



## **REPORT ON ATTENDANCE AT THE 17<sup>TH</sup> GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF ICOMOS AND SCIENTIFIC SYMPOSIUM: PARIS 28 NOVEMBER – 3 DECEMBER 2011**

The 17<sup>th</sup> General Assembly (GA) of ICOMOS was held in Paris from 27<sup>th</sup> November to the 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2011. I attended the GA as a member of the outgoing ICOMOS SA Executive Committee and held the proxy vote for the President, Ntsizi November, who was unable to attend. Three other members of ICOMOS SA also attended the GA, they were Andrew Hall (outgoing EXCOM member), Nicholas Clarke and Quanhita Samie. All of us carried the full complement of proxy votes on behalf of our members in South Africa. Andrew Hall had previously served as a member of the ICOMOS Executive Committee and then on the Bureau (similar to what we would refer to as an Executive Committee). Due to various circumstances he indicated that he would not be in a position to stand for re-election and after discussions with the ICOMOS SA Executive as well as approaches from a number of international colleagues, I agreed to make myself available for election to the Executive Committee. This was done and I attach a copy of my election platform to this report for information.

### **THE STRUCTURE OF ICOMOS**

I thought that it might be helpful to persons reading this report, who are not familiar with ICOMOS, to briefly explain how the organization is structured.

As a non-governmental organization ICOMOS has a small number of staff members who are employed to undertake the administrative requirements of the international organization. Based in Paris, the office currently has 2 Directors, one responsible for ICOMOS and one for World Heritage matters, an accountant, a librarian in charge of the documentation centre, and a number of other administrative persons.

The international membership of ICOMOS is represented by two Committees whose members are elected as the triennial general Assembly and who are in brief, responsible for the strategic direction of ICOMOS and the professional business thereof. These 2 committees are the Executive and the Bureau.

### **THE BUREAU AND EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

The Executive Committee is the governing body of ICOMOS. It is composed of 20 members elected by the General Assembly: the President, the Secretary General, Treasurer General, 5 Vice-Presidents, who shall be the officers and 12 members - plus the Chairman of the Advisory Committee, the Co-ordinator of the Scientific Council and up to five co-opted members. Recognized professionals, these members represent the major regions of the world. The Executive Committee prepares the program and budget and monitors their implementation. It also records the establishment of National and International Committees and ensures the implementation of the program.

(Also refer to [www.icomos.org](http://www.icomos.org) for additional information)

The GA was preceded by a meeting of the ICOMOS Advisory Committee (ADCOM) and Scientific Council. As in the previous two years I was asked to serve as rapporteur for the ADCOM meeting by the Chairperson John

Hurd (ICOMOS UK), this I did with pleasure. The organisers had also invited me to serve as rapporteur for one of the four parallel sessions of the scientific symposium : "Development and the return to the Art of Building".

Most of the International Scientific Committees (ISC's) took the opportunity of holding their annual meetings during the course of the 7 day schedule. As a member of the ISC20C (International Scientific Committee for 20<sup>th</sup> Century Heritage), I was able to attend the meeting of that committee held at the *Institut National d'Histoire de l'Art*, on Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> and the workshop which was held at le Corbusier's Swiss Pavilion at the *Cite Internationale Universitaire de Paris* on Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> December – a very special experience!

As a member of the ISC20C I serve on the Bureau of the Committee as Treasurer and am responsible for the drafting and monitoring of the Triennial work program (2011-2014) and am part of the Heritage Alerts sub-committee.

The ISC20C formulated two resolutions to be put to the General Assembly:

1 The further development of the principles contained within the 'Document of Madrid' relating to the conservation of 20th century architectural heritage. (I have circulated the Document previously subsequent to my attendance at the ISC meeting in Madrid).

2 The development of a Heritage Alert for the *Halle Freyssinet* in Paris (together with ICOMOS France and ISCARSAH- International Scientific Committee on the Analysis and Restoration of Structures of Architectural Heritage).

