultural innovation as hospitals are currently playing in medical research.

The following are three new museums that are good examples - not models, for I am not in a position to judge - of the roles museums can play. The first is the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao, Spain, that has contributed to the urban regeneration of a city and a society in crisis, as well as constructing a bridge between a strong local cultural identity and modernisation projects which have a global reference. The second museum is the New Tate Gallery in London, with its openness and its mix of temporalities, in other words, its capacity to link the present, the past and the future within a multicultural initiative.

The third museum, the San José Tech Museum, California, to which I am personally attached, re-establishes the connection between technology and culture. This museum, set in Silicon Valley, has succeeded in integrating state-of-the-art research and high-tech systems into the educative and leisure functions of the museum, in an environment where technological development raises fear and scepticism. This connection between technology and society is achieved, on the one hand, by the constant incorporation of technological innovations and, on the other, by involving children, since they are more open to innovation than adults and can transmit this capacity to communicate to society as a whole. This museum is also committed to exploring the global problems of humanity, particularly through awarding prizes, such as the technological innovation prize which rewards the most useful innovation for the good of humankind.

In conclusion, museums can become mausoleums of historical culture reserved for the pleasure of a global elite or they can respond to the challenge and become cultural connectors for a society which no longer knows how to communicate. In other words, museums can remain - as Josep Ramoneda, Director of the Barcelona Centre for Contemporary Culture put it - "museum pieces", or they can reinvent themselves as communication protocols for a new humankind. ■

The ICOM Advisory Committee

selected the following theme for

International Museum Day 2002:

"Museums and Globalisation".

The *Réunion des musées nationaux*

An example of how museums can strike a balance between commercial development and cultural values by pooling their economic resources

Philippe Durey

Chief Executive of the
Réunion des musées nationaux, *France.*

It is well known that the last twenty years have been a period of extraordinary development for museums; and there have been numerous attempts to interpret and account for this growth. During this period, particularly in Western Europe and North America, museums have renovated and extended their buildings, restored their collections, purchased massively on the art market, published innumerable catalogues and held more and more ambitious exhibitions, attracting much media attention. Their activities are increasingly directed towards improving public access to culture, and shops, restaurants, workshops and auditoria now abound within museums.

In such a context, the issues of funding and business management have rapidly assumed such overwhelming importance that they have raised fundamental issues about the guiding principles and purpose of museums.

A disturbing trend towards competition between museums has emerged, in which establishments vie desperately to attract visitors. Firstly, it can be observed that, whilst the funds needed to renovate and extend museums have in general been obtained without undue difficulty, in many cases during periods when the economy was especially buoyant, there has been a tendency for the operating costs of the new facilities to be systematically under-estimated. Since it is out of the question for the new facilities to be left closed or unused once they have been installed, a bitter, unremitting battle for entrance fees then commences — including between state-owned museums, given the inherently finite nature of government subsidies.

As a result, we have seen museums trying to extend the range of potential sources of income and in particular attempting by all available means to attract more patrons and sponsors. To succeed in doing so, they need to be the museum of the moment, whether through exhibitions, purchases or other activities. In this scheme of things, public relations become all-important. Recognition in the international media and the tourist industry becomes vital. To gain such recognition, museums readily allow their collections to travel, not only via the traditional system of loans for temporary exhibitions, but also, in recent years, by creating permanent outstations or subsidiaries in other countries. The aim is either to make direct contact with and captivate a wealthy public or to set up a network of museums under one name to guarantee that exhibitions or collections will be able to circulate within the network and so improve the rate of return on production costs or purchases. In so doing, museums are taking on board what can only be called a philosophy of global branding and trade networks. The communities in which a museum proposes to set up an outstation will be required to pay a high price for the right to use the brand name, and this will provide the museum with the necessary funding for further expansion or restoration of the parent museum: once this has been achieved, the circle is complete and the museum has to resume the search for funding from other sources.

It is not my intention to pass judgement on the ethics of this system, merely to draw attention to the fact that it exists — although one cannot help feeling somewhat anxious at a system which seemingly proposes to apply the same commercial methods as for ordinary objects to the cultural property of museums, inherently fragile and steeped in significance as it is.

As we confront these syndromes of rivalry and economic competition between museums, which have also become more prevalent within individual countries or cities, it may be of interest to present a system with radically different aims, an unusual but well-established example of how a number of museums owned by a single entity, in this case the French state, and grouped together with the aim of enhancing both their collections and the quality of the public services they offer, can act jointly and pool their economic resources. This system is called the *Réunion des musées nationaux* (Union of national museums) or RMN.

The origins of the RMN

The RMN was created under the French Finance Act of 16 April 1895 to provide a framework for deciding how the sums generated by the sale in 1887 of the diamonds formerly belonging to the French Crown should be used. After lengthy debate between those in favour of using these sums to further social causes and those in charge of the museums, it was decided that museums should receive half the money. The same law also set up an independent body with civil status and sufficient financial autonomy to accept donations, legacies, and state subsidies, and to sell replicas of sculptures belonging to the museums and prints from the Engraving Studio of the Louvre. These revenues were to fund acquisitions of art works for a group of four museums: the Louvre, the Château de Versailles, the Musée du Luxembourg and the Château de Saint-Germain-en-Laye which housed the Museum of National Antiquities. A council of members of parliament and senators, top civil servants, personalities from the art world, including collectors, and the director of the museums service was formed to approve the RMN's budget and to decide what purchases should be made.

This system was extremely flexible: amongst other things, it enabled the funding for one year to be held over and included in the next year's budget and allowed the council to make an immediate decision to allocate funds to a purchase, should they deem it necessary.

By 1939 the number of museums in the RMN had grown from four to fifteen and it now comprises 33 museums, most of which are clustered in Paris and the surrounding area, although some are to be found elsewhere, like the Chagall Museum in Nice or the Porcelain Museum in Limoges. They vary widely in size and scope, from the Louvre to the little Museum of Napoleon on the island of Aix, but they are all government-owned museums whose running is overseen by the *Direction des musées de France* (Museums of France), which in turn is supervised by the Ministry of Culture.

Before giving a brief summary of the history of the RMN, I should say at once that the founding principle of a joint acquisitions fund for art works which can only be drawn on with the permission of a council has been maintained to this day, although there have been changes in the role and composition of the council. (The Minister of Culture now has the final say in purchases, even if in practice he or she almost always abides by the Council's decision). Before the Council is consulted regarding an acquisition, the proposal is put to a committee of curators made up of the main heads of curatorial departments from the 33 museums.

A gradually extending sphere of operations

The RMN began to extend its sphere of operations immediately after the end of the First World War. Admissions charges for national museums were first introduced in 1921, and the sums generated by ticket sales were allocated to the RMN in 1930. That same year, a commercial and technical division was set up within the RMN to publish and distribute photographs, postcards and catalogues of the contents of the museums.

The first large-scale exhibitions were mounted at the Jeu de Paume or more often the Orangerie, Paris, during the 1930s. The RMN was put in charge of both the practical aspects and the financing of these exhibitions, in the main a profitable activity. But it was after the Second World War that truly large-scale exhibitions began to be held, particularly from the 1960s onwards, with the first major exhibitions at the Grand Palais. Transporting and insuring art objects now required considerable outlay, as did the facilities needed to satisfy the public's insatiable appetite for books, posters, gifts based on exhibits, educational items or just souvenirs.

Museums' commercial activities took another step forward in the 1980s, with the massive projects for the renovation, extension and creation of new museums in Paris (the musée d'Orsay, the Louvre and the Picasso Museum), in which extensive bookshops or specialist boutiques were included inside the actual museums.

In 1990, to enable it to adapt to these new economic imperatives, the RMN was granted the status of EPIC (*Établissement public industriel et commercial*) or government-owned corporation. This rather outlandish-sounding term conceals a more flexible legal status, which gives government-owned corporations more freedom in business decisions. The RMN staff (who currently number 1,400) no longer have civil servant status; instead they are governed by private law. The RMN can recruit staff and create posts, and the contracts issued by the corporation are not subject to such strict rules as those issued by public services, although they are checked by a state comptroller. The corporation is run by a board of directors made up of representatives of the State (in its capacity of owner), directors of major museums such as the Louvre and the Château de Versailles, representatives of museum staff and outside figures. The board is chaired by the Director of the *Musées de France*, but the day-to-day management of the corporation is handed over to a chief executive — for the last thirty years a chief curator — who is in turn assisted by commercial and administrative directors.

The RMN's remit and activities today

The 1990 decree entrusts the RMN with two main tasks:
1) "helping to develop the collections of the national museums"
2) "improving public access to the museums and promoting knowledge of their collections by publishing and marketing products based on the works conserved in the museums or works about the museums, by mounting exhibitions, etc."

A brief reminder before I list the RMN's activities: the State still directly pays the salaries of the national museums' core staff, not only all the specialist posts such as curators, conservators, archivists and librarians, and some of the administrative staff responsible for the day-to-day running of the museums, but also all the security employees.

The RMN receives the entrance fees and payments for guided tours of the national museums, amounting to approximately 225 million francs (30.2m $) per annum for just over 9 million visitors. The Louvre and Versailles, which have had public institution status since 1992 and 1995 respectively, retain part of the money from ticket sales, handing over a percentage of the total to the RMN — 45% in the case of the Louvre and approximately 15% for Versailles. The RMN pays the salaries of cashiers, ticketing and cloakroom staff, guides, and so on, in the museums whose entrance fees it receives.

The RMN finances and organises about 25 exhibitions per year at the Grand Palais and other national museums, from which it receives the money from ticket sales. Exhibitions attract eight to nine hundred thousand additional visitors per year, but for the last twenty years or so, the exhibitions side of the business has made an overall loss, and the trend is for the deficit to get bigger and bigger every year. Annual expenditure on exhibitions varies between 100 and 120 million francs (13.4-16.1m $), annual income of 70 to 90 million francs (9.4-12.1m $), or slightly more if retail sales of products related to the exhibitions are included.

The RMN publishes and distributes the museums' products. This is the sector which has grown most in the last fifteen years. It now has a turnover of 535 million francs (71,7m $). The publishing side consists of the book department (the RMN's output of 120-130 catalogues per year makes it France's biggest art publisher); the picture department (postcards, posters and so on); the merchandising and multimedia departments (the second of which co-produces a large number of CD-ROMS), the photographic agency and the moulding workshop.

On the distribution side, there is a retail network of 55 bookshops and boutiques in national museums, fifteen or so regional museums belonging to local authorities (which are run as concessions) and some non-museum locations; mail-order and Internet sales departments; an export department which liaises with a network of retailers in 45 foreign countries, a commercial services department which deals with some specific types of customer, and finally a warehousing platform.

Figures for the publishing and sales departments are now levelling off after a difficult period. The circumstances surrounding these setbacks will be discussed below.

Overall, the RMN uses the resources it accrues from all its various activities (but mainly from ticket sales) to finance acquisitions by the museums. It currently manages to make 50-55 million francs (6.7-7.4m $) a year available for acquisitions and hopes to generate as much as 65 million francs (8.7m $) for this purpose in 2003. It also pays each of the museums a small allowance (amounting to approximately 4% of its turnover) to assist with running costs.

It should be noted, with regard to acquisitions, that the RMN also manages some types of private funding, notably donations and legacies from private individuals intended for the purchase of particular types of art work, and State subsidies such as the *Fonds du Patrimoine* (heritage fund). The national museums as a whole have about 120-130 million francs (16.1-17.4m $) per year to spend on acquisitions. This is still a low figure compared with current art market prices.

This brief description should give some idea of the diversity and breadth of a system which entrusts a single structure with the task of managing economic resources amounting to 900 million francs (120.8m $) for 33 museums of widely varying size and scope. This structure must also ensure public access to the museums, organise exhibitions, and distribute knowledge aids for collections, as well as partially fund the purchases made by national museums.

The RMN: business methods, cultural and public service objectives

All of the RMN's activities involve the almost impossible task of reconciling a genuinely commercial approach (which seeks to manage and develop sparse resources to their full potential) with its public service obligation to bring the collections of the museums belonging to the State to the knowledge of as wide a public as possible, whilst upholding the standards of quality, diversity and originality which are indissociably linked with the notion of culture.

A first example of this duality can be found in the RMN's structures and decision-making procedures. Collegiate decision-making structures — committees and councils in which precedence is given to museum curators, that is, to the members of staff most closely involved in actual research and conservation, and the most concerned with the cultural values of the museums — co-exist with a conventional corporate hierarchy with a board of directors, a works committee, operational divisions and departments.

