

RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED BY ICOM'S 13TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Mexico City, Mexico
1980

ICOM'S 13TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Mexico City, Mexico, 3 and 4 November 1980



Resolution No. 1: Museums and the World Heritage

Taking into consideration the inspiring lectures given by the keynote speakers, panellists and participants in the discussions on 27 October, and the increasingly recognized status of museums as institutions in the service of society and its development,

Recommends:

- a. That museums constantly identify the needs of society and develop their services accordingly;
- b. That museums ensure that their professional knowledge and important role in the protection of the natural environment be made known to those concerned with development planning;
- c. That museums, apart from preserving the objects of the past, also engage themselves in the preservation of contemporary material and the maintenance of traditional techniques;
- d. That museums as repositories of knowledge and techniques use these resources as a basis for providing necessary information for exhibitions to the local communities;
- e. That in view of the urgency of the situation, this General Assembly urges National Committees to approach their governments to provide adequate funds for the necessary research to prevent the extinction of the natural and cultural heritage.

Resolution No. 2: Museum Responsibilities Towards the Handicapped

Aware of the United Nations Organization's decision to declare 1981 as the International Year of Disabled Persons,

Recalling Article 27 (1) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which states: «Everyone has the right to freely participate in the cultural life of the community»,

Recommends:

- a. That museums of all kinds, as institutions serving society, should consider ways and means of making themselves accessible to handicapped people by providing facilities and creating job opportunities where possible;
- b. That they support the training and education of the handicapped;
- c. That they collect, document, and exhibit material relating to the handicapped as a contribution to the better understanding of the problems involved;
- d. That they should consider initiating programmes to integrate all groups of people in this work;
- e. That they grant free entrance to the handicapped.

Resolution No. 3: ICOM Policy

Recognizing the international, non-governmental and professional character of ICOM (as defined in Article 6 of the Statutes and in Section III of the Rules of ICOM) and the need to provide for the development of museums and museum personnel,

It is recommended that:

- a. The theoretical, practical, and ethical aspects of museum work be studied within the framework of ICOM's International Committees and Affiliated Organizations to ensure continued professional development and that the resulting information be disseminated between Committees and to the museum community at large;
- b. Opportunities be found to apply museum philosophy and practice through the realization of museum projects and professional assistance involving ICOM members;
- c. A projects unit be developed to undertake ICOM's museum projects and professional assistance programme.

Resolution No. 4: National Heritage

Taking into account the growing national and international feeling that the cultural heritage is an essential element of identity for a given community, for a nation, and for a people,

Acknowledging UNESCO's efforts in favour of the return of cultural property,

Requests all museum professionals to urge their governing bodies to consider the return of cultural objects to their places of origin,

Recognizing the need to reinforce all measures for the protection of

the national heritage, particularly with a view to curbing illicit traffic in cultural objects,

Urges all museums to assist ICOM and UNESCO by documenting their acquisitions especially in cases of foreign origin,

Requests that all efforts be made at the governmental level to create and support professional training in the various museum fields, by means of setting up the appropriate structures, and developing courses, internships, and in-service training activities, and to this end calls on UNESCO to ensure the financial means as a necessary pre-condition for this work, particularly in developing countries,

Endorses policies of documentation of national heritage through inventorying and cataloguing of the collections existing in a given country and abroad, and finally,

Urges all governments to effectively protect the national heritage by passing appropriate legislation, ratifying international conventions, and taking into account the relevant recommendations passed by UNESCO and, in particular, by establishing and permanently applying efficient measures at the technical, administrative, customs, and police levels.

Resolution No. 5: Training of Personnel

Recognizing for the future of museums the necessity of ensuring basic, interdisciplinary museological training at all levels,

Aware, in particular, of the slow development of certain countries in the field of training of personnel,

Recommends earnestly to UNESCO to give priority to the training of museum personnel at the regional level in its programme,

Invites all ICOM National Committees, governments, and UNESCO Member States, to facilitate cultural exchange and to further the organization of training programmes,

Requests ICOM to compile a directory of training centres, museology courses, and museums willing to accept trainees and to participate in exchanges in the field of museology.

Resolution No. 6: Conservation Responsibilities of Museum Staff

Considering that the conservation of the natural and cultural heritage has to be supported by a strong current of favourable public opinion,

Aware that critical interest in all aspects of the theory and practice of conservation can be developed by providing adequate information to the public,

Recognizing the principle that the processes of conservation and restoration are not merely of a technical nature but that they must also involve constant analysis and documentation in the fields of art and

history throughout the whole period of treatment of a given object,

Noting the professionalism of museum conservators and restorers, the need for adequate teamwork with curators and specialists in related academic disciplines, and the importance of the conditions of equipment and privacy in which conservation work must be carried out,

Knowing that conservation is a permanent process,

Stresses the need for continuous inspection of the museum collections at regular intervals, and for reporting on the results of such inspections to the appropriate authorities,

Noting and regretting the threats to the professional freedom of museum curators, conservators, and restorers represented by the pressures exerted by public powers in repeated cases of temporary or long-term loans and transfers of cultural objects,

Reaffirms that the independence of the museum profession is a necessary guarantee for the conservation of the natural and cultural heritage.