

RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED BY ICOM'S 25TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Shanghai, China
2010

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Resolution 1: Shanghai Declaration on Museums for Harmonious Social Development

Underlining the theme of the 'ICOM 2010' General Conference in Shanghai, Museums for Social Harmony, as a profound and resonant concept for global society;

Recalling the crucial change in ICOM's international definition of museums in 1974, introducing for the first time a clear statement of museums' social purpose: that museums exist 'in the service of society and its development';

Noting that the concept of 'society' itself has undergone transformation in the decades since ICOM profiled museums' social responsibilities – and that all modern societies today are increasingly challenged by far-reaching changes internally and in their relations with the world, where values and ideas about future development are evolving dynamically in an ever more pluralistic environment;

Affirming the enlarged ethical responsibilities of museums, as set out under eight broad principles in the ICOM Code of Ethics for Museums (2004), which includes the following statements:

(Principle 1) Museums preserve, interpret and promote the natural and cultural inheritance of humanity.

(Principle 4) Museums provide opportunities for the appreciation, understanding and management of the natural and cultural heritage.

(Principle 5) Museums hold resources that provide opportunities for other public services and benefits.

(Principle 6) Museums work in close collaboration with the communities from which their collections originate as well as those they serve.

Reaffirming the frameworks of the 1995 and 2000 UNESCO publications, Our Creative Diversity and the World Culture Report 2000, the breadth and pluralism of their vision of culture and ongoing work that promotes

the indivisible connections between biodiversity and cultural diversity between tangible and intangible heritage;

Fostering recognition and respect for diverse social and cultural practices, to build strong societies that include persons and groups from varied backgrounds;

Promoting openness, freedom of thought, conscience and belief, and wide access to knowledge generated by museums for all;

Celebrating the increasingly important and reflexive roles that museums play today in international affairs, including as ambassadors for intercultural awareness and informed relations between nations;

Warning that the positive recognition of difference and experience of intercultural communication with others cannot be passively assumed, but must be actively promoted by museums in their engagement with diverse audiences, to achieve greatest benefits to civil society in a global age;

Emphasising the growing need for museums to develop skills, capabilities and new models of collaboration to provide a structured platform for interactions between different peoples, cultures and forms of knowledge;

Members of the international museums community and ICOM delegates gathered in Shanghai for 'ICOM 2010' declare the important value of museums as agents for harmonious social development, in which individuals and diverse groups participate freely and actively – through museums' preservation and projection of the varied environments, histories and achievements that human beings share, affirming humankind's unique and irreplaceable legacy for future generations.

Resolution 2: ICOM Cultural Diversity Charter

As an integral part of the outcomes of the activities of 2010 — The International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures, The International Year of Biodiversity, and The International Year of Youth: Dialogue and Mutual Understanding — the ICOM Cross Cultural Task Force recommends that consistent with the 1998 Cultural Diversity Policy Framework of ICOM, and in continuing to address the wide range of issues with cross cultural dimensions through intercultural and intergenerational dialogue and in developing inclusive approaches and guidelines for how museums should endeavour to deal with cultural diversity and biodiversity, that the 25th General Assembly of the International Council of Museums meeting on 12 November 2010 in Shanghai, China, adopted the following set of principles as the ICOM Cultural Diversity Charter:

1. **DIVERSITY:** To recognise and affirm all forms of cultural diversity and biological diversity at local, regional and international levels, and to reflect this diversity in all policies and programmes of museums across the world.

2. **PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY:** To promote enabling and empowering frameworks for active inputs from all stakeholders, community groups, cultural institutions and official agencies through appropriate processes of consultation, negotiation and participation, ensuring the ownership of the processes as the defining element.
3. **COOPERATION AND COORDINATION:** To cooperate and coordinate in sharing projects and enhancing professional exchanges so as to maximise resources and expertise at regional and global levels.
4. **PEACE AND COMMUNITY BUILDING:** To promote the sense of place and identity of diverse peoples through appreciating their multiple inheritances – natural and cultural, tangible and intangible, movable and immovable – and fostering a shared vision inspired by the spirit of reconciliation through intercultural and intergenerational dialogue.
5. **INNOVATION AND INSPIRATION:** To foster creativity and to develop challenging approaches to stimulate inclusive heritage consciousness in culturally and linguistically diverse museum contexts.
6. **CAPACITY BUILDING:** To make directed and sustained endeavours to increase the operational capacity of museums to respond with vigour and insight to transformation and change in culturally and linguistically diverse societies.
7. **PRODUCTIVE DIVERSITY:** To maximise approaches that will encourage the diversification of resources to address and reconcile the competing demands of cultural diversity and biodiversity with economic imperatives.
8. **STANDARD SETTING:** To discuss and debate various UN and UNESCO international heritage law instruments, both soft law recommendations, charters and declarations and hard law conventions and treaties, providing strategic professional leadership, especially with reference to the cultural suite of international legal instruments.
9. **SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE:** To locate culture as the fourth pillar along with economic, social and environmental sustainability and to address the cultural and creative dimensions of climate change.
10. **DIGITAL DOMAIN:** To understand the differences between digitisation, digital access and digital heritage, to support digital access in all activities, and to recognise that digital access is not a substitute for return, restitution and repatriation.