The first of these collegiate structures is the exhibitions committee, which determines the exhibitions schedule. It is made up of the main curators and directors of museums, and representatives from the major curatorial departments, plus two regional museum curators. The exhibitions committee is chaired by the Director of the *Musées de*

France. The second is the publications committee, which evaluates proposals for publications, establishes an order of priority for scholarly publications, and determines the level of remuneration for their authors. Finally, there is the artworks council, which vets proposals for acquisitions.

In areas for which there is no committee, the RMN constantly endeavours, through regular meetings, to seek approval for its chosen policy directions from the representatives of the museums. The RMN never manufactures an item of merchandising without the approval of the curator representing the collection to which the original object belongs.

This respect for the cultural remit is strongly visible in the exhibitions financed and organised by the RMN, in which content of scientific and cultural value is given pride of place. As I have already said, the exhibitions side of the business has consistently made a loss for many years. Amongst the several factors contributing to this structural deficit, three are worth a specific mention.

Firstly, the fact that exhibitions tend to be held in Paris. This peculiarly French penchant for centralisation tends to mean that visitors are spread more thinly between exhibitions, with the result that ticket sales flatten off or fall. Secondly, the ever-rising cost of transport, insurance, security personnel, and so forth. Thirdly, the content of the actual programmes of exhibitions, which can lead to financial losses due to the desire to showcase unusual themes with a high scientific content and due to the fact that exhibitions are regularly organised in smaller museums to create a lively atmosphere and attract visitors in greater numbers, but these exhibitions hardly ever cover their costs.

This respect for the cultural remit can be observed even in the most commercial sector of the RMN — the publishing and retail sales division. At first sight it may seem surprising that the RMN should only be able to break even in a sector which one might think would generate sizeable profits. But in many areas, the RMN behaves quite differently from a private company, since every year it publishes about fifteen very serious scholarly catalogues of collections, whose retail sales are naturally very low and whose manufacturing costs are high, and three scholarly journals including the *Revue du Louvre* and the *Revue du laboratoire des musées de France*. It also publishes a catalogue for every exhibition it organises, including those with a limited potential readership, for example in the case of some of the small and medium-sized museums, because it is convinced that these exhibition catalogues are one of the few ways in which small museums can make a lasting contribution to the advancement of their particular branch of specialist knowledge. And even in the area of museum guides, which might be expected to be profitable, the RMN routinely publishes versions in less widespread foreign languages, with the aim of providing visitors who in many cases have come from far away with the assistance they have a right to expect.

This brings me to the area of new technologies and multimedia. Although in recent years the RMN has succeeded in becoming one of the leaders in the French market for cultural entertainment CD-ROMs by working with specialist private companies to co-produce interactive educational games in which the action takes place at Versailles, the Louvre or Ancient Egypt — a very lucrative sector — it also co-produces CD-ROMs with a high scientific content and for the schools market, where profits are low or even totally non-existent.

I would also like to say a word about the way the RMN's photographic agency is organised. The agency is responsible for photographing the collections of the national museums in their entirety, even though only a few of these photographs can be used for commercial purposes. The agency offers the museums many services free of charge and charges the research community less than the agencies with which it competes. Since last year, the photographic agency has nonetheless been managing to break even.

My last example from the production side of the RMN is the Engraving Studio of the Louvre, which has been managed by the RMN since 1895. The Studio produces prints from its collection of copper-plate engravings

which are then sold in the museum shops, maintaining a four-hundred-year-old tradition of craftsmanship and dissemination of culture. New works by contemporary print-makers are also commissioned, and prints of these then offered for sale to museum visitors. This important contribution to the arts results in a loss of about 1.5 million francs (200,000 $) to the RMN which, however, is tending to diminish from year to year.

As regards retail sales, I should now like to mention two significant examples. The first is the RMN bookshop under the Louvre pyramid. From the moment it was founded in 1992, the Louvre and the RMN intended this bookshop to be one of the best-stocked specialist art history bookshops in Europe: its shelves and stockrooms currently contain over 18,000 book or catalogue titles. The decision to keep such a wide range of titles in stock, which of course reflects an ambitious cultural policy, naturally involves high operating costs, which is one of the reasons why the bookshop, despite the Louvre's very high visitor numbers, barely manages to cover its costs today.

The other example is the RMN's book and gift-shops and the retail outlets run by the RMN in the small and medium-sized museums in its network. Purely economic considerations would surely mean that some of these would simply be closed down on the grounds that they do not make a sufficient profit, or that the range of products offered would have to be drastically reduced, keeping only the most popular guides and postcards. The RMN prefers to meet its public service obligations fully by keeping such outlets open and maintaining a varied range of products, provided it can generate sufficient profits to balance its overall sales figures.

There is no need to add to these examples, which to my mind amply demonstrate the principles governing the way the RMN operates. Let us now ask whether such a system can be compatible with the recent changes that have taken place in French museums and what conditions would enable it to survive in the future.

The new challenges facing the RMN

To answer these questions, I shall examine three significant aspects of recent developments in French national museums: changes in the acquisitions sector; in the area of exhibitions; and the increased autonomy of the largest museums.

There is a fairly broad consensus on the usefulness of a joint acquisitions fund from which it is possible, by a process of collective decision-making, to allocate higher levels of funding for purchases to a museum than it would be able to muster on its own, at any given point.

But, as has already been said, the sums which the RMN is able to amass remain modest at approximately 50 million francs (6,700,000$). The main source is the net income from entrance fees after the costs of ticketing and other visitor facilities have been met and the losses on exhibitions made up. To this are added other public subsidies and certain private donations and legacies; but the total funds available for acquisitions remain inadequate.

It is currently fashionable to argue for a system of top-up funding to be set up possibly along the lines of National Lottery funding in Britain, so as to stem the flow of French heritage out of the country. There is no reason why such funding should not be entrusted to a joint acquisitions fund, and the RMN would seem to be the most obvious choice.

Is there the same consensus when it comes to exhibitions? The small and medium-sized museums in the group certainly wish to receive the grants which enable them to hold a major exhibition on average once a year or one year in two. Moreover, the system gives them access to the invaluable assistance and skills of the RMN's expert exhibitions staff, who are used to dealing with insurance, transport and technical and organisational issues, so that the museums themselves are not constantly having to acquire skills in these areas. Finally, the fact that the RMN processes all loans requests from foreign museums means that

requests can be co-ordinated. This is useful in itself, and makes it possible to prioritise some requests over others.

But these advantages are less obvious for the larger museums. For a start, they already have exhibitions staff, equipment and funding, so they are in less need of back-up from the RMN. Most importantly, notably in the case of the Louvre and the Musée d'Orsay, they now have extensive temporary exhibition facilities for which they would like to implement their own exhibitions policy. Twenty years ago, the only possible Paris venue for exhibitions mounted by museums belonging to the State was the Grand Palais. That is no longer the case, and it is less clear how roles should be allocated and programmes should be shared out between the Grand Palais exhibition galleries run by the RMN and the exhibition facilities at the major museums.

The Grand Palais has three main advantages: its reputation (which confers instant kudos on any exhibition held there), its position in central Paris; and its size, which means that it can house extremely large exhibitions. But it is in need of renovation and has high operating costs. This means that it is only suitable for large-scale retrospectives of very famous artists or subjects, so that the high costs are offset by very large visitor numbers. It is scarcely feasible to mount exhibitions with a narrower focus there nowadays. Conversely, exhibitions on more specific themes might help to attract different types of visitor to the largest museums, which need to look beyond mass tourism (almost 70% of the Louvre's visitors are foreign tourists).

Sadly, this plausible scenario clashes head-on with an opposing rationale which spurs the largest museums on towards greater independence.

As I have already said, the biggest national museums, the Louvre and Versailles, were granted public institution status several years ago and were allocated separate budgets. But the quid pro quo for this increased autonomy, essential though it was, seems to be a degree of withdrawal on the part of the state, or at least of the Ministry of Finance, which has scant tolerance for what it sees as uncontrolled increases in operating costs, and is tending to say that it is up to these establishments to find new sources of funding for themselves from now on.

In this context, the largest museums display little inclination to share or pool their resources, are loath to hand over all or part of their entrance fees, and are of course tempted, including in the area of exhibitions, to keep the themes which are likely to attract the most visitors for themselves. The notion that they might run the distribution side of things directly, rather than going through a middle-man like the RMN, is also alluring.

Yet there are a number of advantages to the RMN's publishing and distribution system. Firstly, it has an impressive, constantly-expanding network of 55-60 retail outlets all over France. Secondly, it possesses know-how in many fields in which skills and expertise cannot be acquired overnight — publishing, merchandising, multimedia, mail order, e-commerce and so on. Thirdly, the methods and guiding principles of the RMN ensure that its aim is not to make profits for shareholders but to generate funds for the acquisition of art works and to bring the museums' collections to the notice of as wide a public as possible.

The debate is now open. Will the old system of pooling resources, which has given pride of place to curators and collective decision-making by museums, and which seems in so doing to put choices which are clearly linked to a particular set of professional ethics first, survive the new attitudes stemming from the demands and ambitions of the largest museums, and the preoccupation with spectacle and event that is typical of our age? The RMN will not be able to survive without the largest museums, which are a showcase for the national museums as a whole. But the outcome of the debate will almost certainly be determined by political considerations. ■

Museums for the 21ˢᵗ century

Between crisis and success
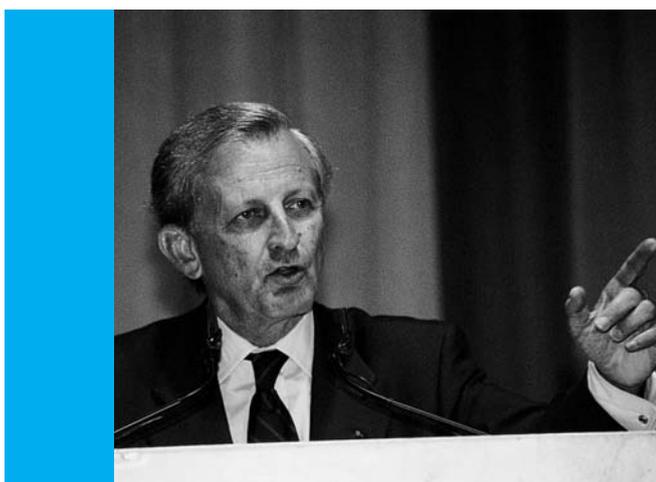
Luis Monreal

Director-General of the "La Caixa" Foundation, Spain.

Throughout their history, museums have experienced periods of crisis and success. Although some of their functions are anachronistic today, they have been, and still are, criticised by those sectors that wish museums to be democratic institutions, accessible to all and with a relevant social function. How can, and indeed must, museums respond to the challenges and needs of society in the new century?

Firstly, different types of museums have developed in Europe and America. European museums, the majority supported by the public sector, are considering the diversification of economic resources and modernisation of their management. On the other hand, American museums, almost always privately funded, are trying to import the deep-rooted tradition of public service, which is customary in the institutions on the other side of the Atlantic, into a new context. Museums in developing countries, also public, constitute a third group. This group struggles between the lack of technical and financial means and the indifference of its own society.

Since the end of World War II, museums throughout the world have experienced extensive conceptual and technical development. However an important question remains unanswered: which museums does 21ˢᵗ century society need?

"Museum" and "Management": two contradictory concepts

Until very recently, the terms "museum" and "management" were considered to be contradictory. Traditionally, the museum or "Temple of the Muses" appeared to be an institution dedicated to the worship of objects and works of art and, as such, accessible only to a minority of initiates, under the ritual pontificate of a clique of directors and curators. Until recently, museum directors were not from the business world, but from the high spheres of knowledge, science and art, spheres known in our civilisation as the "intelligentsia". Museum administrators of this class were recruited specifically to officiate in the temples of culture for the benefit of a minority of initiates. How could they be expected to concern themselves with or be interested in the banal job of managing the heritage under their guardianship? The high priests of museums reacted with indifference to any attempt to secularise their position and transform them into managers of institutions.

From these elitist origins, the museum as an institution has come to understand the need for developing management methods and instruments. However, several questions remain. Do present museum management practices meet the new challenges that 21ˢᵗ century society poses? Do these practices include possible technological developments? Do they take into account the new mass culture which anti-globalisation movements vociferously denounce? And finally, do they respond to a new economic concept?

Artists as museum directors

The museum world is still divided into three large blocs. Firstly, there are the museums of our old-world nations in continental Europe, traditionally controlled by the State. Secondly, those in the Anglo-Saxon world, particularly in the United States, are the result of private enterprise and management. Finally, the museums in developing countries which lack human, technical and material resources are forced to find new formulas to meet the specific educational and social needs of their communities.

