

# **RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED BY ICOM'S 15<sup>TH</sup> GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

Buenos Aires, Argentina  
1986

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Buenos Aires, Argentina, 4 November 1986



## **Resolution 1: The Contribution of Cultural Exchange to Mutual Understanding Among Peoples**

Recognizing the effect that mankind can have in all its actions on the preservation or destruction of the cultural and natural heritage,

Appreciating the concerns of all members regarding the preservation of the cultural and natural heritage,

The 15th General Assembly of ICOM, meeting in Buenos Aires, Argentina, on 4 November 1986,

Recommends the reaffirmation of Resolution No. 1 of the 12th General Assembly of ICOM, Moscow, 28 May 1977, which inter alia recognized «that cultural exchanges among nations in all areas improve their mutual understanding and cooperation and contribute to international détente and to the strengthening of peace...»

## **Resolution 2: The Future of Our Cultural Heritage: Emergency Call**

Noting that all of mankind's cultural material heritage is in great danger, threatened by negligence, inadequate maintenance, natural decay and acute lack of any preservation treatment and preventive care,

Recognizing that only a coherent preservation policy on all levels can provide the necessary remedies,

The 15th General Assembly of ICOM, meeting in Buenos Aires, Argentina on 4 November 1986,

1. Calls on local, national and international authorities to give the highest priority to the preservation of the cultural material heritage;
2. Recommends appropriate education and advanced training of all personnel concerned with these endeavours;
3. Recommends that education authorities develop curricula at all levels

of education with a view to fostering appreciation of the cultural heritage;

4. Encourages all related professions in fields such as architecture, anthropology, archaeology, art history, etc., to formally recognize that no training in these disciplines be considered complete without at least an introduction to the basic principles of conservation, not in the sense of conservation practice, but with the aim of generating an awareness and understanding of conservation and its importance to other disciplines;

5. Recommends as the highest priority the creation and promotion of conservation centres, workshops, information networks, and international conservation organizations as well as a network of assistance for disasters;

6. Recommends that conservators and other related specialists be involved at every stage of planning and construction of exhibit facilities, storage space, and during archaeological excavations.

### **Resolution No. 3: The Threat to Our Natural Heritage**

Whereas there is a grave and immediate threat of the loss of a great proportion of our people's natural heritage through the rapid destruction and degradation of our natural environment, particularly in those regions of the world that have not yet been significantly altered, and

Whereas the quality of life of all peoples is reduced and endangered by the continuing indiscriminate and unplanned elimination of great numbers of plant and animal species, and

Whereas little is known even today of the great majority of plant and animal species with which we share this globe, and

Whereas the responsibility for discovering, describing, and preserving examples of this biological diversity rests today almost exclusively with the world's natural history museums and their scientific personnel,

and

Whereas the university training of young scientists has changed focus so that the number of those who are able to understand and record this diversity of life has rapidly declined in the past decade,

Therefore this, the 15th General Assembly of ICOM, meeting in Buenos Aires, Argentina, on 4 November 1986,

Urges natural history museums and zoological and botanical gardens and nature reserves throughout the world to work together and with both public and private entities to train young scientists in the essential research of documenting the earth's biological diversity and to develop mechanisms for preserving sufficient habitats for this diversity to continue to exist and flourish for future generations.

## **Resolution No. 4: ICOM News**

The 15th General Assembly of ICOM, meeting in Buenos Aires, Argentina, on 4 November 1986,

Considering the important work carried out by ICOM News as a vehicle of information among the members of Latin America and the Caribbean, Commends its publication, and

Supports its continuation as an effective means of communication.

## **Resolution No. 5: Cooperation with regional organizations**

Recognizing the significant role played by regional organizations such as the Organization of Museums, Monuments and Sites of Africa (OMMSA) in promoting the goals of ICOM,

The 15th General Assembly of ICOM, meeting in Buenos Aires, Argentina, on 4 November 1986,

Commends the work of these organizations, and

Invites the Secretary General to cooperate with and assist them in any way that he can.

## **Resolution No. 6: Need for Professional Training**

Considering the urgent need for the professionalizing and future development of museums, and for the more effective training of museum personnel at all levels as an essential factor in the protection of the cultural and natural heritage,

The 15th General Assembly of ICOM, meeting in Buenos Aires, Argentina, on 4 November 1986,

Requests that steps be taken by ICOM:

1. To identify the specific needs and priorities for museum training in the different regions of the world;
2. To publish a further edition of the international directory of training programmes Museum Studies International;
3. To encourage and assist the establishment of necessary solutions to the identified training needs at a local national and international level, particularly through the development of international cooperation in the establishment of new training facilities and increasing the support for existing regional and national centres;
4. To encourage and assist in the development of training courses, conferences and exchanges for teachers of museology and specialized skills.

## **Resolution No. 7: Documentation of Museum Collections**

Recognizing that in many cases the history of nations and peoples is best represented by objects in museums,

Considering that proper documentation of museum objects is an essential element in safeguarding them,

The 15th General Assembly of ICOM, meeting in Buenos Aires, Argentina, on 4 November 1986,

Urges all museums to improve the quality of the documentation of their collections in order to help prevent losses by theft and the illegal export of stolen museum objects.

