

31st General Assembly of ICOM - Milan, Italy, 2016

Resolution No. 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 belief to the different forms of social life; from technology to ways of life and production, as well as to power relations and exchanges between generations;
3. *Recognizing that* such 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 landscape;
5. *Considering that* museums share the task with other institutions working to preserve heritage and ensuring 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 of the values 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, criticized 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.

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