I would like to illustrate this generic, and certainly arbitrary, classification with an example showing the situation in which large State-controlled museums have found themselves until just a few years ago. I am referring in particular to our most important national art museum, the Museo del Prado, in Madrid. After being converted into a public institution at the end of the Napoleonic War, in 1819, the museum was directed by famous artists for a long period of time. The first was Vicente Lopez, Royal court painter of King Ferdinand VII. Then came two members of the Madrazo dynasty, José and Federico, followed by other famous artists of Madrid's royal court. Few people remember that during the Spanish Civil War, Picasso was appointed director of the Prado, although he never took up the position. After the war, Fernando Alvarez de Sotomayor, General Franco's professor of painting, also occupied the position.

As you can well imagine, none of these celebrities thought that the institution under their care had to be "managed". To be director of such an important museum was above all an honour, something to be added to their visiting card and which added extra sparkle and social prominence to a brilliant artistic career.

For the same reason, the obligations and duties of all of these historic directors were very limited. They received a modest salary which served simply to cover their hospitality expenses, and were under no obligation whatsoever to dedicate themselves fully to the task of directing the museum. On the other hand, they did not have to demonstrate any professional ability in the conservation of collections in their care or in changing their exhibitions, developing educational programmes or optimising the generally paltry economic resources set aside in government budgets for maintaining the institutions.

As from the 1960s, the government entrusted the management of Spain's foremost art museum to a different type of professional: art historians and archaeologists whose true calling was university teaching. The new job description for directors did not require any previous experience in the management of a museum-related institution. Hence, due to their university vocation, these directors paid more attention to the university chair than to the art museum. My Spanish colleagues will easily remember the names of several very famous directors of the Prado who, compared to their artist predecessors, had the advantage of possessing historical and critical knowledge of the collections of paintings and a wider set of criteria by which to organise and preserve them.

Directors or Managers?

One of the serious dilemmas that has arisen for museums in the 20th century is the question: should museums be directed or managed? Two distinct concepts are involved here: to direct involves the ability to develop an institutional strategy, lead a team, orientate the design of programmes and services for the public, represent the interests of the institution in dealing with government instances and, in short, guide the development of the museum in all areas of its activities.

To manage, on the other hand, implies an instrumental function. This concept includes the notions of administrating allotted resources, whether they be human, technical or financial, and optimising their investment, establishing methods and standards for the efficient operation of the institution, and ensuring that processes are carried out smoothly. In short, it means developing the necessary processes for the proper functioning of the museum. Museums need to be both directed and managed. These two functions are necessary, distinct and complementary.

Unfortunately, this fact has not always been understood. Some people confuse directing and managing. They believe that the one who directs also manages and the one who manages also directs. This causes tremendous errors in the design of museum staff hierarchies and the selection of candidates when hiring for directorship and managerial positions.

In addition, the concepts of "direction" (as applied to museums) and "management" are not understood in the same way in Latin and Anglo-Saxon traditions. For example, in English there is no clear distinction between the two terms. The term "management" means both direction and management, which often creates serious misunderstandings

in international forums. Furthermore, the use of the one term "management" reveals the Anglo-Saxon preference for directors of a more executive than creative character.

University versus Business School

In Europe we believe that several prerequisites are essential for the post of director: scientific and academic knowledge of the museum's theme, an overall conception of collection preservation and maintenance, strategic planning ability for educational, commercial and marketing projects, and leadership and interpersonal skills.

As for the post of manager, it requires a solid background in resource management, administration and finances, as well as an adequate knowledge base in the areas of standards and law. It also requires very specific personal qualities such as methodological precision, an interest in the regular monitoring of processes as well as analytical ability. Obviously, one person alone rarely possesses the personal and professional qualities necessary for both posts.

Throughout the last few decades, we have seen how museums, whether they be State or private, European or American, have experimented with appointing exclusively managerial directors or ones with scientific and academic backgrounds. These initiatives have met with varying degrees of success. Each selection criteria has its advantages and disadvantages. "Creative" directors from the humanities, arts or science field, are generally more qualified for developing and promoting the institution for which they are now responsible. Often trained in the world of business schools, "management"-centred directors are more competent in the rational use and optimisation of resources at the disposal of the institution.

The selection of either one of the directorship profiles described above also includes different levels of risk. Several problems may arise with the exclusively "creative" directorship of a museum, including misuse of available resources, creation of a financial deficit in the institution or situations of anarchy, internal conflict and conflict with sponsoring administrations. Likewise, an exclusively managerial directorship, which tends to prioritise control processes over creative ones, frequently results in sterilising the capacity of the institution to create new programmes, reducing its public service ambition, bureaucratising the administration and demotivating the staff.

In order to reconcile such dichotomous requirements necessary for the management of a museum, some institutions, especially in North America, have tried creating a twin-headed directorship where both a creative director from an academic background and an executive director with management training have equal responsibility. These efforts have also met with varying degrees of success.

In the last few decades we have seen in Europe the appearance of professionals from other fields into the management of museums. This process started at the same time as a relative "privatisation" of State museums. In France, the creation of relatively autonomous "public corporations" destined to implement large museum projects, led to the introduction of directors from both the famous "Ecole nationale d'administration" (high-level civil service training) and the business or political worlds.

Politicians have always been tempted to intervene in museums. All things considered, these institutions are very visible in any society, serving as emblems, and are thus susceptible to being presented as an achievement of a government or a party. Indeed, in our democratic systems we frequently see the phenomenon of the "parachuting" of individuals from the political class into the directorship of museums, a phenomenon belonging more to totalitarian regimes or banana republics.

A process of change

The process that has been described up to now, with its hesitations and errors, seems to be historically typical of the first stage of the museum institution. Various criticisms have been levelled against the museum, especially during the second half of the 20th century. It was called an

old and obsolete institution, a mere repository of collections without a true social vocation; a judgement which I believe is incorrect. Since the beginning of the 1970s the museum profession, demonstrating a youthful spirit, has tried to reorientate the role of the museum. Recent technological advances have given us instant access, in our homes, to information and images. The museum, by contrast, presents an authentic experience without intermediary, and this is increasingly appreciated. Statistical data concerning museum attendance in the industrialised world indicates that museums are clearly on an upward curve, from crisis to success. Their audience has increased proportionately much more than that of any other medium of communication. For it is precisely with communications media that 21ˢᵗ century museums have to equip themselves if they are to be more than a mere repository of collections. They are on the way to becoming institutions dedicated to communicating to the public the heritage in their care. They have developed new methods and types of activity, through temporary exhibits, educational and promotional activities, conferences, school workshops, specialised seminars, institutional magazines and publications. In addition, an on-going relationship with the press and audio-visual media helps to achieve the greatest possible impact of these activities. Museums are also starting to make appropriate use of the immense possibilities for communication and promotion that Internet provides.

The process of transformation of the museum, which I have attempted to describe in a general and certainly incomplete way, has affected all aspects of the institution. Firstly, its original concept as preserver of collections, is today overtaken by the conviction that the museum only has a raison d'être if it adopts a social mission: of communicating and educating in addition to being a unique place where people can very happily spend their leisure time. Secondly, to a certain extent, the museum has been claimed by civil society. Funding from individuals, foundations or businesses has started to boost its development and adapt it to new requirements and demands. As a complement to this development, the traditional administrative management of the institution has had to be provided with more flexible and efficient methods in order to respond transparently and pertinently not only to the controlling governmental taxation agencies on which they depend, but also to public opinion. On the other hand, this has brought with it resource optimisation criteria, borrowed from private sector companies. This development has brought about a situation where even the big State museums have been obliged, to a greater or lesser degree, to introduce innovations in structure and functioning. In many cases these have included adopting an outsourcing formula in order to make some of their services more efficient.

Despite their rigid tendencies, museums have had to introduce new technology into all aspects of their activities, both visible (exhibits) and invisible (management) to the visitor. Those which have not done so are suffering the consequences of a loss of confidence on the part of the public and potential patrons.

Museum management in the 21ˢᵗ century

Museum management in the 21ˢᵗ century must be capable of tackling the challenge of diversifying programmes and activities, as well as managing the increasing complexity of technical resources. On the other hand, given that museums have become top-ranking institutions, exposed to the constant scrutiny of society, their management in the 21ˢᵗ century must also be attuned to public opinion and develop even closer relationships with their public.

These ideas all lead us back to the initial question. How will museums be managed in the present century? Museums are widely diverse entities. They can be big or small, public or private, rich or poor; they have very different themes and varied audiences. To a certain extent museums, as with all human beings, are each unique and one-of-a-kind. There will never be two museums alike. For this reason, it is utopian to think that general management formulas can exist. By contrast, using a bit of common sense, it is possible to identify the conditions for the optimum management of a museum.

The first is that irrespective of their level in the institution, those entrusted with the management of a museum should be people of quality, both personally and professionally. The second, is that they should be able to work as a team. This, without a doubt, is the most important condition. The word "team" is used carelessly to designate simply a group of people who work at the same institution. However, in many cases, such a group is not a team, but a heterogeneous mosaic of personalities and knowledges, which is incapable of establishing and maintaining synergistic relationships.

The team is the key

In my opinion, a team is a group of people who, through their interaction and synergistic capabilities, obtains better results that the sum of its parts. It must be recognised that, for many reasons, museums have not generally been characterised by their institutional ability to form teams. The most obvious reason is that museums require a heterogeneous staff to accomplish its many functions, with professionals from diverse horizons and different interests working together. Communication difficulties between staff members are widespread, a situation which often is exacerbated by the difficult conditions under which they work, the lack of recognition for their work, professional jealousy, modest salaries, etc. An art historian, an economist, a chemist, a restorer, an educator, a fund-raising specialist, a photographer, etc., may have little in common, but nevertheless all of these professionals, and doubtless a few others, may be working under the same roof.

If teamwork is an essential condition for the efficient management of museums, and professional diversity is one of the major difficulties in forming a team, it may be reasonable to ask why not form homogeneous teams. Such an absurd question does not merit a response, unless it is to offer an emphatic reminder that the new challenges facing museums make it unthinkable that they should try to turn the clock back and entrust the management of the institution to a single person: an illusory one-man band who would possess all the necessary academic and technical knowledge for carrying out his mission.

If the team is the key, the key to the team is its director. Should he or she be a "creative" or an "executive" director? This question does not have a formulaic answer either. What is important is that, in addition to having the appropriate professional qualities and experience, a director should have the human qualities and sufficient rational and emotional intelligence to lead a group, create a situation of healthy emulation and mutual respect and solidarity in the work effort. In fact, these are the same qualities of intelligence, honesty and common sense that are required to succeed in any activity. Furthermore, a good director is one who attributes the institution's successes to the team and assumes responsibility for the failures.

In the heyday of technocracy, fortunately now behind us, reasons for success in business were thought to lie in structures, hierarchy, organisational charts, standards and procedures, mastery of technology, and so forth. Today, we believe in something more logical and simple. It is the quality of our human resources and their ability to work as a team that is essential. Consequently, our efforts to develop museum management in the 21ˢᵗ century must be directed towards strengthening our teams and facilitating the intellectual and professional development of their members as well as their capacity for initiative. We must also try to create the conditions favouring team-member interaction and it must be stressed that our function as director should be as guide and example, to provide encouragement rather than as process controller and auditor of results. But more important still is to remember that people expect our comprehension and respect, and that the most effective motivation is the credit that we can give to their work and the explicit acknowledgement of their professional accomplishments. ■

Museums: Arenas for Dialogue or Confrontation
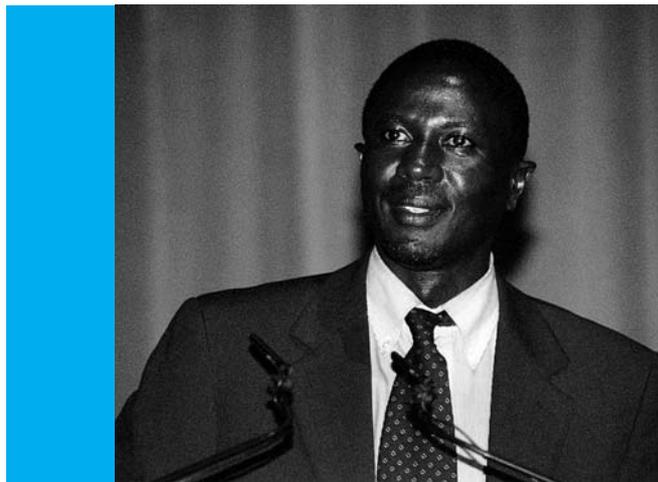
George H.O. Abungu

Director-General,
National Museums of Kenya, Kenya.

