



Protecting the World's Cultural Heritage in Times of Change:
Emergency Preparedness and Response

Paris, 6th December 2011

PRESS RELEASE

First International Conference of the International Committee of the Blue Shield

An active collaboration between ICOM and its partners,
the first ICBS international conference on the theme
*Protecting the World's Cultural Heritage in Times of Change:
Emergency Preparedness and Response*

The International Council of Museums is pleased to announce the first International Conference of the International Committee of the Blue Shield (ICBS), held **in Seoul, South Korea, from 8 to 10 December 2011** and hosted by the National Museum of Korea.

Established in 1996, ICBS gathers five international heritage organizations: the International Council on Archives (ICA), the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA), the Coordinating Council of Audiovisual Archives Associations (CCAAA), the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) and the International Council of Museums (ICOM), whose Director General, Julien Anfruns, is currently the President of the committee. Together, these organizations work to improve the means and methods of strengthening heritage protection in crisis situations following natural disasters, armed conflict or periods of political instability. As a leading heritage organisation in this area, ICBS has been formally granted an advisory capacity to the *Second Protocol to the Hague Convention of 1954 for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict 1999*.

This conference on the protection of cultural heritage is timely as the year 2011 will undoubtedly be remembered as a very challenging period for the protection of cultural heritage, as the world faced an unprecedented succession of natural and man-made disasters. The earthquake in Christchurch, the armed conflict in Côte d'Ivoire, the events that gave rise to 'The

Arab Spring' in Tunisia, Egypt, Yemen, Syria, and Libya, the tsunami in Japan, the earthquake in the Himalayas and Turkey, and the recent floods in Thailand have all put cultural heritage at great risk. This succession of events emphasised the urgent need for appropriate preparedness and response measures.

That is the reason why ICOM, with the help of the Ministry of Culture of Korea and the National Museum of Korea, organises the first International Conference of ICBS that will bring together professionals and experts in museology, documentation and in the protection and promotion of heritage and sites. The International Conference will also benefit from the valuable input and expertise of professionals in the military, humanitarian, meteorological and technological disciplines, thus feeling the paramount need for collaboration in the area of the protection of cultural heritage in emergency situations. The presence of UNITAR-UNOSAT, UNSIDR, the Red Cross, the Council of Europe and UNESCO will especially contribute to improve cross-sector knowledge, practices and collaboration in order to enhance the preservation and protection of the world's cultural heritage.

The theme of the Conference, *Protecting the World's Cultural Heritage in Times of Change: Emergency Preparedness and Response*, will be developed through diverse distinct topics:

- The impacts of natural disasters and environmental changes
- Protecting heritage during military conflicts and political crises
- Protecting cultural heritage through the recognition of its diversity
- New technologies, new risks, new responses
- Preparedness and response at the regional and local level
- Improving the protection of cultural heritage, a global approach

Participating experts, including keynote speaker Dr. Richard Kurin, Under Secretary for History, Art, and Culture, Smithsonian Institution, will discuss and share ideas and case studies on these issues central to the enhancement of the protection of cultural heritage and for effective response measures in emergency situation.

More information on:

<http://www.icbs2011seoul.org>

<http://icom.museum>

Press Contact

ICOM - Aurélie AUBOURG - Tél. + 33 1 47 34 91 63 – aurelie.aubourg@icom.museum
UNESCO House . 1, rue Miollis . 75732 Paris Cedex 15 . France - Tel. +33 1 47 34 05 00, Fax +33 1 43 06 78 62

National Museum of Korea – Ms Na-hyun RIM - annie1124@korea.kr
137 Seobinggo-ro, Yongsan-gu, Seoul, Korea 140-026 Tél. +82.2.2077.9302, Fax +82.2.2077.9345

ICOM in short

Created in 1946, ICOM (International Council of Museums) is an international non-governmental organisation maintaining formal relations with UNESCO. Within the United Nations, ICOM has a consultative status with the Economic and Social Council. ICOM is the only international organisation representing museums and museum professionals on a global level.

ICOM is:

- A diplomatic forum made up of representatives from 137 countries and territories
- Standards of excellence for museums including ethics (*ICOM Code of Ethics for Museums*)
- A unique international network of more than 30,000 museum professionals around the world
- A think-tank composed by 31 International Committees which represent museums' specialties
- Missions of international public service notably in the fight against illicit traffic of cultural property and emergency programmes in case of natural disasters or armed conflicts.

For all questions concerning the world museum community and for interview requests with ICOM's Director General, please contact the press office:

Press contact: Aurélie AUBOURG – Tel. + 33 1 47 34 91 63 – aurelie.aubourg@icom.museum