Resolution 3: Inclusive Museum Knowledge Communities

As an integral part of the outcomes of the activities of 2010, International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures; and International Year of Youth – Dialogue and Mutual Understanding;

The ICOM Cross Cultural Task Force recommends that building on the

1998 Cultural Diversity Policy Framework of ICOM and continuing to address the wide range of issues with cross cultural dimensions through intercultural and intergenerational dialogue; developing inclusive approaches and guidelines concerning the way that museums should endeavour to deal with cultural diversity;

That the 25th General Assembly of the International Council of Museums meeting in November 2010 in Shanghai, China, support continued participation of ICOM in the Inclusive Museum Knowledge Community beyond 2011, so that the Inclusive Museum Knowledge Community could become a valuable resource for the museum and the wider heritage community.

Resolution 4: Promoting Community Museums

Bearing in mind the importance of museums in promoting harmony, mutual understanding and exchanges between communities locally, regionally and nationally;

Recognising that museums can contribute to breaking down barriers between people and communities and to promoting respect and understanding and tolerance of social and ethnic diversity and the preservation of human rights;

The General Assembly commends the creation of appropriate museums intended to preserve and reflect the varied heritages of different communities.

Resolution 5: Museums and Cultural Tourism

Conscious that museums play an important role in the promotion of cultural tourism;

Noting the fact that museum collections contain objects of great artistic and heritage value;

The General Assembly commends all appropriate museum initiatives which make museums more attractive to the public and which enhance their ability to contribute to education, in search of training, cultural understanding and preservation;

The General Assembly encourages the integration of museums into national development programmes through the promotion of appropriate cultural tourism.

Resolution 6: Heritage and Legacy

Recalling that the cultural heritage of the world is important for mutual understanding between peoples;

Noting that our cultural heritage is vulnerable to many threats and that its protection demands united efforts informed by professional experience and by continuing research and development in conservation

and in documentation of heritage objects and monuments;

Considering the vital importance of continual improvement in public access and presentation;

The General Assembly notes that amongst ICOM's most pressing tasks are

Sustainable development of museums;

Support for dialogue amongst museum professionals and the museum public internationally;

Support for all forms of positive and respectful cooperation with the various social, ethnic and confessional communities of museum stakeholders nationally and internationally with a view to promoting and preserving our common cultural heritage and passing it on as legacy to future generations.

Resolution 7: Clarification of Conservation Terminology

The General Assembly welcomes and endorses the clarification and definition of conservation terminology including “preventive conservation”, “remedial conservation” and “restoration” as the preferred terms characterising the various forms of action to conserve tangible cultural heritage which were adopted by ICOM-CC at its 15th Triennial Conference in New Delhi 22-26 September 2008. The terms are defined as follows:

Conservation – all measures and actions aimed at safeguarding tangible cultural heritage while ensuring its accessibility to present and future generations. Conservation embraces preventive conservation, remedial conservation and restoration. All measures and actions should respect the significance and the physical properties of the cultural heritage item.

- Preventive conservation – all measures and actions aimed at avoiding and minimizing future deterioration or loss. They are carried out within the context or on the surroundings of an item, but more often a group of items, whatever their age and condition. These measures and actions are indirect – they do not interfere with the materials and structures of the items. They do not modify their appearance.

Examples of preventive conservation are appropriate measures and actions for registration, storage, handling, packing and transportation, security, environmental management (light, humidity, pollution and pest control), emergency planning, education of staff, public awareness, legal compliance.

- Remedial conservation – all actions directly applied to an item or a group of items aimed at arresting current damaging processes or reinforcing their structure. These actions are only carried out when the items are in such a fragile condition or deteriorating at such a rate, that they could be lost in a relatively short time. These actions sometimes modify the appearance of the items.

Examples of remedial conservation are disinfection of textiles, desalination of ceramics, de-acidification of paper, dehydration of wet archaeological materials, stabilization of corroded metals, consolidation of mural paintings, removing weeds from mosaics.

