

RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED BY ICOM'S 1ST INTERIM CONFERENCE

Mexico City, Mexico
1947

1ST INTERIM CONFERENCE OF ICOM

Mexico City, 8 November 1947

Resolution No. 1

Resolved: That the ad hoc committee of the International Council of Museums, appointed to review the recommendations prepared by the Secretariat for submission to the Working Party on Museums of the Second Session of the General Conference of UNESCO (as contained in Documents 2C/25, 2C/26, 2C/27, and 2C/28) desires to suggest respectfully, in case it is consulted, that said recommendations be approved in principle by said Working Party with the proviso that priorities in respect thereto be established in the following order: (1) Exchange of information; (2) Exchange of personnel; (3) Exchange of material; it being understood that problems of museum reconstruction have general priority in any case.

Resolution No. 2

Resolved: That it be deemed a prime point that UNESCO must provide the Museum Section with a suitable professional staff to enable such Section to cope with the many problems involved and that, in case the International Council of Museums should be invited to assume any responsibilities in respect to the implementation of such a programme or any part thereof, said Council be supplied by grant or grants from UNESCO with sufficient funds to enable it to employ competent personnel of high professional quality to enable it adequately to discharge any responsibilities that may so be imposed upon it. ICOM on the other hand desires to assure the Working Party on Museums and the UNESCO staff that it desires to cooperate in every way possible within its means of voluntary cooperation to contribute toward the success of UNESCO's Museum programme.

Resolution No. 3

Resolved: That ICOM support strongly the project of the publication of a periodical defined in the letter from the Head of the Museum Section of UNESCO to the President of ICOM, under date of 31 October, 1947, provided that the subvention mentioned in the said letter be made for five years at a minimum, and be sufficiently large to permit the publication of the said periodical at a level which shall be considered worthy of

Resolution No. 4

Resolved: International Exchange of Objects should be encouraged in accordance with the following points:

1. We believe that it is of the greatest importance for every nation that the knowledge of the cultures of the various countries forming part of one world should be made more widely known; 2. By these means there will be a broader ground of mutual understanding, for through exchange of cultural knowledge there is a common ground for peace;

3. We believe that in the great museums of the various countries of the world there should be an adequate and significant representation of cultures of mankind;

4. We believe that each country through its museums should facilitate and implement by all means possible this interchange;

5. We believe that there are various ways of accomplishing this purpose:

a. Permanent loans,

b. Temporary loans,

c. Interchange of collections,

d. Purchase through legal means and where possible under scientific control;

6. We declare ourselves strongly opposed to the illegal excavation and exportation, without the authority of the State, of objects which are considered of primary importance and of specific and unique national interest;

7. We believe that scientific expeditions should be permitted under proper controls and that in that permission should be included the idea that there be as generous as possible distribution of the materials excavated under the legal controls of each nation;

8. For those countries which particularly wish to obtain casts or copies of significant objects, including scientific apparatus and items of historical value, we believe that every facility should be given to make this exchange or purchase;

9. We believe, given the difficulties of monetary exchange, that where possible this interchange be effected through international means;

10. We believe that first priority should be given for aid and interchange to those countries which have been devastated by war and to those countries which up to the present time have not had the facilities or opportunities to complete their universal collections.

Resolution No. 5

Resolved: That archaeological, artistic, historical and scientific objects properly classified as «unica» should be reproduced in some form and placed in safe keeping, for these reasons:

The war showed that the riches which make up the common patrimony of humanity are exposed to destruction. But it is not only war which threatens them so gravely. Fire (for example the destruction of the Library of Lima), earthquakes, disasters of all sorts could tomorrow annihilate unique treasures for which we are all accountable to posterity. Every unique object (books, scientific objects, works of art, archives) should be reproduced by photography, casts, microfilm, reprinting, facsimile, or other appropriate means and distributed throughout the world to make sure that, should the originals disappear, the men of tomorrow shall not be deprived of the irreplaceable documents. If one had not had the cast of the Sinanthropus or Pekin skull, this document, essential for the history of the origin of man, would at present be lost. Preserving such documents is our essential aim, and UNESCO should find means to have unica reproduced, either by direct action or by indirect action in the countries in possession of treasures indispensable to general culture.