Museums are about people and are made by people for people. The origins of the museum and its growth may however not reflect this. Museums have traditionally been places of identity and pride, temples of the best collections, put on display for human reflection and education.

While some traditional museums have addressed socio-economic issues, most have been reflections of human pride and past achievements rather than of current issues and future projections. Today, however, museums must change with the times from temples of achievement and national identity to grappling with social issues affecting the people they are founded to serve. Museums and museum professionals must work in the service of the public and be accountable for the support that they get from the public.

ICOM's definition of the museum is very broad and provides a wide range of opportunities for museums to involve themselves in the service of society. The museum is defined as 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." The statement that captures the museum's social role is "in the service of society and of its development." It confirms the role of museum management aimed at the well-being of peoples and at heritage as a dynamic element in society."

The museum is the embodiment of the cultures of a people; a temple of heritage; the representation of the identity or identities of a nation and its achievements. But museums have also become forums for dialogue and critical thinking; in some cases, museums provide spiritual spaces where a community can rally around shared heritage, problems, catastrophe or happiness. Thus museums are today moving away from the confines of their grand walls as houses of wonder, collections of the very rare and fortification of the untouched, to open friendly spaces of memory, shared experience and representation of identities.

It is, however, clear that there are different types of museum, as defined by their activities and even audiences. Museums of feathers or stamps alone may not share much with museums of natural history; a numismatic museum is not easily comparable to a museum of art. Public expectation from a natural history museum may not be the same as from a numismatics museum or museum of stamps. They may, however, be connected by the same principles of serving the public and sharing common ethical considerations.

It is also important to note that museums all over the world, particularly in Europe and North America, do not only depict "us" or "ours" but also "others." Equally important is the fact that some of the most popular exhibits in some of the largest museums worldwide come from "others." These are interpreted by "us" either as great achievements of humanity, unique, or as a sign of a difference from "us." In many cases, objects are interpreted by "us" to show how different "others" are. For

many years the interpretations were the monopoly of curators and not of the makers or users and owners of the different heritage. Today this monopoly of interpretation and representation is being challenged. Museums do not only preserve world cultures but are also guardians of their interpretation and hence of our understanding of our world. Museums shape how we understand our being. Thus the traditional presentation and interpretation of material culture and other cultural symbols in museums today provides a challenge for museum curators, as the diverse but globalised community asks for a stake in the production of their own history.

It must also be appreciated that the material culture of a people is a manifestation of their way of life and how they understand and treat their environment. Material culture bears messages which help us to understand why a people behaves in a certain way. In Africa, for example, much of material culture (objects) has symbolic meanings and the objects are passed from generation to generation; material culture is used in creating a coherent society through acceptance of the pieces as unifying factors. These pieces are grounded in the local cultural context and occupy special or defined spaces. They are often symbols of unity in a diversified society; some have spiritual connotations. Many of these are currently found in museums. Thus museums become the guardians of spiritual and symbolic items.

The question then is: how can museums bring this context closer to reality? And, more importantly, how can museums, particularly in Africa, make their objects have a positive impact on the lives of their people?

Still today, many items continue to find their way onto the international markets through illicit trade, where they are taken from their contexts, abused and lose their meaning. These same items find their way into large and prestigious museums as major exhibits with elaborate and glossy catalogues.

In order for museums to gain respect, they must first clean up their act, be transparent and further the interests of the societies which they interact with. In doing this, museums compete for resources with many other bodies offering entertainment and education, and even with institutions that address human needs such as health and economics. This is the case for African Museums. The privileged position of museums as the pride of the nation is beginning to be challenged by an inquisitive public. Museums all over the world are at the crossroads. The management of museums and the choice of their activities, particularly those that have an impact on society, are issues to be examined closely.

Museums in Europe and North America

The question of "what museums for the 21st century?" is now a common one. In Stockholm, in June 2001, a gathering of over 260 museum personnel from over 40 countries grappled with issues concerning the role of museums, ethics, relevance, etc. Today, as people stop taking museums for granted, they are beginning to demand the removal of the monumental walls that surround the museum and to create spaces with a human face, a forum for dialogue, and a neutral ground where many voices, even unequal ones, have a chance of being heard. It is time for museums to move away from a conservative orientation to become a dynamic, flexible and proactive institution that recognises change and appreciates diversity.

There are nevertheless great opportunities for museums to play a central role in the national agenda, particularly in Europe and America. This is due both to good economic performance and to the lottery money available for culture, as well as to the people's demand. Today, in Europe and America there is demand for more free time. The free market and unrestricted use of science and technology is providing this opportunity. People are increasingly consumers of leisure and are at the same time thirsty for fruitful educational activities.

What is not clear is whether museums are prepared for this kind of

challenge, for addressing issues that affect humanity, developing mechanisms for inclusion of changing cultures, while retaining their ethical stance.

Africa at the crossroads

By contrast, museums in the developing world and particularly in Africa compete with other institutions such as schools, hospitals and public works for the very scarce resources of their various governments. Museums are therefore not a priority and must strive to generate their own resources. If they are to attract central funding, they must play an even more important social role. This requires a broad mission, a proactive stance and flexibility.

Museums in Africa in their present form are recent creations of the colonial era. While material culture has always formed part of African life, it was never organised in the Western sense of display, as is the case in museums. It formed part of daily life, whether for ceremonial, ritual, functional, spiritual-religious or political usage. However, even objects in daily use had symbolic meaning and, when used for ritual or ceremonial purposes, attracted varying degrees of reverence; objects had a life and spirit of their own.

With colonialism, Europeans exposed to the outside world what they saw as the hidden "treasures" of Africa, the regalia symbolising the "primitive" peoples of the continent. Over the years, the growing settler community in Africa wanted places of entertainment, which were provided, among others, by the display and consumption of African cultural and natural heritage.

Many of the collections that came to be housed in these places were from missionary collectors, administrators or rich white families who had previously indulged in the collection of African paraphernalia. With time, and as the collections grew, governments then established official museums.

In Eastern and Southern Africa, the fossil-rich Rift Valley offered opportunities for archæologists and palæontologists to investigate the theory of human evolution. Africa, presented as the possible cradle of the human species, attracted the attention of scholars from as early as the 1920s and 1930s. The early findings were placed in local museums, since these specialists were associated with the museum institution. The collections strengthened the position of the museum as a centre for education and research. This was, however, in most cases for a white elite.

For many years, museums in Africa, especially the well-developed ones, were of little significance and benefit to the local people, as they strove to be centres of excellence for the outside world. Many museums in Africa had therefore become irrelevant institutions by the turn of the last century. Visitor statistics in many were low, as people only visited them during school outings. Thus museums in Africa had to re-evaluate their role in the new society. The question, "What museums for Africa?", first asked in November 1991 through an ICOM-organised brainstorming session of archaeologists and museologists, became a common cry across the continent. Africans began to reflect on museums that could address their needs and interests, and interpret their history as they saw it. For it also became a question of empowering people to own their history and heritage. It has, however, taken many professionals and bodies to start these discussions; among them are the West Africa Museums Programme (WAMP), the West African Archaeological Association (WAAA), ICOM, the South African Development Community Association of Museums (SADCAMM), AFRICOM and various museum professionals in Africa.

As public facilities, museums should have an influence on public life and development, should increase knowledge and make it accessible to the community which they serve.

In Africa, however, there was a long period during which the museum was not managed for the well-being of the people. The President of Mali,

Alpha Oumar Konare, when he was President of ICOM, remarked: "*Who still doubts that Africa's museums never really left the cities, and even in those cities have remained things belonging to foreigners? Who doubts that museums in Africa have harboured illicit objects, or have often served to legitimise dubious traffic? Who doubts that the image of Africa transmitted abroad does not correspond to the reality of African life or to the views of African people? Who doubts that many museums continue to exist only because they are financed from abroad?*". This was Konaré writing in 1991 and reflecting on the problems faced by African museums: the lack of vision, of independence, of transformation and community participation. His prescription was therefore "*to eliminate the Western model for museums in Africa so that new methods for the preservation and promotion of Africa's cultural heritage can be allowed to flourish*". It was necessary to cultivate willpower, to break away from dependence and to embrace dialogue. It was necessary for museums to include the marginalised in their activities, to speak various national languages and to be open to science and technology.

Today, African museums must take the continent's needs into account and play a dual role as custodians of national heritage and forums for cultural development and exchange. The museums founded in the past decade not only respect new national identities, but also use the past through exhibitions and public programmes to instil a sense of identity and pride in the spectator, as well as to engage in social dialogue. These new developments reflect the desire for museums to take a central role in the political, economic and social discourses of African countries, to present diversified activities and play active social roles. They convey powerful messages of memory or collective identity.

Museums in the service of communities

The role of museums therefore ranges from educational facilities, platforms for dialogue, spaces of memory and common identity, to areas of resistance against oppression or a venue for economically and environmentally sustainable activities for local communities.

For example, The National Museums of Botswana, through their desert Zebra Outreach Programme, have popularised museum activities at the rural level, taking the museum to the people while at the same time carrying out research into oral traditions. Due to its effectiveness, this programme receives good funding from the government, despite its high running costs. It is a true reflection of the flexibility of the museum and its physical presence among the people in their own space.

Through its Museum Interactive Programme, the Education Department of the National Museums of Kenya is involved in popularising science for young people by using museum specimens in interactive learning. In recognition of science as a means of national development, the programme has set up a club called the Young Researcher, for children between the ages of 8 to 13, who come every month to work behind the scenes with NMK researchers, in museum departments and laboratories. The club is an important educational tool as well as a constructive recreational activity.

Through similar programmes, the NMK has identified the weaknesses of the education services within the country, especially in primary schools where students are perceived only as listeners, and teachers as the owners and givers of knowledge. Through countrywide workshops, the NMK has started addressing this issue, developing the skills of primary school teachers in the promotion of analytical teaching. Analytical teaching provides students with a capacity to take an active role in the exercise of learning. Interactive learning exercises arose out of the need to bring museum objects to life and to endow them with meaning, for the benefit of our communities. Here, the museum is not only popularising science and technology, but also encouraging the education of those people who will be responsible for running the country and deciding the destiny of the society. As Alpha Oumar Konaré once noted, "*it must be clear that we are conserving objects not for their own sake, but for mankind in relation to man and society. If we pay more attention to the objects than to man or society, we shall conserve nothing. An object cannot be conserved outside the human and the social context*".

Museums as community spaces

Museums in Africa are becoming platforms for expressing living communities' feelings and expectations; with the disappearance of many of their cultural and spiritual spaces, communities are beginning to regard museums as alternative spaces for cultural activity and community performance. Thus museums have become spaces for dialogue and free expression that also offer opportunities for recreating the "better past."

In relation to the above, the village museum in Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania, acts as a venue for the different Tanzanian ethnic groups to recreate their rich traditions in a town, but within a rural setting. The various ethnic days, where people from an ethnic group go through their traditional practices, including food preparation and consumption, traditional folk singing, dance and story-telling, have become very popular. Here the museum provides opportunities for people to enjoy the rich traditions that have ensured the survival of the group, and for the young to learn from the old. It additionally enables each individual to identify their role in the community.

In Cape Town, South Africa, where 30 years ago a whole community was evicted from their homes in District Six, a museum was set up on that site, which helped to retain the spirit and cohesiveness of the community. Additionally, the museum ensured, through community mobilisation, that no new construction should take place in the area, which was appropriated by the apartheid government. Today, the common memory of people of District Six is represented in the museum. After 30 years, the present government of South Africa has now decided to give back the land to the original owners. This is a case where a simple community museum has not only helped in presenting a people's collective memory, but has played a successful role of resistance against an oppressive regime and has subsequently negotiated the return of the land by the new democratic government to its original owners. It is therefore the guardian and custodian of a people's memory, land, and dignity.

There are a number of other African museums which play similar roles in different parts of the continent. For example, when the king's Palace Museum in Antananarivo, Madagascar, caught fire, the whole town rallied to put out the fire; subsequently, the whole of Madagascar was in mourning. Today, this is probably the only element that brings the people of the island together – including the 200 or so political parties. It has become a symbol of the nation, a common identity for an otherwise diverse nation.