## **Resolution No. 8: Participation in ICOM by Members from Developing Countries**

Welcoming the increasing interest shown by museum professionals from developing countries in participating in the work of ICOM,

Noting the increased level of participation by members of ICOM from the countries of Latin America in the ICOM 14th General Conference and 15th General Assembly, held in Buenos Aires, Argentina, from 26 October to 4 November 1986,

Recognizing that members of ICOM from countries outside Europe and North America do not generally have the opportunity to participate fully in the work of ICOM and its Committees because of the high costs of doing so, through problems of currency exchange and as a result of the economic problems in many countries,

Aware that the Statutes of ICOM limit the official languages of ICOM to English and French, thereby limiting the opportunities for effective participation in ICOM by many members who do not use those languages,

and

Conscious of the fact that, partly as a result of these factors, museum professionals from developing countries have not been adequately represented on the Governing Bodies of ICOM, in particular the Executive Council,

Being aware of the severe budgetary problems presently confronting ICOM,

The 15th General Assembly of ICOM, meeting in Buenos Aires, Argentina, on 4 November 1986,

Resolves to request the Executive Council and the Advisory Committee, in accordance with the latter's responsibility to consider and advise on all important projects concerning the functioning of ICOM:

1. To examine ways and means of increasing the opportunities for members from developing countries to participate in future General Conferences, General Assemblies, meetings of International Committees and meetings of the Advisory Committee, and/or explore ways and means whereby meetings of International Committees could be organized in developing countries without, as far as possible, putting financial burdens on such countries;
2. To consider ways of reducing the difficulties experienced by members in countries with currency controls and exchange rate problems in meeting the costs of ICOM membership;
3. To consider means of increasing the capacity of ICOM to provide services to members in languages other than French and English;
4. To explore the possibility of providing further technical and institutional support to developing countries, in particular those of Africa, in accordance with ICOM's regional policies; and
5. To consider ways that will help to ensure more adequate representation of members from developing countries and from the various regions on the Executive Council of ICOM,

Having regard in each case for the need to balance the budget of ICOM and to reduce the accumulated deficit.

### **Resolution No. 9: Emergency Call for Education and Cultural Action**

Recognizing the necessity of museum education to guarantee public understanding of and support for the future conservation of our cultural and material heritage,

The 15th General Assembly of ICOM, meeting in Buenos Aires, Argentina, on 4 November 1986,

Recommends that museums:

1. Establish and maintain museum education services for their communities, and
2. Directly involve the community in the research into and interpretation of cultural heritage.

### **Resolution No. 10: Need to Provide Facilities to Protect Cultural Property**

Considering that the rapid development of contemporary society results in an unpredictable and unprecedented number of objects entering museums, particularly in the field of archaeology on the one hand, and from everyday life of the 19th and 20th centuries on the other hand,

Aware that museums are not usually able to fulfil their duty in this

respect,

Given that the objects concerned, when they are little or badly cared for, become destroyed and that, consequently, these witnesses of cultural identity are irretrievably lost,

The 15th General Assembly of ICOM, meeting in Buenos Aires, Argentina, on 4 November 1986,

Requests the governing authorities to take appropriate steps to ensure the creation of the necessary conditions for the organization and equipment of museum laboratories and storage, and to encourage studies on this subject.

### **Resolution No. 11: Participation of Ethnic Groups in Museum Activities**

Whereas there are increasing concerns on the part of ethnic groups regarding the ways in which they and their cultures are portrayed in museum exhibitions and programmes,

The 15th General Assembly of ICOM, meeting in Buenos Aires, Argentina, on 4 November 1986,

Recommends that:

1. Museums which are engaged in activities relating to living ethnic groups, should, whenever possible, consult with the appropriate members of those groups, and
2. Such museums should avoid using ethnic materials in any way which might be detrimental to the group that produced them; their usage should be in keeping with the spirit of the ICOM Code of Professional Ethics, with particular reference to paragraphs 2.8 and 6.7.

### **Resolution No. 12: Inclusion of Spanish as a Working Language and a Language for ICOM Publications**

Considering that Spanish is the official language of a large number of member countries of the International Council of Museums and of others that will become members in the future,

Taking into account that those countries constitute a large percentage of members who would be able to understand each other in their own tongue, thus enhancing the flow of information concerning the cultural identity of peoples,

Convinced that this request would also contribute to the greater development of the work of ICOM,

Bearing in mind that the inclusion in ICOM of the Spanish language is an important and reiterated aspiration of the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean,

The 15th General Conference of ICOM, meeting in Buenos Aires, Argentina, on 4 November 1986,

Requests the Executive Council of ICOM to consider all possible measures for Spanish to be included as a working language and a language for ICOM publications.

### **Resolution No. 13: Resolution to Confirm the Adoption of the ICOM Code of Professional Ethics**

Noting:

1. That under the Statutes of ICOM, Article 5, respect for a fundamental code of professional ethics is part of the definition of the museum profession;
2. That a Draft Code of Professional Ethics (Document 86/AD.15) has been prepared by a sub-committee of the Advisory Committee, after a profound study of existing national, specialized, and other codes of museum ethics, and in consultation with all National and International Committees and with UNESCO, and has been endorsed by the Executive Council and the Advisory Committee;
3. That the Advisory Committee has unanimously recommended that the present Draft Code be adopted by the 15th General Assembly as the official policy of ICOM for the purposes of Articles 5 and 16 (c) of the Statutes;

This General Assembly resolves:

That the ICOM Code of Professional Ethics be approved and adopted by the 15th General Assembly of ICOM, meeting in Buenos Aires, Argentina, on 4 November 1986, as the official policy of ICOM and that it be disseminated as widely as possible, both amongst the membership of ICOM and throughout the world museum movement.