

RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED BY ICOM'S 20TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Barcelona, Spain
2001

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Barcelona, Spain, 6 July 2001



ICOM 2001 Barcelona

Resolution no. 1

Noting the changing methods for financing museums and the continuing drop in government support,

Considering the increasingly important role of the private sector and other non-governmental organisations in assuming responsibility for museums and in fostering different types of sponsorships and financial partnerships with museums,

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Requests the Executive Council to encourage governments to recognise these various partnerships and to seek standardisation on rules for tax deductions, thereby recognising, in each country, these generous actions to assist museums in accomplishing their mission in the service of society.

Resolution no. 2

Recognising that the primary responsibility of museums is the preservation of heritage and the fostering of public understanding of heritage, and that it is the duty of their governing authorities to identify the resources required for maintaining their responsibilities in this regard,

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Strongly supports government action to realise the greater financial and political autonomy of museums, and recommends that practical guidelines be developed to assure such autonomy without abrogating governments' responsibility for the continuation of these institutions which preserve heritage and foster public understanding of heritage.

Resolution no. 3

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Urges the Executive Council to continue to seek the best possible cooperation with all relevant organisations and agencies in the fight against the illicit traffic of cultural and natural property and in particular:

a) to compile a database of all national legislation in force since 1970 concerning the protection of cultural and natural property, to be readily available to members for consultation through the UNESCO-ICOM Information Centre. To facilitate this, translation of the texts into one or more of the official languages of ICOM should be provided;

b) to continue to seek the ways and means to prevent the transfer of illicitly acquired cultural or natural property across national borders by:

1) Encouraging nations to standardise their legislation on cultural and natural property protection on the basis of available international legislation;

2) Establishing the best ways and means of achieving this in discussion with Interpol, the World Customs Organisation and the diplomatic corps.

Resolution no. 4

Considering that the world's cultural and natural heritage, both movable and immovable, is fundamental to our cultural identity,

Recognising the significance of this heritage, its vulnerability, and the moral obligation to guarantee access to it for present and future generations,

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Urges ICOM to stimulate the dissemination of information on the fragility of our heritage and activities which promote public awareness of conservation activities.

Resolution no. 5

Considering the quality of Museum International and its importance for the museum community,

Noting that this publication is an indispensable tool for the work of museum professionals in their various fields,

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Urges UNESCO to continue the financing and publication of Museum International in all official languages of ICOM, and to publish other language versions as possible.

Resolution no. 6

Recalling the commitment of ICOM to the need to reflect and sustain cultural diversity through museums and their collections,

Noting that many countries in the 21st Century comprise a diversity of cultures which co-exist in harmony within a unitary nation,

Recognising the fundamental right of peoples to sustain their own culture through democratic processes of self-determination,

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1. Regrets the serious damage to the Museum of East Timor and the disappearance of important cultural collections due to civil disorder;
2. Calls on the international museum community to provide all possible assistance in the reconstruction of the Museum, the return of missing collections, the conservation and documentation of existing and new collections and the training of museum personnel.

Resolution no. 7

Noting that for more than half a century, free trade negotiations have upheld the cultural exception principle intended to protect the national natural and cultural heritage from the effects of the elimination of barriers to trade,

Recognising that this cultural exception has made possible the adoption and enforcement of national natural and cultural heritage protection laws, international Conventions, Protocols and other measures,

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Calls on UNESCO, regional and national organisations, governments and the World Trade Organisation to oppose vigorously any proposal to abolish or weaken the long-established cultural exception, in order to continue to protect the significant cultural and natural heritage of the various nations of the world.

Resolution no. 8

Aware that the Nazi regime, in power from 1933 to 1945, orchestrated and enabled during the implementation of the Holocaust, the misappropriation of art and other cultural property through means such as theft, confiscation, coercive transfer, looting and pillage,

Acknowledging that despite efforts following World War II to undertake restitution of misappropriated property, many objects were never

returned to their original owners or legal successors,

Concerned that such objects may have subsequently come into the custody of museums,

Recalling ICOM's Recommendations Concerning the Return of Works of Art Belonging to Jewish Owners issued by the Executive Council in December 1998,

Noting that museum professionals, other individuals and organisations have gathered to establish international principles for addressing the problem of misappropriated objects, such as those contained in the Washington Conference Principles on Nazi-Confiscated Art, December 1998, the Vilnius Forum Declaration, October 2000, and the American Association of Museums' Guidelines Concerning the Unlawful Appropriation of Objects during the Nazi Era, April 2001,

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Urges all museums to encourage action by their national governments to ensure full implementation of the provisions of such documents, which establish international principles for addressing the problem of misappropriated objects.