18 April 2011: International Day for Monuments and Sites
The Cultural Heritage of Water

Every year on 18 April, ICOMOS celebrates the “International Day for Monuments and Sites”, whose establishment was approved by the 22nd UNESCO General Conference in 1983. The ‘Cultural Heritage of Water’ is the theme for 2011.

The aim of the International Day for Monuments and Sites is to encourage local communities and individuals throughout the world to consider the importance of cultural heritage to their lives, identities and communities, and to promote awareness of its diversity and vulnerability and the efforts required to protect and conserve it.

Water is one of the key resources required to sustain life. It has led to the development and generation of significant material culture in the form of items, technology and places. How to obtain it, how to store it, how to harness its power and conserve it has motivated human endeavour in a myriad of ways. It has also been the catalyst for the development of significant cultural practices which have generated intangible cultural heritage values. It has inspired poetry, literature, artistic endeavour such as painting, dance and sculpture. It has informed and inspired the development of philosophies and religious practice. The cultural heritage of water, therefore relates not only to the technology and architecture that humankind has developed to manage, utilise and celebrate its life giving properties but also to those intangible values that have shaped our beliefs and practices.

This year the International Day is celebrated all over the world by a wide range of organisations and 34 ICOMOS National and International Scientific Committees.

Visit the special ICOMOS web page - www.international.icomos.org/18thapril/2011/index.html to find:
- Information on 18 April events throughout the world
- An ICOMOS background article, illustrating the many aspects of the cultural heritage of water
- A special bibliography by the ICOMOS Documentation Centre
- Other resources such as:
  - the UN, UNESCO Natural Sciences and Culture Sector web sites,
  - the Euromed Heritage IV programme
  - and many others, including the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands.

For 2012, the theme of the International Day for Monuments and Sites will be “The World Heritage” to mark the 40th anniversary of the 1972 UNESCO World Heritage Convention.

Wishing you a very happy International Day for Monuments and Sites!

For more information contact: ICOMOS International Secretariat – secretariat@icomos.org