

ICOM-SA Newsletter No. 9, August 2016

ICOM celebrated its 70th birthday by adopting new statutes and branding at the General Assembly on 9 July 2016. ICOM-SA was represented at the conference by Bonginkosi Zuma, Catherine Snel, Beverley Thomas, Vicky Heunis and Helene Vollgraaff. In addition, Bonginkosi and Helene read papers at the CAMOC and COMCOL International Committee meetings respectively. Catherine and Helene share their experience of the General Conference and Assembly in the newsletter.

This is the last newsletter of the current ICOM-SA Board. Over the last three years, ICOM-SA had several successful meetings starting with the Conference on *Museum Research in South Africa – Relevance and Future*, 26-27 August 2014 in Durban. The conference was co-hosted by eThekweni and funded by the Department of Arts and Culture. In 2015, ICOM-SA hosted a joint workshop with ICOM, ICEE and SAMA, and this year, ICOM-SA teamed up with ICOMOS-SA to develop a policy framework for heritage and museum practitioners on *Museums and Cultural Landscapes*. Focus group meetings and workshops were organised on behalf of ICOM-SA and ICOMOS-SA by Durban Local History Museums, National Museum, Bloemfontein and UNISA's Museum of Anthropology and Archaeology. In addition, East London Museum, Port Elizabeth Museum, Graaff Reinet Museum, Cape Institute of Architects, National Heritage Council, African World Heritage Fund and EcoAfrica hosted meetings.

As a result of the above meetings and workshops, the outgoing ICOM-SA Board hopes that we have promoted a strong supportive network for museum professionals. We also aimed at involving more professionals in the running of projects, including creating opportunities for local professionals to contribute to professional and ethical standards and guidelines.

The task is not yet completed – we will be discussing a draft policy statement on Museums and Cultural Landscapes on 26 August 2016 and hope to have a final version ready by November 2016. The ICOM-SA Board would like to thank everyone who contributed, through discussion and comments, to this document.

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ICOM-SA Chairperson



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Personal Reflections on Milano 2016 – Catherine Snel,

As a museum professional, attending the ICOM General Assembly was a highlight of my museum career. Telling colleagues, family and friends that you are attending the biggest museum conference in the world surely sounds like music on the ear!

ICOM brings people from all over the globe together, and gives us the opportunity to engage, to share and to form new networks, and also explore \and learn more from the host country.

As a member of COMCOL, my ICOM journey started a few days earlier in Bassano Del Grappa, situated in northern Italy, a three hour train journey from Milan, and one hour and twenty minutes train journey from Venice. Bassano is a beautiful small town surrounded by Alps, with winelands and the typical historical charm complete with a city wall! Having our COMCOL pre-conference in this picturesque

gem was a great starting point to unfold the conference theme, “Museums and cultural landscapes.” We explored the city’s museums, medieval villages and the most beautiful villas, with the most decorative frescos. After the majestic Bassano, we were introduced to Padua, another historical city. Exploring these towns, took me back to my cultural history class, especially the historical architecture module. As a student I have never imagined to be able to see splendid architecture so close up. It was just a magical moment for me!

The pre-conference tour geared me up for the official programme. I interacted with so many museum and heritage professionals and was so proud to represent the South African museum sector on an international level. The presentations were of a good standard overall, and it was also great

that some of the topics were about current world issues. Another proud moment was taking part in the election procedure and knowing that your vote counted in the process of electing the new ICOM executive committee for the next three years.

Being at the conference, made me realise how important it is for us as African museum community, to be part of the wider discussions around



museum and heritage issues, and not to isolate ourselves.

I have enjoyed everything about the conference but could not get used to the extreme heat! It was unbearable. Walking and commuting using the Metro to the conference venue in the scorching heat was not my cup of tea! By the end of the conference, I felt like a flat tyre and came home with swollen feet that landed me in the doctor's surgery! Despite all of this, when I look at my hundreds of pictures and think of all the beautiful memories, I smile and am forever thankful for my ICOM experience!