In both Senegal and Mali, two museums have been set up to deal specifically with the issue of women. In both, the role of women as custodians of heritage, guardians of homes, mothers of the children, providers of food and performers of other domestic chores is for the first time vividly put on public view through exhibitions. For all they do, women's roles in most African societies have not been given recognition, unlike the roles of men – the "protectors" of the family. These museums are therefore trying to address gender issues that will not only bring recognition of women's roles in male-dominated society, but also bring to the fore the issue of equality, the sharing of responsibility and the acknowledgment of the role of women as the backbone of the society. In this sense, the museum becomes the voice of the oppressed and the underprivileged.

African museums as custodians of the continent's heritage

The role of museums in Africa as custodians of both cultural and natural heritage has improved their status and made them relevant to peoples' needs. While some countries in Africa have two institutions in charge of cultural heritage - namely museums for movable heritage and Departments of Antiquity for immovable heritage - many countries such as Kenya, Malawi, Uganda, Nigeria, Ghana, Zimbabwe and Botswana

entrust this role to their National Museums. The latter are empowered through relevant legislation to be custodians of heritage which includes antiquities and monuments. In Kenya, the old towns of Lamu and Mombasa have been registered as protected historical heritage, under the guardianship of the National Museums of Kenya. Also, some museums have established training centres together with their local communities, in order to train members of the community to carry out restoration, preservation and renovation work. This is the case for the Swahili Cultural Centre in Mombasa and Lamu and the Great Zimbabwe Conservation Centre.

A number of museums also contain large collections of botanical and zoological specimens. For example, the National Museums of Kenya in Nairobi has the largest collection of plant species on the continent in its Herbarium; the same applies to its entomological collection. It also has the largest Centre for Biodiversity in Eastern and Central Africa. Most of the museum's research facilities are directly related to human survival, existence and the preservation of the environment. For example, the entomology department contributes directly to pest control and advises farmers on which insects are good and which are bad for crops. It also works closely with the International Centre of Insect Physiology and Ecology for pest control in the region, since it is the only institution that is engaged in the collection and maintenance of a permanent study collection.

The marine resources section of the Centre for Biodiversity, especially ichthyology, works with other institutions in improving fish stocks in the lakes of East Africa and also helps run the Aquarium of the National Museums of Kenya, which is both an educational and an entertainment facility.

Many African museums are beginning to appreciate the role of indigenous plants, especially food and medicinal plants. They not only exhibit indigenous food plants and medicines, they also experiment with the values attached to foods and the cultural significance of different plants. The issue of food security and poverty reduction has become part of museums' main activities. These are not only areas of interest but are practical human experiences that may enable museums to get better funding opportunities, since museums are directly serving the people. The relevance of museums and hence the sustainable support which they can attract in the future will depend principally on their contribution to national development, through tackling issues that affect their different communities.

Africa's position is unique; for a long time, it was a continent of conflict and wars. Most of the leaders have not lived up to the expectations which independence brought with it, as many countries are more divided than ever before. There has been in many instances a lack of understanding of diversity as a resource. This has created a need for alternative forums of discussion, a neutral ground which some museums have provided to fill the gap as facilitators of peace and co-existence among different peoples. This of course provides tremendous status opportunity and funding prospects, for research and implementation of the museum's findings.

A number of museums in Africa (such as the National Museums of Kenya) are involved not only in peace research, but also in peace exhibition, or similar projects. The traditional knowledge is there and, to quote Alfa Oumar Konaré, "*we must also be open to traditional knowledge, the knowledge of the people, of notables, men of culture*". This knowledge should be used for the benefit of humanity.

Creation of partnerships through networking

One area that museums can and in some cases have already started to exploit is the creation of partnerships and networks with other museums, within and beyond the continent. An important example of partnerships in Sub-Saharan Africa is the twinning of African museums with European ones, notably through ICOM's Swedish-African Museum Programme (SAMP), sponsored by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA). This unique arrangement has seen museums in Africa and those in Sweden develop joint programmes and create equal partnerships that have produced rich cross-cultural exchanges and also support for African museum programmes. Many of these programmes have identified local needs and created partnerships among people of different worlds e.g. the Women's Group of the Nyaweg and Buhuslän's Museums.

Also, through AFRICOM, African museums have been able to document their collections using a standard set of norms, thus making it easier for them to exchange information. It is hoped that AFRICOM will further help popularise the museum's social role over the continent.

It is clear that African museums are starting to play a crucial role as regards exhibitions, education and research. They are evolving into community facilities and are creating forums and spaces where different voices can be heard. They are regionalising and even globalising their operations through partnerships, and enhancing specifically the role of culture in the appreciation of diversity and understanding between human beings. African museums are well placed to play this unique role, as they are also custodians of living heritage. In this sense, other museums have a lot to learn from developing countries, where the past and the present are still so tightly intertwined. ∎

Concurrent Sessions

Marketplace of Ideas

The Marketplace of Ideas constituted an original and innovative element in the programme of ICOM's General Conference. This discussion forum, designed to promote exchanges of all kinds of information and expertise, was completely redesigned for this year's conference and took the new form of "mini-lectures" lasting about fifteen minutes, scheduled one after the other throughout the day.

The large number of speakers from all over the world who took part came from widely differing professional contexts, but whether they were museum professionals, cultural workers, academics, researchers, or politicians with culture portfolios, all of them had specialist knowledge and personal experience to share.

The Marketplace of Ideas was organised, like all the Conference events, around the general theme "Managing Change: museums facing economic and social challenges". Several main topics (two, three or four, depending on the day) were on offer on each of the three days, and these in turn provided a starting-point for a number of mini- lectures. The first day, audiences were offered the themes "Heritage and society" and "Museological and museographical projects". The speakers dealt with such varied topics as the European Museums Forum; mounting exhibitions; management and funding of museums in Uruguay; and Cameroonian art. The theme running through the second day's lectures was "How to showcase and convey the meaning of heritage", "Visitor studies and the development of educational services" and "Assessing and classifying the public". The talks given touched on a great variety of subjects: the "permeable" museum; management systems; audio guides; wall paintings; a new scheme to promote appropriation of art works amongst primary school visitors; and visitors to art museums in Caracas, Venezuela. On the third day, the Marketplace of Ideas focused on "Museum management", "Commercial techniques", "Preventive conservation and security of documentary resources" and "Professional ethics". Once again, the audience were able to hear speakers on subjects as varied as games and merchandising for museum shops; documentary resources in museums; educational tools; ways of making museums more democratic; and the use of norms for classifying museum objects.

In the course of the three days, the speakers were able, in the time allocated to them, to communicate their views on a specific subject or urge us to reflect on a particular issue or the characteristics of a particular institution. For the audiences who attended the event, the Marketplace of Ideas was an opportunity to gain an insight into the many different subjects and viewpoints offered, in what proved to be a short space of time! For a few minutes or a few hours, listeners were able to enter into worlds which were in some cases familiar and in others totally new and unknown to them, and so to broaden their experience and understanding of the world of museums. ■

The Responsibility of Society in the Running of Museums

This first Concurrent Session involved a large panel discussion, with enthusiastic contributions from the floor.

ICOM's *Code of Professional Ethics*, amended by the 20th General Assembly includes two revised paragraphs on the relations between the museum institution and Friends of Museums. These amendments imply a recognition of the increasing importance of these networks, embedded in certain communities and around particular museums, for the museum world as a whole. The President of ICOM, Jacques Perot, welcomed closer collaboration between museum professionals and Associations of Friends, while stressing the importance of respecting the specific domains of the two groups and avoiding an overcomplication of management issues. Since, Jacques Perot continued, museums depend less and less on State and regional or municipal funding, they increasingly require the support of surrounding communities. This support can take the form of partnerships, with shared responsibility for educational and lobbying activities. It is vital now that at every stage in the development of museums, Associations of Friends of Museums are involved.

Louis Dassault, President of the Quebeqois Association of Friends and Volunteers of Museums, recalled the *Code of Ethics* adopted by the World Federation of Friends of Museums in 1996. This *Code* specifies the respective roles of the museum institution and Friends of Museums, the different spheres of operation, and the different responsibilities and commitments of the two parties. This *Code of Ethics* is available on the Web at www.museumsfriends.org

Max Dingle, President of the Australian Federation of Friends of Museums, emphasised that Friends are engaged in issues which affect museum professionals and which also concern the community: issues of access, environmental issues and audience issues (in this respect, it is important to target neglected groups such as older women and families). Mr Dingle stressed the importance of State support for education and culture, in order to create a climate of intellectual curiosity. Increasingly ephemeral past-times, which do not promote intellectual engagement, and increased competition between different "leisure activities" make the task of museums difficult. Faced with these challenges, the relation between Friends of Museums and museum management should more than ever before correspond to the ideal marriage: reciprocal obligation, equal dependence and mutual independence.

ICOM *Code of Professional Ethics*

II Institutional Ethics

2. Basic Principles for Museum Governance

2.6. Friends of Museums and Supporting Organisations

Museums depend on the public to encourage their growth and development. Many museums have Friends and supporting organisations. It is the institution's responsibility to create a favourable environment for such support, recognise its contribution, encourage the practice, and promote a harmonious relationship between such organisations and the professional staff.

2.7. Educational and Community Role of the Museum

(…)
The museum has an important duty to develop its educational role and attract wider audiences from all levels of the community, locality, or group it serves. It should offer opportunities for such people to become involved in the museum and to support its goals and activities. Interaction with the constituent commu-nity is an integral part of realising the educational role of the museum and specialist staff are likely to be required for this purpose.

Saskia Brown
Editor, *ICOM News*

Concurrent Sessions

Acquisitions Policy

Geoffrey Lewis *Chair, ICOM Ethics Committee.*

Collecting legally. Preventing illicit traffic in cultural property

At the second of ICOM 2001's Concurrent Sessions, some of the issues involved in the trafficking of cultural property and the difficulties faced by museum curators were discussed by three distinguished museum colleagues: Robert Anderson, Director of the British Museum; Lorenz Homberger, Deputy Director and Curator of African Arts, Museum Rietberg, Zurich, and Pavel Jirasek, Director of the Department of Moveable Cultural Heritage, Museums and Galleries, Prague. Geoffrey Lewis, Chair of ICOM's Ethics Committee, moderated the session and reports on it here.

In his opening remarks, the moderator drew attention to new elements in the revised ICOM *Code of Professional Ethics*: the concept of "due diligence" was introduced to emphasise the need to ensure secure provenance for acquisitions; the problem of the outstanding item which contributed much to knowledge but lacked adequate documentation to be sure of its legal acquisition; and the stance of ICOM towards serious infringements of the *Code* among its members.

Attention was also drawn to the use of international legislation in the *Code* as a standard; this was applicable whether or not it had been ratified by the member's country.

If there had been any understanding that illicit trafficking in cultural property was restricted to the non-industrialised countries, this was soon dispelled by Dr Jirasek. Thefts of cultural property, particularly from churches, have increased dramatically since 1986 in the Czech Republic. Police files show that some 30,000 to 40,000 such items have been stolen since then. In response to this the Czech authorities introduced a number of measures, including legislation.[1] This made it possible to enter into agreements with owners of historic buildings to improve their security and introduce preventive conservation measures. Another development was the cataloguing of important objects and the creation of a database of stolen material, accessible to both the cultural authorities and the police. These measures were contributing to the fight against illicit trafficking. They also assisted museums in avoiding the acquisition of suspect material and guarding against material from illicit excavations.

The issue the acquisition of material for archaeological museums was developed by Dr Anderson. Much significant evidence is being irrecoverably destroyed, he said. Inevitably, stolen objects will have their provenance suppressed. There is a strange view that art museums might adopt different attitudes from history museums on the basis that provenance counts for less if an object is deemed to be a work of art. Every object has historic content, and every object is a lesser one if its origins are obliterated.

The British Museum actively collects on a world-wide basis and has a clear statement of its acquisition policy in relation to illicit trafficking, formulated in 1972. This was strengthened in 1998 by the Trustees' statement, *Acquisition of Antiquities*.[2] This deplores the looting of archaeological antiquities and clearly states that the British Museum will refuse to acquire illegally excavated or illegally exported objects. It extends this principle to items offered on loan for exhibition or conservation, and refuses to give certificates of authenticity or valuations.

In discussing the practicalities of such a policy, Dr Anderson referred to the difficulties that arose in a "due diligence" search, particularly in obtaining accurate data on the law in force at a particular time in a number of countries.