#### **ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING 27-28 NOVEMBER 2011**

Venue: *Institut National d'Histoire de l'Art*, (The National Institute of the History of Art)

The Advisory Committee of ICOMOS consists of the presidents of all the national committees of ICOMOS and the presidents of the ISC's. All ICOMOS members are welcome to attend the Advisory Committee meeting, which is held annually, and they may participate in the debates, but are not permitted to vote.

The ADCOM plays a valuable role in serving as a platform for debate and engagement with all the national committees and ISC's, many of which are not represented on the Executive or Bureau. Strategies and Policies are developed and tabled here for debate, discussion and, should consensus be reached the ADCOM will make recommendation for adoption of a number of resolutions to either the General Assembly or the Executive Committee.

Also with the aim of promoting exchanges and better mutual understanding, a Forum of the ICOMOS International Scientific Committees was organized during the General Assembly. The International Scientific Committees were given the opportunity to present their activities, an offer which was met with great success. Several ISCs also held their regular annual meetings during the duration of the General Assembly.

#### **THE 17<sup>TH</sup> GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF ICOMOS**

The GA is traditionally accompanied by a Scientific Symposium at which speakers present papers related to the topic selected for the triennium. This year the theme was: HERITAGE: DRIVER OF DEVELOPMENT. This was intended to broadly examine the role of heritage in the creation of tomorrow's society.

The text below, introducing the themes, is taken from the General Assembly website and has been shortened for ease of reading.

“The effects of globalization, which are manifested in growing trends towards standardization and westernization, bring various forms of instability to human societies. Until now, heritage has been confined to the role of passive conservation of the past, and so has often been seen as a burden hindering development. In the future it should be called upon instead to play a major role, re-establishing cultural identity and diversity as key reference points for development; these factors are currently endangered, yet vital. There is a need to reassess the role of heritage in a constructive way.

The concept of heritage, which ranges from designated historic monuments to a jumble of memories, first needs a clear definition that identifies its inherent nature and sets out its boundaries and limits, now and in the future. For the purposes of the symposium it was proposed to focus on four issues, chosen for their fundamental importance or contemporary relevance.

#### Sub-theme 1 -Regional development

As more and more people abandon small towns and the countryside, migrating to large conurbations, urban development has become anarchic, ad hoc and difficult to control. This has already had serious, even catastrophic results: these include the disruption of spatial scale and the loss of landmarks, the breakdown of social relationships, an imbalance between the city and the countryside, and the squandering of space.

#### Sub-theme 2 -Sustainable development, or the return to the Art of Building

The second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was marked by the frantic explosion of fossil fuels and is credited with the international spread of Western lifestyles and buildings, said to represent ‘progress’ but nevertheless creating a distinct break with traditional models. The goals that we have today for energy saving and recycling require a fundamental change in the character of both new and old buildings, in line with the following three points: expertise in re-use, expertise in building and adapting to sustainable living

#### Sub-theme 3 -Development and Tourism

Heritage is a major part of the tourist industry, but at the same time, because of the mass consumption to which it is increasingly subject, it runs the risk of being meaningless by fluctuating between the preservation of museum pieces and theme-park caricatures. Cut off from its context, the real significance of heritage is drowned out by a feeble reflection, and its very nature is altered by excessive numbers of visitors and the facilities installed for them

#### Sub-theme 4- The Economics of development

Investment in our heritage produces particularly attractive returns; the cultural sector fully understands this, but adopts methods that tend to be rather commercial. The investment must be better directed, by identifying targets and striving for more qualitative results rather than short-term profits.”

There were a huge number of presentations made during the course of the symposium, and it proved to be difficult to move between sessions to catch the presentations of particular personal interest. As I was rapporteur for part of sub-theme 2 I spent most of the time in those sessions and although I had been interested in attending a number of other presentations it was simply not possible. Many of the presentations in this sub-theme were of a technical nature addressing issues such as energy efficient in historic buildings, building materials and appropriate ways in which retro-fitting – for want of a better word – could be implemented without causing damage to the integrity of the structure or materials.