Personal Reflections on Milano 2016 – Helene Vollgraaff

Milano 2016 was my fourth ICOM Triennial and as in the past, it did not fail to deliver on my huge expectations. After the week, one's head is spinning with new ideas, old friendships are rejuvenated and new ones established. The Turkish novelist, Orhan Pamuk, gave a wonderful keynote address about the importance of the ordinary and the need for museums to become homes. The landscape artist, Christo, encouraged us to free our minds and to think big. Marlene Nicolini, mayor of the Italian island of Lampedusa and Linosa, gave an inspiring paper on the need for a caring society that looks beyond immediate political and economic interests.

But, ICOM is not only about work. It is about professional networks that become personal relationships over time. And there was lots of opportunity to experience Italian cultural and natural landscapes.



ICOM Revised Statutes 2016

ICOM adopted revised statutes at an Extraordinary General Assembly on 9 July 2016 in Milan, Italy. The process was driven by the *Working Group on the Statutes, Internal Rules and Regulations and Governance* under the leadership of Per Rekdal.

Some of the changes include:

- New names for bodies, e.g. the Advisory Committee has been renamed the Advisory Council and the Executive Council, the Executive Board.
- In future, the positions of Chairpersons of the National and International Committees as well as the President of ICOM are restricted to individual members only. It was argued that institutions cannot hold such positions and that all these positions require individual commitment to ICOM.
- The criteria for ICOM membership have been revised to reflect the diverse practices in different countries. The new criteria take into consideration that in many countries, museum professionals work on a freelance basis rather than being employed by a museum.
- In future, members of the Executive Board can apply for travel grants. It is acknowledged that a restriction on travel grants in the past meant that membership of Executive Board was limited to those who could afford to travel
- The Museum Definition Working Group is still working on a revised definition of museums, therefore the 2007 definition has been retained for the present.

Resolutions adopted at the ICOM General Assembly, 9 July 2016

Resolution 1: The Responsibility of Museums Towards Landscape

Museums and landscapes are an essential element of humanity's physical, natural, social and symbolic environment.

Landscape is a highly complex network, defined by relationships between social and natural elements. The richness of landscape arises from its diversity.

Museums are part of the landscape. They collect tangible and intangible testimonials linked to the environment. The collections forming part of their heritage cannot be explained without the landscape.

Museums have a particular responsibility towards the landscape that surrounds them, urban or rural. This implies a dual duty: on the one hand, the management and upkeep of heritage in a sustainable



development perspective for the territory; on the other, attention given to images and representations that identify and connote the landscape itself.

Considering the above, and

1. *Remembering* UNESCO Conventions, ICOM Code of Ethics and NATHIST Code of Ethics;
2. *Knowing* that the concept of Cultural Landscape incorporates not only the physical size of a territory, but also a wide range of intangible factors – from language to lifestyle; from religious beliefs to the different forms of social life; from technology to ways of life and production, as well as to power relationships and exchanges between generations;
3. *Recognizing* that such a concept encompasses soundscapes, olfactory, sensory and mental landscapes, and also the landscapes of memory and of conflict, often incorporated in places, objects, documents and images, endlessly expanding opportunities for museums to take action on cultural landscapes;
4. *Understanding* that museums contribute with the knowledge and expertise of their professionals, to raise awareness among communities – helping the development of decisions that involve a transformation of the landscapes;
5. *Considering* that museums share the task with other heritage institutions working to preserve heritage and enduring its management and development.

The 31st General Assembly of ICOM recommends that:

- Museums extend their mission from a legal and operational point of view and manage buildings and sites of cultural landscape as ‘extended museums’, offering enhanced protection and accessibility to such heritage in closed relationship with communities.
- Museums contribute not only to the knowledge and value of cultural landscapes, but also to the development of symbolic frameworks that determine them, so that the notion of cultural landscape becomes an instrument for the assessment of what needs to be protected, enhanced and handed on to future generations, and what will go instead questioned, criticised and modified.

The International Council of Museums assumes the need to emphasize the mention of cultural landscapes in its key documents, such as the Definition of Museum, the ICOM Statutes and the ICOM Code of Ethics.

