

Report by the Secretary General of ICOMOS on the programme and activities, and on the implementation of the resolutions of the 18th General Assembly

The way that ICOMOS has taken through the past three years, is not a long stretch, but has provided interesting views and experiences. My triennial report highlights some issues in the core activities and management, reflecting the development and implementation of the triennial program 2014 - 2017 and the perspectives of the organization, in terms of capacity.

Implementation of the resolutions of the 18th General Assembly

Among the 49 resolutions of the 18th General Assembly, there were 12 site-related resolutions and 11 of more general character. Those related to ICOMOS' organization and development work, touched participation in meetings through communication and technology means, 50th anniversary, financial management and the aftermath of the statutes amendments, as well as projects of Connecting Practice, Heritage toolkit, and Upstream activities. The resolutions were all taken on board from the end of 2014, and most of the concerns and initiatives have born tangible results. Maybe only the complicated problem of the Parthenon site and marbles still remains unsolved. The technical means of remote participation and social media communication are in place and use, the 50th anniversary events produced a multitude of international and national celebrations and scientific reflections. Some long-term topics and programs, those on Syria, Ukraine and Iraq, rights-based approaches and UNESCO programs, continue to occupy ICOMOS' representatives and membership.

The statutes renewal adopted in 2014 meant application of many new administrative practices. A major work of the past two years has been the adapting of the rules of procedures and the by-laws of International Scientific Committees to comply with the amended statutes. To its full extent the new set of rules will grow next year, after all ISCs have renewed their by-laws. The paperwork exercise has been enormous, and the major part of the rules is now under consideration in this GA. The drafting work has its base in the 2014 statutes, and in the findings of the two years' testing period. As some inconsistencies and complicated practices were discovered during the work, and after advice was asked from legal experts of the legal framework for associations in France, as well as from the annual General Assembly, on the principles of the amendments, a few corrective amendments are proposed this year.

Implementation of the General Programme

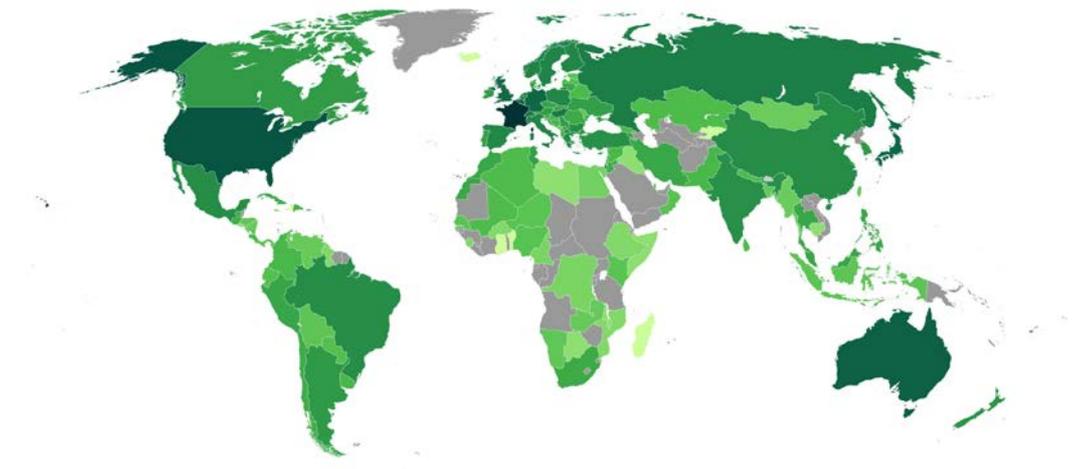
The goals set by the resolution 17 in Florence included five goals, five objectives and 33 strategies for implementation. The program was resolutely on the table of the Board from the meeting in March 2015 on. The themes were prioritized and an implementation program created, overarching themes were further developed in special workshops held on ICOMOS' role, work and place in the field of heritage conservation (2015), on finding how to integrate young generations into ICOMOS (2016), and on university links (2016). Action plans were prepared and applied in decision-making whenever possible. Especially the ideas on the integration of young generations could also well feed into the future. The inter-generational exchanges deserve continued attention throughout the organisation. Some National Committees already implement their young members' and mentoring programs, Israel and Australia as inviting examples. During these years, I have many times heard young people tell about eminent ICOMOS members who have become their role models - testifying of the mentoring processes on the grass-root level.

The implementation of the goal on sharing knowledge and creating active partnerships was the result of not only the work in the Board, but in the Scientific Council and committees, Secretariat and many members contributed to this. A new partnership now exists with E.C.C.O. (European Confederation of Conservator-Restorers' Organisations). Communication through social media increased notably. More documents are now available in Mandarin, thanks to the support of ICOMOS China, and the ISC20C Madrid document from 2011 – 2014 can be read in 13 languages. However, creation of new translation groups for other languages than English and French remained a target of persuasion work.