- Restoration – all actions directly applied to a single and stable item aimed at facilitating its appreciation, understanding and use. These actions are only carried out when the item has lost part of its significance or function through past alteration or deterioration. They are based on respect for the original material. Most often such actions modify the appearance of the item.

Examples of restoration are retouching a painting, reassembling a broken sculpture, reshaping a basket, filling losses on a glass vessel.

Conservation measures and actions can sometimes serve more than one aim. For instance varnish removal can be both restoration and remedial conservation. The application of protective coatings can be both restoration and preventive conservation. Reburial of mosaics can be both preventive and remedial conservation.

Conservation is complex and demands the collaboration of relevant qualified professionals. In particular, any project involving direct actions on the cultural heritage requires a conservator-restorer (ref. ICOM-CC definition of the profession, Copenhagen, 1984, and the ICOM Code of Ethics for Museums).

Resolution 8: Professional Development for Future Museum Personnel

Whereas CIPEG has recognised that many students no longer receive object- and materials-based training in Egyptology and consequently do not have an appropriate professional knowledge to enable them to work in museums with ancient Egyptian collections and that this tendency has been identified in many other museum-relevant disciplines from the sciences to art-history;

Accordingly the General Assembly resolves to urge ICOM members and supporters to appeal to their university colleagues and those in other appropriate institutes and organisations to intensify art-historical and objects-focused teaching as an essential part of the curriculum for the relevant sciences, social sciences and humanities disciplines.

Resolution 9: Continuous Professional Development for Museum Personnel

Bearing in mind the ICOM Code of Ethics 2006, Section 1.15 and ICOM Statutes Article 2, Section 2, The General Assembly resolves that as museums evolve as institutions, driven by ideas of sustainability and social inclusion, continuing education and professional development assume even greater importance. During the joint annual conference of ICR and ICTOP in Mantova (Italy) from the 18 to the 24 October 2009, this position was supported in presentations and discussions. Therefore, the

General Assembly urges its members to include training for all museum personnel in all strategic and, where relevant, operational plans.

Resolution 10: Partnerships for Capacity Building

Noting that the limited means, infrastructure and staffing of Arab and African museums prevent the accomplishment of their missions;

The General Assembly resolves that ICOM shall establish effective partnerships between museums from developed countries and those from developing countries, in order to permit the latter to benefit from the expertise of the former, by means of:

The organisation of training programmes in conservation, documentation, and digitisation of collections;

The encouragement of the holding of specialist meetings on museum management, in order to facilitate communication and sharing of knowledge, as well as the transfer of technologies to museums in developing countries;

Training in the sourcing of financial and in-kind support.

Resolution 11: Flow of Information and Opinion within ICOM

Bearing in mind the importance of the free flow of information and debate within ICOM, the General Assembly resolves to maintain ICOM-L as a free and open discussion list for all matters relating to ICOM and the museum community and further resolves to promote the exchange of ideas, encourage the membership to participate in such exchanges, and resolves to facilitate the flow of knowledge and ideas within the organization.

Resolution 12: Working Papers for General Assembly, Executive Council and Advisory Committee

Noting the necessity for time to read and analyse working papers for, and draft minutes of, meetings of the General Assembly, Executive Council and Advisory Committee, the General Assembly resolves that a clear and unambiguous time limit of one month be fixed and enforced for working papers as well as for minutes and lists of decisions.

Resolution 13: Role and Impact of International Committees

Bearing in mind the importance of the work of the International Committees for the achievement of ICOM's Strategic objectives for the enhancement of professional practice and exchange of information, the General Assembly resolves:

To encourage improved communication by and about the International

Committees;

To recommend to the Executive Council and Advisory Committee the establishment of an Open Forum on the International Committees at the time of the annual meeting of the Advisory Committee and at the Triennial Conference to promote the work of the International Committees and to answer the questions of ICOM members and receive feedback about their activities;

To recommend the use of the ICOM Website and ICOM News to publicise the work of the International Committees;

That an evaluation of the Standing Committee on International Committees be undertaken with a view to including in its mandate the improvement of its support for the work of the International Committees;

Resolution 14: Disaster Relief Programme

The General Assembly strengthen ICOM's commitment to assisting museums and heritage institutions facing the consequences of natural and man-made disasters.

Resolution 15: Heritage Restitution

Recalling that documents and objects have in the past been confiscated from colonised countries;

Noting that these documents and objects form an integral part of their historical heritage;

The General Assembly resolves to encourage all the parties concerned who are in dispute to enter into dialogue with a view to resolving the issues of restitution and draws attention to the ICOM Code of Ethics for Museums and to ICOM's adherence to International conventions governing such matters.