Resolution 2: Inclusion, Intersectionality and Gender Mainstreaming in Museums

Considering that:

1. The implementation process of the Resolution No.4 of the 28th General Assembly of ICOM, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil 2013, on “Museums, Gender Mainstreaming and Inclusion: Benchmarking against the *ICOM Cultural Diversity Charter, Shanghai 2010*” has mainly been focused on Gender Equity;
2. Intersectionality such as of race, ethnicity, colour, faith, age, class, regional location and sexual orientation are rarely assessed in considering inclusion;
3. Cross cutting themes are significant in the *1948 United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights*; the *2001 UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity*; the *2015 UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Protection and Promotion of Museums and*

Collections; and the *ICOM Cultural Diversity Charter* adopted at the 25th General Assembly in Shanghai China, 2010.

The 31st General Assembly of ICOM recommends that the President and the Executive Board of ICOM develop:

- Further systematic approaches to assessing the follow up on Resolutions from ICOM 2010 and 2013 General Conferences, and build on the work of the Strategic Plan and Resolutions Monitoring Committee (MOCO) in assessing the extent to which ICOM's programme and activities, including various Committee deliberations, address cultural, linguistic and geographical diversity benchmarked against the ICOM Cultural Diversity Charter;
- Gender Mainstreaming policies and strategies, and actively ensure their implementation as an integral part of ICOM's future strategic goals;
- Strategies for expanding and encouraging the inclusion of members and their communities and countries across the geographical regions of the world; and
- The Inclusive Museum Knowledge Community through enhanced communication strategies.

Resolution 3: Strengthening the Protection of Cultural Heritage During and After Armed Conflict, Acts of Terrorism, Revolutions and Civil Strife.

Considering:

1. Resolution No. 5 of the 28th General Assembly of ICOM, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 2013, on the "Protection of Cultural Heritage During and After Armed Conflict, Revolutions and Civil Strife";
2. The increase of terrorist acts with dramatic consequences on communities, heritage and museum collections; and
3. The most recent dramatic events occurring in the world of museums, monuments and sites.

The 31st General Assembly of ICOM *recommends:*

- Ongoing strengthening of the protection of Cultural Heritage During and After Armed Conflict, Revolutions and Civil Strife; including conflicts all over the world that provoke terrorist acts having dangerous impacts on communities, museums and landscapes.

Resolution 4: Promotion and Protection of Cultural Objects on International Loan

Considering:

1. That cultural exchanges through sharing heritage and museum collections strengthen dialogue, mutual enrichment and understanding among nations and cultures, and serve as an important educational instrument as well as a driver for economic growth and tourism, contributing to sustainable development;
2. That cultural objects constitute a universal treasure of humanity and should be protected while being temporarily abroad by a legal international instrument consistent with national laws and other international conventions;

3. The cooperation and the interchange of museum collections for purposes of exhibitions, education and research promoted by *ICOM Guidelines for Loans* (1974) and the revised version of the *ICOM Code of Ethics for Museums* (2004)
4. That immunity from seizure and jurisdiction should correspond to established international instruments regulating the movement of cultural property.

The 31st General Assembly of ICOM *recommends* that the Executive Board of ICOM:

- Drafts a policy position for promoting the immunity of cultural objects on international loan for cultural, educational and research purposes, from seizure.

Executive Board 2016-2019

The election of the new ICOM Executive Board took place during the ICOM Milano Conference. The successful candidates are:

President:

- Suay Aksoy, Turkey

Vice Presidents:

- Laishun An, China
- Alberto Garlandini, Italy

Treasurer:

- Peter Keller, Austria

Ordinary members:

- Hilda Abreu de Utermohlen, Dominican Republic
- Inkyung Chang, Republic of Korea
- Vinod Daniel, Australia
- Carlos Roberto Ferreira Brandão, Brazil
- Carina Jaatinen, Finland
- Leontine Meijer-Van Mensch, Germany
- Maria de Lourdes Monges Santos, Mexico
- Emma Nardi, Italy
- Terry Simioti Nyambe, Zambia
- Diana Pardue, USA
- Carol Scott, UK