Resolution No. 6

(Submitted by Mr McCurry on behalf of the National Gallery of Canada)

Whereas exhibitions in public museums are among the most effective means of achieving fundamental education and education for international understanding, and are effective at all age levels and at all stages of mental development and,

Whereas the UN has specifically requested UNESCO to assist by all appropriate means in making the purposes of the UN and UNESCO more widely known, and Whereas the impact of visual presentation is the most immediate and the most lasting, and

Whereas this project can be implemented at once through existing experienced channels and at minimum of expense:

Therefore be it resolved that UNESCO be requested to stimulate the sponsoring and the organization through the facilities of ICOM of a series of appropriate exhibitions which would embrace museum material of all suitable types and which will include visual material suitable for all ages, especially in those countries hitherto insufficiently privileged in this respect.

Resolution No. 7

(Presented by Mr Marius Barbeau of Canada)

Resolved: That UNESCO take under consideration the project herewith brought forward by Canada: that means be sought to establish international archives of the voice, including native songs, dance and ritual melodies, linguistic and phonetic, for which there has been a need for many years by research students and artists. (This proposed project

is supported by the following scientific institutions: National Museum of Canada, International Folk Music Council (London), American Folklore Society (New York), the Archives of Folklore (Quebec).)

Resolution No. 8

(Submitted by the Committee on Training of Museum Personnel)

Whereas: The members of ICOM discussed the whole question concerning the training of personnel of museums, with a view to defining the task to be undertaken by the International Committee formed for this purpose, they consider this task as being of capital importance. Resolved: That the Committee be composed of representatives of different countries, charged with keeping the Section of Museums of UNESCO informed of its work, and that it present its first report at the General Conference of ICOM in 1948.

(ICOM would be happy if the section of Museums of UNESCO would take notice of the work of this Committee and take into consideration the work which it wishes to undertake in the same field.)

Resolution No. 9

(Submitted by Mr Gysin and referred to the Executive Committee for further study.)

a. The first, formulated by the section of Children's Museums of ICOM, concerns the organization of meetings of this section, the exhibitions that it plans, its budget and several related questions.

b. The second, a large document presented by the National Institute of Anthropology and History of the Mexican delegation to UNESCO, does not emanate from ICOM, but deserves deep study on the part of the Executive Committee.

Resolution No. 10

(Presented by Dr Paul Rivet)

Resolved: That ICOM suggest that UNESCO contribute by what means it has at its disposal--Press, lectures, radio broadcasts, etc.--to the creation in the world of public establishments consecrated to living science, to spread scientific culture and make known the importance of research and scientific discoveries and their results on human progress.

Resolution 11

(Presented by Dr Shaw)

It is urgent that technical museums of all kinds be inspired by the new museographical methods in order to bring life into collections which are often of incomparable richness but which are not displayed as they deserve.

Resolution No. 12

(Presented by Mr Locher)

Resolved: That the Secretariat of UNESCO be asked to publish, when

possible, a book on the needs of museums and galleries of art in the countries devastated by the war, drawn from studies made on the spot by groups of experts.

Resolution No. 13

(Presented by National Parks and other Nature Reserves)

Resolved: That the Executive Board of ICOM be requested to urge in every appropriate manner that favourable action be taken, by the General Conference of UNESCO now in session, on the following two proposals, they being included in «the programme of UNESCO for 1948», and being of primary importance to this committee of ICOM:

1. Stimulate Member States in an inquiry on national programmes and policies governing national parks, nature reserves, and, in general, the conservation of wild nature and landscape beauty, collecting information on successful experiences, with a view to a report to a future General Conference.

2. Sponsor an international technical conference on the protection of nature, with a view to recommendations, which a later General Conference would submit to Member States, aiming at protective legislation, fauna conventions, international agreements about migratory species, etc. (It is understood that these proposals are in accordance with the request of the International Conference on the Protection of Nature, held at Brunnen, in July 1947, under auspices of the Swiss League for the Protection of Nature, at which 24 countries were represented).

Resolution No. 14

Resolved: That the International Council of Museums does hereby tender its most heartfelt thanks to the Mexican Committee for International Cooperation Among Museums for the generous hospitality which the members of the Council have enjoyed during their stay in Mexico; and furthermore, be it

Resolved: That the Council respectfully requests that the Mexico Committee will convey to the Government and people of Mexico the gratitude which the members of the Council feel for the privilege of holding their Conference in a land of ancient and still continuing artistic splendour and among a people whose penetrating intelligence and unfailing sympathies have permanently enriched our memories and our hearts.