The World Heritage services and practices, that are executed in the framework of the 1972 Convention, have been under a looking-glass and serious development work during this triennium. For providing transparency and wider participation with both, the World Heritage Committee and our membership, improvements were introduced, especially in the evaluation processes on ensuring balanced expertise and more dialogue. The processes, especially the evaluation methods, have proved to be of flagship character and serve as models in wider use. New solutions for streamlining practices continue to be sought in projects, Connecting Practice was in its second phase. Upstream assistance services as introduced in 2015 were in their pilot phase.

The work on the charters and principles of conservation remained as a core activity of the scientific work of the triennium and six updates, new principles and intentions on updates, are for consideration of this assembly.

A good example of the over-arching themes, and at the same time of proactive work in the heritage field, is the enormous work in bringing culture and heritage into the global Sustainable Development Goals. It is thanks to the contributions coordinated and provided by our focal points and a team of contributors, that a new vision was opened for conservation in this context. Fulfilling similar large-scale and long-standing objectives and cooperation for and around heritage will certainly remain on the agendas long.

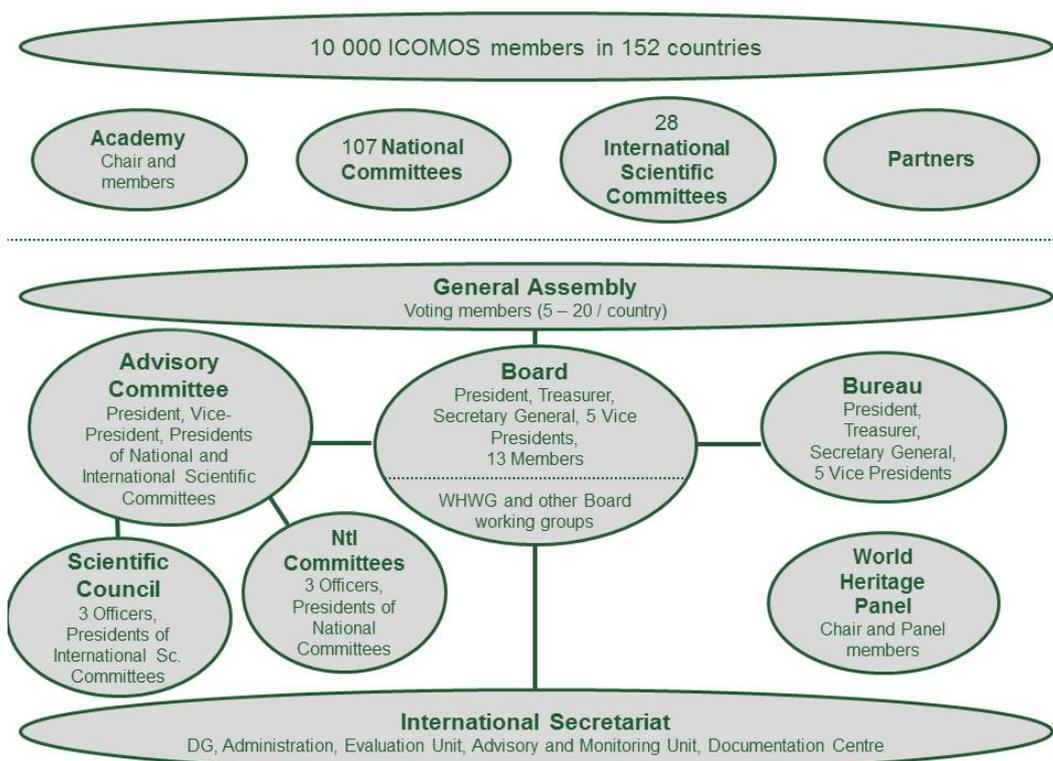


ICOMOS' membership in the world

Our presence in the world was stable during the triennium, comprising now of 10 000 members in 152 countries and in 107 National Committees. The number of ISCs has grown to 29 with the establishment of the committee on Places of Religion and Ritual this year. In the past few years, the Board has introduced a "nurturing" system for those national and scientific committees whose functioning had ceased: while withdrawing recognition, assistance is given for a new birth by calls to all professionals of the country, or conservation field, to join and form a new committee. The decisions on non-functioning and on the restart were hard to make, but at the end, every process handled with care proved to be successful. Special attention was paid during the triennium for example to the National Committees of Russia, Colombia and Lebanon. Since the Advisory Committee election in 2015, new practices have been established for monitoring of the committees and the Advisory Committee officers are taking over tasks in the monitoring and nurturing process.

The goal for maintaining the debate and cross-disciplinary programs has been implemented especially by the SC and the ISCs resulting in programs of joint activities and papers of wide views. Heritage toolkits frame is available on the web site, but only two committees have taken it into active use.

