

# **RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED BY ICOM'S 14<sup>TH</sup> GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

London, United Kingdom  
1983

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London, UK, 1 & 2 August 1983



## **Resolution No. 1: Museums for a Developing World**

Emphasizing the relevance and contribution of museums in a rapidly developing world as they respond to social and economic changes;

Recommends that museums:

- a. Develop strategies to ensure that contemporary material culture in all parts of the world is collected and recorded for the benefit of future generations;
- b. Continue to maintain and develop professional standards commensurate with their responsibilities in preserving the cultural heritage and providing public services;
- c. Respond to the increasing need for the closest collaboration between museum professionals concerned with collections and their utilisation in providing effective museum services;
- d. Encourage research in association with appropriate agencies, to provide a better understanding of the positive role of museums in contemporary society and in the future.

## **Resolution No. 2: Museums and Development**

Recognizing that true development can only take place through an improvement in the quality of life, hence of the cultural dimension in each society, rooted in the cultural identity of each people,

Underlining that museums are the repositories of that cultural identity and the principal agents contributing to its understanding, protection and renewal,

Stressing that museums contribute also to the peaceful evolution of nations within the security provided by the comprehension of their own culture as well as that of others and to the assimilation of change by society,

Recognizing therefore that museums can make an important contribution to development,

Noting however that in low-income countries there is an average of only one museum per 3 million inhabitants, a ratio which is one-hundredth of that of industrialized countries,

Deeply concerned by this current situation,

Urges the national authorities in each country as well as the international community, and in particular the international and regional development agencies, to consider within their development programmes and budgets increased support for the establishment and strengthening of museums as essential to the well-being of their communities.

### **Resolution No. 3: Inequality of Museum Provision**

Recalling that a museum is an institution in the service of society and its development, as stated in the ICOM Statutes, and that as a consequence exists to serve the community at large,

Recognizing that the majority of regional ethnic groups all over the world, and many minority groups in developed countries, do not have museums relevant to their group or community in their neighbourhood,

Noting that although the support and further development of both existing and new national, regional and specialized museums is vital, such museums, often located in national or regional capitals, may not be able to meet fully the specific needs of local communities,

Recommends that in view of the importance of museums to society, every effort should be made by the competent authorities in each country, region or local community to develop appropriate museums specifically planned to serve both rural and urban populations deprived of adequate access to the cultural and educational benefits of museums.

### **Resolution No. 4: Illicit Trafficking in Cultural Property**

Recalling the Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property adopted by the General Conference of UNESCO at its sixteenth session in Paris, 1970,

Welcoming the recent decisions of certain industrialized nations with a significant volume of trade in cultural property to pass legislation to prevent illicit trafficking in their countries,

Noting with concern that the illicit trafficking in cultural property continues,

Urges all ICOM members to:

a. Encourage their governments to ratify this Convention where this has

not already occurred;

b. Adopt national codes of ethics concerning the acquisition of cultural property;

c. Refrain from acquiring items for which there is no export licence or other evidence of legal exportation;

d. Report to the proper authorities in the country concerned any offer of foreign material for which evidence of legal exportation is not available.

Further requests UNESCO to encourage the harmonization of legislation of its Member States on a regional basis and to insure that the cultural heritage of contiguous states be mutually respected, noting particularly the success of the San Salvador Convention in Latin America.

### **Resolution No. 5: Return of Cultural Property to its Countries of Origin**

Acknowledging the positive results achieved during the past triennial period, through professional and institutional cooperation between museums, in promoting the return of cultural property to its countries of origin,

Noting with satisfaction that the initial distrust shown in certain countries with regard to the intentions and extent of the return of cultural property is disappearing and that, in the majority of cases, returns effected during the past three years were not motivated by political circumstances but responded rather to considerations of a moral, cultural and scientific nature,

Recognizing that the cultural heritage is an essential element of identity for a given community,

Noting that, in order to fulfil the moral rights of people to recover significant elements of their heritage dispersed as a consequence of colonial or foreign occupation, it is necessary to pursue the professional efforts at the international level,

Decides that ICOM shall continue to:

a. Support actively, in an advisory capacity, the UNESCO Intergovernmental Committee for the Return of Cultural Property to Its Countries of Origin or Its Restitution in Case of Illicit Appropriation;

b. Undertake studies to evaluate the needs of countries having lost a significant part of their respective heritages;

c. Assist in the preparation of inventories of cultural property at the national and regional levels, and

d. Provide scientific data and information to all interested parties,

Urges ICOM members, both at the individual and institutional levels, to initiate dialogues with an open-minded attitude, on the basis of professional and scientific principles, concerning requests for the return of cultural property to the countries of origin,

Calls attention to the fact that many countries wishing to recover a significant part of their lost heritage need the assistance of the international community (through UNESCO, development agencies, bi-lateral or multi-lateral cooperation schemes, etc.) in order to improve or to build adequate human and technical resources and museum infrastructures.

## **Resolution No. 6: Career Development and Management Training**

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

Noting the particular need for the development of advanced training programmes in museum policy and management for museum directors and senior staff,

Stressing the need for the career development of museum staff at all levels, and acknowledging the significance of training as a sign of sound professionalism,

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

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

## **Resolution No. 7: Museum Development in Africa**

Taking into consideration the conclusions and recommendations formulated by the participants at the meetings of the African National Committees of ICOM held during the General Conference,

Underlining the importance for ICOM to count on the presence of its African members on the various bodies of the Organization, and in particular in the Executive Council,

Expressing its satisfaction at the establishment of the Regional Training Centre in Niamey, Niger, and requesting that UNESCO will provide increased support for its activities in the future,

Regretting however, that a similar training centre does not yet exist in East Africa, in response to the needs existing in that sub-region,

Stressing the urgency of undertaking the evaluation of the African museum needs in the fields of conservation and presentation of cultural heritage,

Recommends to UNESCO, ICCROM and other international and regional organizations to consider in their programmes:

a. To give special attention to the training of museum personnel in Africa, including exhibit designers and craftsmen employed by museums, and the creation of additional training centres with the highest priorities given to East Africa;

b. The organization, on an annual basis, of sub-regional conservation workshops with the assistance of the International Committee for Conservation;

c. The exchange of exhibitions between countries in the region and with countries in other parts of the world.

### **Resolution No. 8: Cultural Heritage in Occupied Countries**

Deeply concerned by the statements made by several participants about the situation of the cultural heritage in countries which are at present under foreign or colonial occupation,

Reminding the governmental authorities involved of their obligation to ensure the preservation of the national heritage and to respect its integrity, as required in the Final Act of the Inter-governmental Conference on the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict (The Hague, 1954), and by the moral principles accepted by the international community,

Decides as a priority to put at the disposal of the museum professional in the occupied countries all the technical resources of ICOM, in order to contribute to the preservation of such cultural heritage for their legitimate owners,

Requests that museums abstain from purchasing cultural objects from occupied countries, which in most cases will have been illegally exported or illicitly removed by the occupying power,

Finally requests ICOM members to report to the authorities cases of illicit traffic in cultural objects from occupied countries that may eventually be known to them.