### **THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

The GA opened with a reception held at the *Ecole nationale supérieure des Beaux-Arts* at which delegates were welcomed by the Director, Henry-Claude Cousseau, Mr Gustavo Araoz, President of ICOMOS and Pierre-Antoine Gatier, President of ICOMOS France; there was an intervention by Philippe Belaval, Director General of Heritage at the French Ministry of Culture and Communication; Benjamin Mouton, President of the Symposium Scientific Committee; also addressed the gathering

The business of the GA started officially on Monday 29<sup>th</sup> November at the UNESCO headquarters 125 avenue de Suffren, Paris, where addresses were given by a representative of the Director General of UNESCO, Ms Irina Bokova, the French Minister for Ecology, Sustainable Development, Transport and Housing, Ms Nathalie Kosciusko-Morizet and the French Minister of Culture and Communication, Mr Frédéric Mitterrand.

Held under the high patronage of Ms Irina Bokova, Director General of UNESCO, and Mr Nicolas Sarkozy, President of the French Republic it was significant to note that the Assembly was one of the largest ever held with 1 150 participants from 106 countries and members of 77 national committees of ICOMOS present. After the formalities (which were lengthy) were concluded, the remainder of the day was spent with the introduction to the Scientific Symposium.

Regional group meetings and functions were held later in the evening. As there were so few African representatives attending the GA it was agreed that our delegates would meet with our colleagues from Asia/Pacific (including Australasia). We have joined them in the past and have found that there are many common issues shared by this grouping, many of the countries included are developing as we are in Africa and the debate around concepts of heritage shares a number of common factors, particularly with regard to intangible heritage.

#### ICOMOS OPEN ARCHIVE AND GILLES NOURISSIER DATABASE

The second day of the GA was taken up fully with the Scientific Symposium which concluded on Wednesday. During the course of these two days training sessions on the ICOMOS Open Archive and on the use of the ICOMOS database of members and experts were given by ICOMOS staff members. The development of the Gilles Nourissier database of members is placed to become an invaluable tool for ICOMOS and its membership. All members will be able to have their contact details on the database as well as their professional c.v's. This is intended to assist with the identification and selection of suitable qualified experts for commissions in the field of heritage at an international level.

#### ELECTIONS

Voting for the new international position took place on the Wednesday afternoon. Although I had presented my nomination for a position on the Executive Committee, I was approached by senior members of the EXCOM with a request to stand for the position of Treasurer-General. Phillipe la Hausse deLalouviere, who was the past incumbent was unwilling to continue in this position; I therefore stood for the position of Treasurer-General.



The following persons were elected to serve for the forthcoming triennium:-

**Executive Committee 2011-2014**

**Chair:** Gustavo Araoz (United States)

**Secretary:** Kirsti Kovanen (Finland)

**General Treasurer:** Laura Robinson (South Africa)

**Vice-presidents:**

Kristal Buckley (Australia)

Alfredo Conti (Argentina)

Gideon Koren (Israel)

Benjamin Mouton (France)

Zhan Guo (China)

**Executive Committee members:**

Sofia Avgerinou-Kolonias (Greece)

Stefan Belishki (Bulgaria)

Dinu Bumbaru (Canada)

Francesco Caruso (Italy)

Rohit Jigyasu (India)

Toshiyuki Kono (Japan)

Philippe La Hausse Lalouvière (Mauritius)

Wilfried Lipp (Austria)

Christoph Machat (Germany)

Olga Orive (Mexico)

Hae-A Rii (Republic of Korea)

Grellan Rourke (Ireland)

**Chair of Advisory Committee:** John Hurd (United Kingdom)

**Coordinator of the Scientific Council:** Pamela Jerome (United States)

**Honorary Chairs:** Michael Petzet (Germany), Roland Silva (Sri Lanka)

Currently approaches are being made to members in areas of under-representation for their possible co-option to the EXCOM. These regions include the Caribbean/central America, Africa and particularly sub-saharan Africa, and Russia.

