

## **Final Declaration of the International Conference “Museums and World Cultural Heritage” which took place in Catania from 16 to 18 October 2015.**

The World Heritage List includes a very large variety of museums, different in terms of dimension, type and features.

Some of them conserve and communicate collections directly linked with the nature of the Site and its exceptional universal value. Others, in keeping with their environment make them clearer and testify the complexity of their context.

Museum management and site management are often distinguished although it doesn't help neither the Museum or the Site. By this way either the community and the visitors can't appreciate the strict correlation between collections and their cultural and environmental heritage.

This situation is not peculiar to Sites inscribed on the List of World Heritage.

It reflects a more general separation of the management of museums, archives, libraries, archaeological sites, monumental complexes, natural sites and more. Different kind of heritage need obviously a different preservation, conservation, interpretation and presentation and that's the origin of specialized management, but it creates also a distinction in different cultural heritages that didn't exist when the objects were produced.

We must consider the cultural heritage as a whole and more than its different components, considering most the relations between its tangible and intangible components.

The first reason to overcome that situation is the need of giving back to the heritage its own identity integrating cultural and environmental, tangible and intangible heritage.

Secondly it is important to understand the indissoluble unity between past and present, nature and culture, territory and community that represent the key element of uniqueness and diversity of each cultural landscape, as is perceived either from the people inhabiting and by its guests. A point of view capable of grasping the interconnections of the landscape that belongs to the local community and their guests.

According to the Ethical Code of ICOM, museums must conserve, interpret and present cultural and environmental heritage, they must become active actors in the sites and landscapes management.

In order to do so, they have to:

- participate to the protection of cultural and environmental heritage and to the conservation of local tangible and intangible heritage;
- collect, increase and broadcast the knowledge of this heritage;
- present their heritage showing the connections with its original context;
- engage the people in an active participation to the protection, interpretation and presentation of the inherited heritage as a resource for a sustainable development.

UNESCO's Sites have to:

- increase their museological and institutional functions of museums;
- motivate museums and Institutions to have an active role in the protection, interpretation and presentation of the surroundings.

Administrations responsible must:

- ensure that the governance of the sites integrate in their management museums and other institutions and places of culture existing in them;
- promote their involvement in the protection, conservation, interpretation of the heritage inscribed on World Heritage List.

Catania, 18th October 2015