There was also the principle of "last resort" where the museum acted as the repository in the case of antiquities originating in the UK but for which documentation was lacking. Dr Anderson instanced the case of the Salisbury hoard[3] where the museum had purchased items and subsequently repurchased the material from the rightful owner when known. The British government recently published its Select Committee report on the illicit trade and return of cultural property[4] and the Ministerial Advisory Panel on Illicit Trade subsequently recommended[5] that Britain should sign the 1970 Unesco Convention and this was accepted; they did not recommend the ratification of the 1995 Unidroit Convention. In conclusion Dr Anderson stressed the need for international co-operation and to act together on illicit trafficking.

The need for international co-operation was echoed by the final speaker, Mr Homberger, who spoke from the viewpoint of non-European art, giving a number of examples of illicit trafficking. The ICOM *Code of Professional Ethics* provided clear advice on acquisitions policies. However, there was a danger that this key information might be lost amongst the many other ethical considerations that the *Code* contained.

Issues raised in the ensuing discussion included comment on the need to assess the effectiveness of international legislation among countries that had ratified it. The harmonisation of national legislation on cultural property was raised with the suggestion that this might be achieved in Europe through the European Union. The need for a database of national legislation was also reiterated. Concern was expressed that a regular route for illicit trafficking was through diplomatic baggage.

The General Assembly, at the close of the conference, passed a Resolution [no.3: see back cover of this issue] asking the Executive Council to seek ways of facilitating the compilation of a database of national legislation since 1970, encouraging the standarisation of cultural property legislation among nations and initiating discussion with the diplomatic corps and agencies involved in the control of cross-border traffic. ■

From left to right, Lorenz Homberger, Deputy Director and Curator of African Arts,

Museum Rietberg, Zurich; Robert Anderson, Director of the British Museum;

Pavel Jirasek, Director of the Department of Moveable Cultural Heritage,

Museums and Galleries, Prague; and Geoffrey Lewis, Chair of the ICOM Ethics Committee

1 Further information about the position in the Czech Republic and other European nations can be found in Cent Objets Disparus: Pillage en Europe/One Hundred Missing Objects: Looting in Europe, *ICOM, Paris, 2000*

2 Published in British Museum Report 1996-98, *p. 81, HMSO, London, 1998*

3 Stead, I. M., The Salisbury Treasure, *Tempus, Stroud, 1998*

4 HM Government Select Committee on Culture, Media and Sport, Seventh Report. Cultural Property: Return and Illicit Trade, *HMSO, London 2000 (Prepared 25 July 2000) Electronic copy also available via www.parliament.the-stationery-office.co.uk*

5 HM Government Department for Culture, Media and Sport, Ministerial Advisory Panel on Illicit Trade: Report, *Department for Culture, Media and Sport, London 2000. Electronic copy also available via www.parliament.the-stationery-office.co.uk*

Concurrent Sessions

Launching the Top-Level Domain *.museum*

Cary Karp *President of MuseDoma.*
Director of Internet Strategy and Technology at the Swedish Museum of Natural History, Sweden.

One of the milestone events in the creation of the top-level Internet domain for the museum community occurred in the context of the Concurrent Session held on 4th July at the ICOM General Conference in Barcelona. This date was set as the expected launch date even before the domain application had been approved. The sense of anticipation had been shared by ICANN (Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers - responsible for the maintenance of top-level domains on the Internet) and ICOM, from the moment that it became clear that the *.museum* proposal was among those most likely to prove successful.

ICANN met in Stockholm at the start of June 2001, and details of what MuseDoma (Museum Domain Management Association - the *.museum* sponsoring organisation) would be "taking to Barcelona" were a key topic of discussion. This was followed by a month of intense activity setting up the first service to be provided to the prospective registrants in the domain. By the time of the Barcelona event there were, in fact, two services. The first was the initiation of the acceptance of preliminary requests for domain name registration. ("We would like the name *our-place.art.museum*"). The second was a facility providing listings of museums registered in each of the various facets of the domain's naming structure. This allows museums to indicate their locations and disciplinary focus, and listings could thus be provided of all museums registered in, for example, *catalunya.museum* or *history.museum*.

A more detailed review of the live demonstration held at the launch session will be given below. This was preceded by several informative, if not to say momentous, presentations. The first was by Jacques Perot, ICOM President and member of the MuseDoma Board of Directors. After welcoming those present and formally inaugurating *.museum*, he described the significance of a dedicated museum top-level domain both for ICOM and for the entire museum sector. Establishing a verifiable point of recognition for bona fide museum activity on the Internet is a watershed development. The potential that the domain provides for establishing clear contours around burgeoning notions of virtual museums is also profoundly significant. This presentation concluded with a description of the history and organisational structure of MuseDoma, created by ICOM together with the J. Paul Getty Trust.

The second presentation was held by Manus Brinkman, ICOM Secretary General and MuseDoma Secretary. He described his personal experience of locating museum resources on the Internet using currently available tools. The results that can be obtained are likely to prove confusing to the lay public and are simply not acceptable for museum professionals. Significant relief can be expected as *.museum* develops, both by providing means for verifying the authenticity of museum resources and permitting the location of structured subsets of the vast material contributed by museums. The further significance of *.museum* is its pioneering role in establishing a cultural sector on the Internet. We may see the future establishment of domains dedicated to other areas, for example, *.archive* and *.monument*. The presentation concluded with a statement of pride about ICOM's role in this significant development.

The next speaker was Ken Hamma, Assistant Director of the Getty Museum and a member of the MuseDoma Board of Directors. He discussed the uncertain but exciting scope of what may happen on the Internet during the next few years and the major step into the future that is being taken with the establishment of *.museum*. He then acknowledged the contributions of named individuals in the effort thus far. He emphasised the Getty's single goal in ensuring that the venture proves successful and provides museums on both sides of the Internet horizon with all the benefits described during the present report.

This was followed by a presentation held by one of this event's most honored guests, Amadeu Abril i Abril, a member of the ICANN Board and a prominent member of the Barcelona legal community. He described the purpose and functions of ICANN and the considerations underlying its present action in creating new top-level domains. There are several
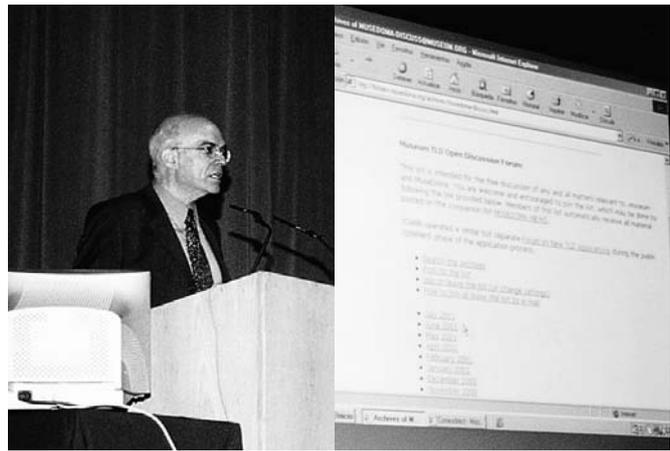
Cary Karp, President and CEO of MuseDoma

principles on which a TLD may be based and *.museum* seemed an ideal test case for assessing the viability of small special-purpose domains, dedicated to various aspects of such things as cultural activity. The truly representative authority provided by ICOM was a key reason for the success of the *.museum* proposal. A second key was provided by Getty participation, demonstrating both the interest of such a strong agency and that the domain was envisaged for the entire museum community and not in terms exclusive to ICOM. The third ingredient was the museum community having manifested its interest in the establishment of a dedicated TLD at the very outset of the process fully five years ago and acting energetically, ever since, with the goal of bringing the domain into existence. The final point in this presentation was its most significant. ICANN expects the museum community to be able to do good things with its *.museum*. Our success will be a pivotal consideration when ICANN plans the further expansion of top-level domain space. We are truly the pioneers.

The final presentation was held by the present reporter, a primary lobbyist during the years' long campaign, supported throughout in this by the Internet Strategy and Technology team of the Swedish Museum of Natural History. This closing presentation took the form of the live demonstration mentioned above and which will now be described in fuller detail.

The ability to demonstrate the features of *.museum* requires that the domain should be in full operation. The formalities necessary for this had, however, not yet been completed. Given the significance of the ICOM Conference, ICANN generously permitted us to bypass the formal exercise and a highlight of this Concurrent Session was the launch and a live presentation of *.museum* as it will soon be available to the full community of Internet users. Conference participants who earlier during the week had visited the MuseDoma booth, were able to see their Web sites identified with new *.museum* labels, for example, *leiden.ethnology.museum*, *liverpoolfc.football.museum*, *mpr.icom.museum*, and *korea.icom.museum*.

Searchable indexes were available for:
art.museum — catalonia.museum — catalunya.museum — conservation.museum — ethnology.museum — football.museum — gateway.museum — icom.museum — music.museum — musik.museum — national.museum — naturalhistory.museum — sport.museum

Museums that provide information in several languages can direct their visitors to the appropriate resource by using the multilingual synonyms that the above system can provide.

The full scope of this potential will hopefully become obvious when the community gains unrestricted access to the services described here in what by then will be a more fully developed format. ∎

Round Table discussions in the Main Hall of Barcelona's Congress Palace

Large and Small Museums: two forms of management

Participants: *Luiz Antonio Bolcato Former Regional Director of IPHAN, Lecturer, Faculty of Architecture, Ritter dos Reis Institute, Porto Alegre, Brazil. •Vincenzo Padiglione Lecturer in Cultural Anthropology, La Sapienza University, Rome; Director, Monti Lepini Ethnographic Museum, Latina, Italy.•Ludmila Korotaeva Director-General of the Vologda State Museum, Vologda, Russia.*

The panel discussed the different forms of museum management which have emerged in the last decades in different parts of the world.

Luiz Antonio Bolcato described how, in many Latin American countries, the role of the State decreased in the funding and management of museums after the fall of dictatorial regimes in the 1960s and 1970s. The economic models to which the region was then submitted brought technological modernisation, which in turn brought wealth but also the concentration of wealth, the poverty gap, technological dependence and a loss of certain cultural values. Later, organisations such as MERCOSUR integrated regional cultural programmes, where museums played a significant role, but the new term "sustainability" was often interpreted in a narrow sense as the capacity to make continued profits.

At present, in Brazil, museums are faced with the question of how they can achieve a significant measure of self-financing without compromising their focus or their ethical principles. Certain museums have responded to this dilemma most creatively, by fulfilling ancillary educational functions and transforming themselves into socio-cultural centres.

New ways of looking at culture have emerged and crystallised around institutions such as the community museum, the eco-museum and the open air museum. New museum management practices have also enabled economic regeneration and supplementary educational provision.

Other changes in the world of museum management in the last decades were highlighted by Vincenzo Padiglione. In the 1950s and 1960s, research focused on technical aspects of museum work. This trend was revised in the 1970s and 1980s, when the New Museology developed a critical and reflexive approach, and the focus shifted to issues around the presentation of collections, the construction of authenticity and interpretation.

One aspect of this shift to a more reflexive stance was the formulation of normative codes applicable to all museums, which risk reducing the variety of museums and the different roles which they can play in their given context. For example, the Monti Lepini ethnographic museum near Rome operates as a museum which is also a laboratory, an archive, a place of discovery, house of memory and educational institution, including the intangible heritage of oral histories.

This example of a museum fulfilling multiple roles on the local level also provides an alternative model of museum management, which is flexible, responsive to local projects and keen to involve visitors and sponsors from different sectors of society. The tendency to seek conformity between museums – in the name of ethical practice but also in response to consumer logic which tends to homogenisation of museum provision – regrettably threatens the small and anomalous museum. But what may seem to be an anomaly is in fact a sign of the extent to which the museum is rooted in its local environment, managed as a strategic resource for the local community and therefore inventive, flexible and pluralistic, both in its ethical approach and in its management practice.

A third perspective was provided by Ludmila Korotaeva, discussing museums in the former Soviet Union. These have had to adapt rapidly to reduced State funding, political and legal uncertainty and a core staff unfamiliar with economic management. Museums have managed to adapt by setting up stronger networks, attuning their activities to modern society, and working on joint programmes and information exchange. A positive point of reference for these transformations has been the privatisation of Dutch national museums through the 1990s, which has provided new models of museum management. ■

Supranational Aid for Museum Management

Participants: *Mounir Bouchenaki Assistant Director-General for Culture, UNESCO, Paris, France.•Damien M. Pwono Programme Officer for Cultural Institutions, The Ford Foundation, New York, U.S.A.*

Supranational aid for museums takes many different forms. It may consist of grants for setting up museums or maintaining them, provision of professional expertise, knowledge and equipment, or the introduction of training programmes or fund-raising projects.