#### CONCLUDING BUSINESS AND RESOLUTIONS

The final business day of the GA included a Synthesis of the Scientific Symposium: this was followed by the presentation of a number of resolutions which were debated upon (sometimes at length) prior to their amendment or adoption. A number of resolutions were withdrawn due to their contentious nature or the fact that they related more to operational matters and as such could be dealt with by the EXCOM and the ICOMOS staff.

The General Assembly adopted two new doctrinal texts, which complement the existing set of Charters which ICOMOS has been promoting since its first General Assembly in 1965 in order to provide guidance to authorities, institutions, experts and any interested stakeholder in their action for the conservation and enhancement of heritage sites. These newly adopted texts comprise:

- the joint ICOMOS – TICCIH Principles for the Conservation of Industrial Heritage Sites, Structures, Areas and Landscapes;
- the Valletta Principles for the Safeguarding and Management of Historic Cities, Towns and Urban Areas.

It also adopted the Paris Declaration on « Heritage as a Driver of Development » resulting from the discussions during the Scientific Symposium, as well as 46 resolutions, concerning organisational ICOMOS matters such as the adoption of new Rules of Procedure for the General Assembly, but particularly on newly emerging heritage issues, for example in connection with human rights and peace, and situations affecting specific monuments and sites.

#### ANNOUNCEMENT OF HONORARY MEMBERSHIP OF ICOMOS AND THE AWARDING OF THE GAZZOLA PRIZE

In Accordance with Article 6 (A) of the ICOMOS Statutes, Honorary Membership may be conferred by the General Assembly, at the proposal of a National Committee, upon individual members of ICOMOS who have rendered distinguished service in the field of conservation, restoration and enhancement of historical monuments, sites, and groups of buildings. The selection is made by the same committee that chooses the Gazzola Prize winner and is approved – as a formality- by the General Assembly.

In 2011 Honorary membership of ICOMOS was conferred on 11 members:

The Gazzola Prize was established in 1979 in memory of Piero Gazzola, one of the greatest protagonists of the conservation and restoration of historic monuments and sites, and a founder member of ICOMOS. The prize is awarded every three years at the General Assembly of ICOMOS to an individual member of ICOMOS who has contributed with great distinction over a period of time to the Aims and Objectives of ICOMOS. The selection of the prize winner is made by a special sub-committee of the EXCOM; the prize itself is a commemorative medal and certificate.

In 2011 the Gazzola prize was awarded to Nobuo Ito of Japan for his outstanding commitment in support of cultural heritage in Japan and internationally for over sixty years, and in particular for his key role in the adoption of the Nara Document on Authenticity in 1994, building bridges between East and West in terms of conservation philosophy.

After the award ceremony a closing reception was held at the UNESCO Building.

## INTERVIEW PANEL FOR THE POSITION OF DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF ICOMOS

A full day excursion was planned to visit the Domain de Chantilly on the Friday, As I was now one of the Bureau members I could unfortunately not attend this visit as we had been requested to interview a number of candidates for the new position of Director-General of ICOMOS. This important position is a key component of the transformation of the institution and the person appointed will be required to not only manage the final re-organisation of the office but be the public face of ICOMOS for much of the time when the President or other elected members are unable to be present. A number of duties will include fund-raising (crucial to the survival of the institution) and the development of a strong media presence.

The first meeting of the newly elected ICOMOS Executive Committee, at which I was present, was held on Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> December at the offices of the Secretariat. The next meeting will be held in Paris in August 2012, followed by a meeting of the Bureau which is scheduled to be held concurrently with the World Heritage Committee meeting in St Petersburg, Russia.



Photo with John Hurd (ADCOM President) LR, Gustavo Araoz (President ICOMOS) and Kirsti Kovannen (Secretary-General)

Laura Robinson  
ICOMOS SA  
Treasurer-General ICOMOS

January 2012