The organizational structure of ICOMOS did not change much since 2014, only the National Committees “Forum” was created. During this triennium, special attention was given to the capacity of the National Committees and to the ways for opening ICOMOS to universities and more generally to communities of researchers that do not necessarily belong to ICOMOS. Results of the dynamics of the groupings can be seen in the next assemblies. They could provide power to the fields of work and thinking. While reflecting the diversity of the cultures and the multitude of heritage practices, the organization of committees could create the dynamics that enables the system to keep breathing in two ways - in and out: be simple and flexible enough for enabling the members to obtain new views and trends through their exchanges and encounters, and for bringing in air, e.g. ideas and expertise, into the organization.



Improved resources in the Secretariat

Stabilisation and strengthening of the International Secretariat has been a key operation during the triennium. After the transition through organizational changes, it is satisfying to see the results. With the help of new financial resources, the Secretariat has taken new tasks in fulfilling the general program and in running the daily administration. High quality work for building initial thematic events like for ex. the workshop on Reconstruction in Post-trauma situations, or the first reflection workshop on a new Gap report, or the work for the project Anqa. The two World Heritage units of the Secretariat, the Evaluation Unit and the Advisory and Monitoring Unit, serve our World Heritage work since 2016 in the challenging atmosphere of new dialogues, partners and widened evaluation and monitoring processes. A more dynamic web site, publications and annual reports¹ performed in the new format as well as the renewal of the membership database and the new ICOMOS photo bank - a long-standing publishing work of the Documentation Centre - further convince of the quality of work.

¹ <https://issuu.com/icomos>

It is a pleasure to see how increased human and financial resources make a difference to the achievements and to the working atmosphere. New resources have enabled a broader publishing and communicating to the membership and to the public. A sound budget and financial planning have given a good back to rely on. My warm thanks to the Director General and all staff for their admirable professionalism and commitment. The health of the Secretariat is a treasure worth maintaining.

The new services owe much to the help from our donors, and I thank them all warmly, especially SACH of China, the states of Belgium, France and Austria, as well Germany and Norway, and the University of Kyushu. Their contributions have been vital to resource the new image and work. The vital technical framework, archiving continues to be rebuilt since 2016. Our finances still need strengthening in medium term and many things remain to do.

A triennial General Assembly year is always a special year in ICOMOS life when the Secretariat is balancing between detailed preparations and business as usual. Thanks to the courage and the fantastic crews of both, the International Secretariat and ICOMOS India, we can experience a new and exciting get-together in a most diverse and still compact set of events and all presented in a beautiful package and cooperation. Thank you, ICOMOS India!

Governance and organizational capacity

It is challenging to manage a membership organization based on participation and freedom of the members and still keep minimal permanent resources. Large parts of the General Program relied on volunteers' contributions. For example, the provision of translations mostly still depends on the commitment of volunteers' translation groups. The commitment of members who serve in these groups is admirable. ICOMOS France and ICOMOS UK deserve special thanks for their translations, that they deliver both, at a normal and at a short notice. A big voluntary contribution is the window to the organization, our web site, which is generously maintained by Gordon Dewis from ICOMOS Canada.

This triennium is marked with short and long-term development work. Old fields of work found renewed practices, in the frameworks of structure and of ICOMOS' World Heritage work. New fields opened, especially into the sustainable development goals and into the Nature – Culture linkages, while many old fields of activities were maintained. New views to the world and to new circles of partners have certainly refreshed the organization and its capacity. In this light, the way to the new triennium seems to unfold with exciting new views and with good food for thoughts.

ICOMOS' capital lies in human resources and in the knowledge of its members. We are privileged to work and contribute to a field that attracts interests in societies and globally, not only due to the diversity of ideas and environments that we deal with, but also due to the diversity and beauty of exchanges we can have with people and societies, as professionals and as human beings. Attracted by this extraordinary nature of conservation field and conservation community, I extend my deep gratitude to all the colleagues whose contributions have brought ICOMOS to be in the front line of conservation thinking and actions across the globe.

24 October 2017

Kirsti Kovanen
Secretary General

Attachment: Statistics on the attendance of Board members in Board and Bureau meetings, 01/2015 – 07/2017

Attendance (%) of Board members in Board and Bureau meetings 01/2015 - 07/2017		
Board members	Board meetings	Bureau meetings*
Ahlberg	85	
Araoz	71	92
Avgerinou	100	
Belishki	85	
Chabbi	29	
Conti	100	100
Diop	60	
Gatier	43	
Jerome	100	
Jigyasu	71	13
Kono	100	100
Koren	92	92
Kovanen	100	100
Machat	57	13
Orive	57	13
Phillips	100	100
Lu	57	13
Robinson	100	83
Rourke	100	100
Salinas	14	
Santana	71	38
ADCOM President	100	63
Observers:		
Honorary President	29	25
ICCROM	25	
Secretariat	100	100
* voluntary for other Board members and observers than PRES, TG, SG, VPs		