Mounir Bouchenaki considered the changes in support for museums over the last 50 years, with particular reference to UNESCO's activities. In developed countries, much of the supranational aid has taken the form of the international dissemination of information, and activities to encourage international exchanges of works of art. For developing countries, supranational aid has generally taken the form of provision of equipment and training.

In the 1960s and 1970s, the situation changed as other organisations such as ICOM, ICCROM and ICOMOS spear-headed cooperation within the museum world and ICOM took over many of the technical assistance programmes which had previously been managed by UNESCO. In this new climate, UNESCO modified its role to that of catalyst and coordi-

nator of projects, and initiator of new management strategies and policies.

This new role of UNESCO is linked to its "funds in trust" system, which provides supranational financial aid, and was the favoured form of support in the 1970s and 1980s. "Funds in trust" are funds given by one or more countries concerned to initiate activities in foreign countries, while leaving the specialist management of the projects to UNESCO. Such funds have been used for museum work in Libya, Egypt and elsewhere.

The end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s were marked by the increasing voice of voluntary organisations and representatives from the private sector in governmental and intergovernmental conferences. This encouraged new strategies of support and funding, through partnerships and collaboration with all financial and social bodies concerned. New models of cultural management were implemented, with the aid of UNESCO, particularly in the former Soviet states.

More recently, UNESCO has been involved in post-conflict situations, where museums play the role of mediators and agents of reconciliation and social reconstruction. This is the case notably in Bosnia Herze-govinia. Another new policy orientation in UNESCO's supranational aid to museums is the strengthening of interregional cooperation, and the facilitation of access to training and information. This has led to requests made to UNESCO for the creation of regional training centres in museology, for example, from Mexico for a Latin American centre and from Sri Lanka for a South-East Asian centre.

Another institution which supports cultural institutions globally is the Ford Foundation. Damien Pwono described how the Ford Foundation supports specific projects or institutions, while also observing general changes in the cultural field, encouraging new ways of channeling resources, sharing good practice, strengthening networks of donors and cooperative agreements, and creating and maintaining knowledge banks. The Foundation is at present involved in on-going research into the public humanities in America, namely the role and management of libraries, archives, cultural centres and museums.

In order to provide effective support, the Ford Foundation works with a large number of geopolitical and professional networks, at all levels. Damien Pwono stressed how, in the context of globalisation, cultural institutions must form strong networks in order to benefit from diversified support. Technical assistance is often more significant for museums than simply the funds which a professional fundraiser might be able to procure. ■

Bruno Frey, Professor of Economics at the University of Zurich, explaining new economic approaches to the value of museums

Balancing Financial and Social Profit

Participants: *Bruno Frey* Professor of Economics, University of Zurich, Switzerland.•*Juan Ignacio Vidarte* Director of the Guggenheim Museum, Bilbao, Spain.•*Marta de la Torre* Director, Information and Communications Department, Getty Conservation Institute, Los Angeles, USA.

Bruno Frey emphasised how, in recent decades, economic principles have been applied to domains not strictly within the purview of economics: the environment, politics, health, law and now art and culture. The assumptions which economists make when considering the arts or the museum are that they need economic incentives in order to function efficiently, and that the market generates the most efficient allocation of resources.

While this purely economic logic is applicable to fields of museum activity such as the provision of refreshments, gifts and publications, the social values produced by the museum escape market calculation. Bruno Frey described how the social value of the museum can be broken down into five different elements, the option value, existence value, bequest value, prestige value and educational value. The option value of the museum corresponds to the value offered by an additional choice (even if the individual chooses not to visit a museum, the option to visit it exists). The existence value is the value which can be attributed to something simply due to its existence. The bequest value of the museum is its value as preserved for future generations, and the presti-

Work in progress

ge value and educational value speak for themselves.

These values, which are not susceptible to a cost-profit analysis, can nevertheless be measured empirically, through surveys and also through "revealed behaviour", manifested, for instance, in house prices or in wage levels in towns with a museum and in towns without one.

The economic value of museums, analysed via "impact studies" which examine the additional employment or economic activity generated by a museum, can always be outstripped by other commercial leisure activities. In order to survive, museums must not claim to compete on purely economic terms but must emphasise the unique role they play in the creation of social and cultural value.

In contrast to the interpretation of the museum uniquely in terms of social values, Juan Vidarte argued that the social and economic goals of the museum are indissociable and not in conflict, and that cultural activity can and should be used as an economic force. When the Guggenheim Museum at Bilbao was set up, its goal was to bring about economic regeneration and social change as well as to become a leading cultural institution for the visual arts in Europe, with an educational focus. Moreover, whereas people mistakenly equate not-for-profit organisations with inefficient management, the Guggenheim Bilbao has maximised efficient management strategies and is self-financing for 75% of its costs, bringing together both public and private funding.

A third viewpoint was offered by Marta de la Torre, describing how privatisation of museums, and hence the growth of economic imperatives, is threatening the museum's mission. An overview of some of the major changes which have occurred within the museum world in the last 20 years shows positive developments – more specialised staff training, more coherent guidelines, more attention given to information dissemination and exhibition design and educational or outreach programmes – but also some very negative phenomena. The latter stem from the "numbers game" which museums are obliged to play – maximising the number of visitors – in order to attract sponsorship and funds. This leads to high museum overheads, reduced resources for research, permanent exhibitions, conservation and other core museum activities. Marta de la Torre argued that we must question whether these changes in the wake of privatisation are socially and economically sustainable. The economic focus threatens the continued existence of the museum and encourages it to transform itself into an entertainment centre or theme park, losing sight of its unique identity and role. ■

The Benefits of the Internet for Museums

Participants: *Cary Karp* *Director of Internet Strategy and Technology,*
Swedish Museum of Natural History, Sweden.•Jan van der Starre
Senior Consultant of Documentary Information Systems, Cap Gemini Ernst & Young Consultants, Netherlands.•Ángel Fernández Hermana
Journalist and Editorial Consultant, Spain.

Cary Karp discussed the evolution of the Domain Name System, which underlies the vast amount of information available through the Internet. Domain names enable people to recognise computers which otherwise connect to each other using numbers rather than names.

Whereas, in the early days of the Internet, the domain name had no particular association with the types of content which could be accessed there, as graphic World Wide Web browsers came into ubiquitous use, there was a tendency to give the domain name a relevant semantic content.

This evolution enables users at least to guess what types of information may be stored under a specific domain name. For example, the newly created *.museum* top-level domain name holds information on…museums.

Moreover, since some 10,000 sites contain the term "museum", the *.museum* domain name provides a way of guaranteeing the authenticity of the museum signed up under this top-level domain, and the reliability of the information provided.

For the real challenge of the Internet for museums is not that it raises the question of real versus virtual objects — in the history of museums, there have always been collections constructed around intangible objects — but rather the question of the quality and reliability of the information which circulates. The new *.museum* top-level domain responds to this challenge.

Jan van der Starre stressed the unrealistic enthusiasm which "Internet for museums" can sometimes elicit. Under the title of "Digital Cockaigne", Jan van der Starre discussed what is really required if museums are to make full use of electronic resources. Firstly, trained Internet staff are necessary, reliable information must be gathered from curators, restorers, educators and administrators or from other cultural resources (libraries, archives, etc.), hardware and software must be purchased, the electronic resources must be marketed (so that, for example, people know of the existence of the museum Web site), and the site must be updated and indexed. All in all, although electronic media can constitute an important and exciting asset for the museum, they are not, as the "Digital Cockaigne" image attempts to portray it, free, always accessible without requiring work and of automatically high quality.

What is specific to the Internet, argued Ángel Fernández Hermana, is that information is accessible simultaneously, at any time and from any place (provided that there is an Internet access point). The Internet opens up new possibilities for the display of information or virtual objects beyond the restrictions of a specific collection. In the museum's "Virtual Room", the past and future elements of the museum can be shown, different contexts of specific museum objects can be evoked, and hypertext links can allow personal management of one's interests. One can browse in conceptually or historically similar virtual rooms and continue one's visit after the museum closes. The Internet can therefore serve museums by introducing new ways of exploring and structuring human culture and knowledge. ■

Edward H. Able, Jr., President and CEO of the American Association of Museums

Renewing the Museum

What should conceptual and management decisions aim at?

Participants: *Edward H. Able, Jr.* *President and CEO of the American Association of Museums, Washington, U.S.A.•Kevin Moore* *Director, National Football Museum, Preston, England.*

Focusing principally on museums in the U.S.A., Ed Able summarised some of the major objectives of museums today.

Museums today are obliged to seek funding. They will tend to be successful if they can show that they respond to the needs of the public and are accessible. Over the last 20 years, the work undertaken by museums in order to make their collections accessible and their programmes attractive has been rewarded by spectacular increases in visitor numbers, especially in Science and Natural History Museums and, to a lesser extent, in Art and History museums.

This drive to attract visitors should not, however, compromise the quality of the knowledge and information available in the museum, which should always be backed by strong research. A recent AAM-sponsored survey showed that museums were rated no. 1 by the American public for the reliability of the information they provide, followed by books, other media (magazines, newspapers, television), with Internet considered to be the least reliable source (see the AAM Web site, http://www.aam-us.org).

Museums must also diversify their funding sources, even those which are at present funded by government. They need to consider revenue-producing activities, private sources and how to constitute reserves, in order to assure the continuation of their institution in times of political and economic uncertainty.

One consequence of rethinking the accessibility of collections is the realisation that the division of museums into disciplines - art, history, science - does not correspond to the ways in which the average visitor divides his or her knowledge and experience. Different ways of crossing disciplinary boundaries should be explored. Integrating new technologies into the museum is one way of approaching this and of enhancing the educational effect of programmes. These developments are, however, costly and require constant maintenance.

Lastly, new management strategies should be implemented in order to develop expertise in the management of people, resources and working practices. It is also important that museum managers develop political skills and learn how to convey to policy-makers and also to the public the importance of museums in society. The enormous asset which museums represent can otherwise be overlooked.

Kevin Moore summarised new museum management techniques, drawing on contemporary management approaches. Museum management attracted interest as a distinct field of management only from the late 1990s, following the general shift in management approaches as from the early 1980s from "scientific" management to "people-centred" management. Drawing on the landmark book of Tom Peters and Robert Waterman, *In Search of Excellence* (1982), Kevin Moore outlined key ingredients for imaginative management: experimentation, in order to respond sensitively to change; frequent reinvention and reorganisation, in order to anticipate change; constant questioning (why document? why collect?...). All in all, imaginative management should involve regular questioning of what one does, how one does it and what one does it for. In this light, management is not, as we still often think it is, a matter of endless report writing and strategic planning. It is a dynamic thinking about methods of implementing goals and values. ■

Round Table discussions summarised by Saskia Brown, Editor, *ICOM News*.

International Committees

ICOM International Committees met at Barcelona to discuss among themselves or in Joint Sessions with other Committees, to meet up with new and old colleagues, to elect new Board members and to visit sites of special interest. Many of the Committees addressed the Conference theme, "Managing Change: museums facing economic and social challenges", from the perspective of their own parti–cular specialism. Many organised diffe–rent types of presentation – keynote speeches, research papers, workshop reports – testifying once again, if need were, to the wealth of reflection which these Committees are engaged in, inclu–ding in interdisciplinary fields. Opposite, some of the topics addressed by ICOM's International Committees over the period of the General Conference.

JOINT SESSIONS

CIMCIM with CIPEG and ICMAH
Debates on various themes: "Sound-Producing Devices issuing from Musical-Archaeological Research: Problems of Mounting and Labelling"; "Pictures of Dance and Music in Ancient Egypt"

DEMHIST with ICMS and ICAMT
Security, Old Buildings, New Buildings, Architecture

DEMHIST with ICDAD
Relationships Between Authentic Interiors and Assembled Objects
Debates on various themes: "Evolving Notions of Authenticity and Interpretation at House Museums in the USA";
"Honest Ways to Use fakes in Historic House Museums"

GLASS Committee with ICDAD
Issues in Glass Today

ICMAH with CIDOC
Documentation of Site Museums

ICMAH with ICTOP
Discussion of training needs of archaeology and history museums and their staff, and possible future co-operation between ICMAH and ICTOP

ICOFOM with INTERCOM and ICTOP
Symposium on the policy, management and training implications of new trends in museum organisation and management.

AVICOM•AUDIOVISUAL AND NEW TECHNOLOGIES
Internet, Web, Museums
New Technology and Museography
New Directions in Cultural Multimedia

CECA•EDUCATION AND CULTURAL ACTION
Open for New learning
The Brazilian Museum educator facing changes in view of economic and social challenges

CIDOC•DOCUMENTATION
Documentation in Spanish museums
What is documentation, now and in the future?

CIMAM•MODERN ART
The (New?) Mission of Large Institutions
The Artist and the Museum
The Mission of Alternative Spaces or Smaller Museums

CIMCIM•MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS
Musical Instruments on Display: Mounting, Security, Labelling

CIMUSET•SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
Managing Change: Museums of Science and Technology facing Economic and Social Challenges

CIPEG•EGYPTOLOGY
Museums and Universities
Exhibitions: New Egyptian Galleries for the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston
Conservation: The Mummy-Project Isachta
Research: New Evidence in the Study of Mirrors and their Representations

COSTUME
Various subjects debated on the theme of the General Conference

DEMHIST•HISTORIC HOUSE MUSEUMS
New Forms of Management for Historic House Museums?

GLASS
New Developments and Research in Museums and Collections of Glass
Representing the Decorative Arts: Recent Gallery Developments in Museums of Decorative Arts and Design

ICAMT•ARCHITECTURE AND MUSEUM TECHNIQUES
Heritage Management and Regional and Global Identity
Museum Management in the 20th and 21st Centuries
The Ethical Limits to Museum Funding
Museum Management and its Social Environment

ICDAD•DECORATIVE ARTS AND DESIGN
Modern and Contemporary Design
Authentic or Assembled: Historical Interiors and Furnishings

ICEE•EXHIBITION EXCHANGE
Contemporary Issues for Touring Exhibitions

ICFA•FINE ARTS
Various subjects discussed on the theme of the General Conference

ICLM•LITERARY MUSEUMS
Various subjects discussed on the theme of the General Conference

ICMAH•ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORY
History Museums Today: Local Identity versus Globalisation
Site and Restitution Museums, New Approaches to Cultural Tourism
City Museums: How to Describe a City

ICME•ETHNOGRAPHY
The "Old" World's Fascination for the "New", Reflected in Museums
Folk Art, Ethnic Art, Fine Art – Categories and Relations
Looking at the Future - Challenges in Documentation; Endangered Cultural Property; New Museum Concepts

ICMS•SECURITY
Museum Security and Economy

ICOFOM•MUSEOLOGY
Museology, Social and Economic Development
Projects: Terms and Concepts in Museology; UNESCO Chair of Museology and World Heritage

ICOM-CC•CONSERVATION
Reinventing the Conservation Department

ICOMON•MONEY AND BANKING
Expressing Historical Identity: Regional Identity, Monetary History
Managing Numismatic Heritage
Researching and Promoting Numismatics

ICR•REGIONAL MUSEUMS
Museum Management, Presentation and Exhibition Design, Conservation and Documentation

ICTOP•TRAINING OF PERSONNEL
Marketing Art and Archaeology Museums: a Training Prospect for South-East Asia
Capacity Building for Sustainable Museum Development: case studies from South Africa and Vietnam
New Aspects of the Training of Curators
Management Training as part of Museum Studies?

INTERCOM•MANAGEMENT
The Ethics of Management
Challenges in Museum Leadership
The Museum Director of Today: Entrepreneur or Guardian?

MPR•MARKETING AND PUBLIC RELATIONS
New Media: Marketing the Museum on the Web; The Experiential Museum
New Audiences: Multicultural Museum Marketing in Australia; Marketing and Branding a New Museum.
New Horizons: Museum Sponsorship

NATHIST•NATURAL HISTORY
Databases, Heritage Management
Exhibitions and Media, Heritage and Economic Resources
Biodiversity, Heritage and Society

UMAC•UNIVERSITY MUSEUMS AND COLLECTIONS
Intensifying Support For and Increasing Audiences in University Museums and Collections

General Assembly

The ICOM Executive Council 2001-2004, elected in July 2001

Elections

A high point in the Conference programme is the election of the members of the Executive Council and of the President and Vice-President of the Advisory Committee. They will serve for the triennial period 2001-2004.

ICOM Executive Council, 2001-2004

On Friday 6th July, 2001, the 20th General Assembly of ICOM elected the members who will serve on ICOM's Executive Council for the period 2001-2004. They will decide on ICOM's major strategies in the three years to come.

President:

Jacques Perot
Director of the National Museums and Châteaux of Compiègne and Blérancourt, France. President of ICOM (1998-2001). Director of the Clemenceau de Lattre National Museum, Mouilleron, France (1974-present). Director of the Army Museum of Les Invalides, Paris (1992-1998).

Vice–Presidents:

Yani Herreman
Coordinator of Museum Studies, Faculty of Architecture, National University of Mexico, Mexico. Head of the Cultural Action Department, Iztacala Campus, National University of Mexico (1995-2000). Director of Cultural Action for the Ministry of Finances (1994).

Bernice Murphy
Independent Curator and Scholar, Australia. Director (1997-1998), Chief Curator & Deputy Director (1989-1997), Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney. Member of the federal "Visions of Australia" Committee (1998-2001).

Treasurer:

Camila Gonzalez Gou
Curator of Antiquities, Museo Frederic Marès, Barcelona, Spain. Technical Curator of the Museum Services of Barcelona (1994-1996).

Members:

Gary Edson
Executive Director of the Museum of Texas Tech University. Director of the Museum Science Program and Professor of Museum Science, Museum of Texas Tech University, U.S.A. (since 1985).

Pascal Makambila
Professor of Sociology and Social Anthropology/Ethnology, Marien Ngouabi University, Brazzaville. Directorate of Congo Museums, Congo.

Giovanni Pinna
President of the Commission for the Protection of Palaeontological Heritage, Ministry of Culture, Italy. Director of the Natural History Museum of Milan (1981-1996).

Elisabet Olofsson
Museum Consultant, Museum and Heritage Development, Sweden. Coordinator of SAMP (Swedish African Museum Programme) since 1998 and SIDA (Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency) since 1992.

Martin Schärer
Founder and Director of the Alimentarium Food Museum, Vevey, Switzerland (1980-present). Lecturer at the University of Zurich, Switzerland. Lecturer in postgraduate Museology at the University of Basle, Switzerland.

Ex Officio:

Alissandra Cummins ➤
Chairperson of the Advisory Committee. Director, Barbados Museum and Historical Society, St. Ann's Garrison, St. Michael, Barbados.

ICOM Advisory Committee, 2001-2004

The Advisory Committee, composed of the Chairs of National and International Committees and of Affiliated Organisations, elected its new Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson at the Barcelona General Conference.

Chairperson:
(elected in the course of the 61st Session of the Advisory Committee, 29th June, 2001)

Alissandra Cummins
Director, Barbados Museum and Historical Society, St. Ann's Garrison, St. Michael, Barbados.

Vice–Chairperson:
(elected in the course of the 62nd session of the Advisory Committee, 6th July, 2001):

Günther Dembski
Chair of ICOM-Austria, Head of the Coins Department, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, Austria.

Alissandra Cummins, unanimously re-elected as President of the Advisory Committee

ICOM *Statutes*

Amendments to the ICOM *Statutes* were voted at the General Assembly in Barcelona on 6ᵗʰ July, 2001, the first set of changes to be introduced since the General Conference of 1989. The key changes are given below.

Under **Article 2 - Definitions,** *non profit art exhibition galleries (1 (b) (iv))* are added to the list of institutions qualifying as museums for the purposes of the ICOM definition of museum. Point (viii), a new addition, further enlarges the range of institutions considered as museums: *1 (viii) cultural centres and other entities that facilitate the preservation, continuation and management of tangible or intangible heritage resources (living heritage and digital creative activity).*

The *Statutes* were also modified to prepare for student membership of ICOM. This is explained in Paragraph 6 of **Article 6 - Categories of Membership:** *Student members shall be persons admitted to this category of membership by a National Committee in accordance with guidelines established by the Executive Council. Student members shall have no right to vote or to be candidate for election to any office within ICOM.*

The procedures of the Advisory Committee were also amended. **Article 21 - Advisory Committee, 1 (b)** integrates the approval of the preceding year's audited accounts into the Committee's functions: "to receive and *approve* the audited accounts for the preceding year, and the annual budget for the current year, presented by the Treasurer". New procedures for decision-making were also voted: *13 (a) If a matter that has been discussed at a meeting of the Advisory Committee cannot be decided at that meeting because of the need for further study or information, the Chairperson of the Advisory Committee may subsequently submit the matter to the members of the Committee for decision out of session. In these circumstances, the proposal will be submitted to the members of the Committee in writing, specifying a date by which a response must be received. Voting may be by post, by facsimile, or by e-mail and the matter shall be decided by a simple majority of those whose votes are received by the specified date.*

Paragraph 2 of **Article 22 - Executive Council** was modified to increase the number of members of the Executive Council: "The Executive Council shall consist of *sixteen* members of ICOM of whom *fifteen* shall be elected by the designated voting representatives of National and International Committees and Affiliated Organisations for a three-year term. The Chairperson of the Advisory Committee shall, *ex officio*, be a member of the Executive Council. Of the *fifteen* members elected, four will be Officers and *eleven* Ordinary Members of the Council...".
As regards nomination of candidates for election to the Executive Council, considered in **Article 27 - Election of Executive Council**, the new Statutes add a phrase to the end of Paragraph 2, *Each nomination must be signed by persons other than the nominee.* The number of candidates on the list for election to the Executive Council increases from 23 to 30. Paragraph 5: "The Advisory Committee shall, by vote, select from among the persons nominated, no more than *thirty* names for inclusion in the list of candidates for election to the Executive Council...".

A complete version of the *Statutes*, showing the modifications adopted by the General Assembly on 6ᵗʰ July, 2001, are available on the ICOM Web site.

Byoung-Oh Tark, Vice-Mayor of Seoul, addressing the ICOM General Conference

ICOM 2004 Seoul

The Barcelona General Conference was honoured by the presence of a representative of the Seoul Metropolitan Government, the Vice-Mayor of Seoul, Mr Byoung-Oh Tark. The General Assembly was shown a video concerning the cultural riches of the Republic of Korea and the diverse aspects of Seoul, its ancient traditions blending with its modern city life. Mr Byung-mo Kim, President of ICOM-Korea and Chairman of the Organising Committee of ICOM 2004 invited all members to the 20ᵗʰ General Conference and 21ˢᵗ General Assembly of ICOM:

ICOM 2004 Seoul
Saturday 2ⁿᵈ - Friday 8ᵗʰ October, 2004
➤COEX Convention Centre, Seoul, Republic of Korea.
The Conference theme will be "Intangible Cultural Heritage". Correspondence can be addressed to Ms Kyungsuk Chang, Coordinator for ICOM 2004, at Email <office@icomkorea.org> and a Web site is available at http://www.icom2004/org

Sid Ahmed Baghli, whose nomination as Honorary Member of ICOM was ratified at the ICOM General Assembly

Honorary Member

In recognition of the outstanding contribution made to ICOM and the museum community by Sid Ahmed Baghli (Algeria), the General Assembly ratified his nomination as Honorary Member of ICOM.
After graduating from the Faculty of Arts of the University of Grenoble (France), Mr Baghli was appointed Director of the National Museums of Algeria in 1964, and subsequently Curator and Director of Antiquities. He was a member of the Algerian Centre for Scientific Research from 1966 to 1976, and then Minister plenipotentiary to UNESCO in Paris from 1982 to 1985. From 1986 to 1997, Mr Baghli returned to Algeria to take up the post of Director of Cultural Heritage and Principal Secretary at the Ministry of Culture and National Education.
A member of ICOM since 1965, Sid Ahmed Baghli was involved in numerous ICOM activities, and contributed to strengthening ICOM, particularly in Arab and African countries. He participated in the revision of the *Statutes* in 1972, of the *Code of Professional Ethics* in 1974, and was elected on several occasions to the Executive Council. Highly committed to ICOM's work, Mr Baghli had the *Code of Professional Ethics* translated into Arabic, during his time as Chair of ICOM-Algeria, and was appointed onto the ICOM Ethics Committee in 1997. In 1998, he worked on the publication *History of ICOM 1946-1996* with his colleagues Patrick Boylan and Yani Herreman.
Jacques Perot, President of ICOM, stressed the respect which Mr Baghli's public-spirited approach generates, and how appreciated he is as a colleague for his courtesy and his famous sense of humour. Visibly moved, Sid Ahmed Baghli thanked the members of the General Assembly for the honour bestowed upon him, which crowns his services to the museum community and in defence of cultural heritage.

Saskia Brown,
Editor, *ICOM News*.