

PRESIDENT'S GREETINGS

Dear Colleagues and Friends,

I am pleased to meet you here in Lausanne, on the occasion of our 9th General Assembly, organized with the most exemplary professionalism and devotion by the Swiss National Committee of ICOMOS.

This General Assembly marks the 25th anniversary of our association and the Venice Charter, and as such is a fitting moment for stocktaking and preparing the future of ICOMOS, not just for three years but for much longer.

I think that our association has accomplished much in the last quarter century, especially in the field of conservation doctrine and in its collaboration with UNESCO, particularly with the World Heritage Committee. But we live in a different world now: in 1965 ICOMOS was a small band of pioneers who filled an important gap in the world of culture; today our association is one of many hundreds, all working for conservation. In the last Twenty-five years we have tried to do much, perhaps too much, and we have spread ourselves too thin. We must now decide what the precise role of ICOMOS will be in the future, not just in the world of conservation and culture, but more generally in society.

It does not seem to me inappropriate to say that ICOMOS is in a crisis situation, which is shared by a great many international organizations, both intergovernmental and non-governmental. This is only normal, because the changing needs of society affect everyone.

This is why I ask you contribute to the debates at the symposium to the maximum of your possibilities. This is why I hope that the world conservation community will be represented here: if the debate is limited to the developed nations then the cultural exigencies of the different regions will not be heard and ICOMOS will not be able to assume a genuinely international vocation. We wish to hear new voices, see new faces and find new energy.

What use is ICOMOS for society? What are the areas in which it should concentrate its professional activities? How must it reform its operational structures, its International and National Committees? Should we decentralize, and if so, how? Who should our partners be?

Our work is cut out for us at Lausanne- not just for the handful of elected officials, the presidents and rapporteurs of the symposium, or the members of the General Assembly committees, but for all of us. The future of ICOMOS is in your hands.

In the following pages are published the texts sent by a number of International and National Committees, as well as those sent by researchers, for the preparation of the world meeting destined to provide a concrete evaluation of the meaning and the significance of the contribution of ICOMOS over the last twenty-five years in the field of the conservation of architectural heritage.

Thanks to such fundamental studies the symposium of Lausanne, which is extremely important, must be a real success. In fact this means drawing up an extremely severe, critical evaluation, not an apology. At the same time it should be serene and constructive: a comparative evaluation will take into account the profound transformation humanity has undergone over the last fifteen years, as much from technical as from political, socio-economic and ethical points of view; it will also take into consideration the evolution of the culture of conservation, admitted today as an essential element for the survival of man and his spiritual values.

The question that we have the right to ask ourselves is the following one: within these transformations of human society and this evolution in thought, how and in what measure has ICOMOS contributed to control and guide such phenomena (and not simply submitted to them) in harmony with its time, in a continuous effort of review and cultural progress?

Before doing this it is necessary to have an updated and global summary of the action of ICOMOS, since its creation at Warsaw in 1965 to the present day. For this it is necessary to know well the history of the organization. The volume *ICOMOS 1964-1984*, published on the occasion of the Rostock-Dresden General Assembly, is extremely useful; for the following years (1985-1990, the different issues of *ICOMOS Information* (without forgetting the summary reports of the 7th and 8th General Assemblies) provide more than adequate information.

However, above all there is the document concerning the founding assembly of ICOMOS (Warsaw, 21-22 June 1965), which has a particular historic importance because it permits us to understand the reasons why it was necessary to create our association. It is not without interest to quote, in these circumstances, some passages from the report of Piero Gazzola (Secretary-General of the Provisional Committee) and above all the following extract:

«The Secretary-General expressed his delight to know that awareness of the historic and aesthetic value of the monument is, from now on, a reality. It follows that it is necessary to develop and render

more efficacious on the practical level the methodological criteria of restoration, while keeping in mind that problems of specialized competence in the modern world go beyond the field of scientific institutions and laboratories and reverberate in social life and constitute the themes of cultural policy. If a critical position such as this is adopted in the face of everyday reality, we cannot fail to recognize, often with a feeling of alarm, that a dramatic conflict of interest corresponds to this increase of sensibility, since various requirements are involved in the integrity and even the survival of monuments. Mr. Gazzola emphasized that much remained to be done in this matter. Juridical means and administrative structures better adapted to the circumstances must be elaborated. It is also necessary to develop the awareness that respect for monuments is not an act of generic appreciation, a nostalgic and respectful deference for the past, but an achievement of the modern world, historically determined, which goes beyond the individuality of the monument and reverberates in town-planning and on the way of life of the collectivity.»

Later in his report, after recalling the major steps in international collaboration in our field between the two wars (1918-1935) until 1965, Mr. Gazzola underlined the exceptional importance of the Congress of Venice (25-31 May 1964) and the creation of ICOMOS and he wrote:

«The activities that await us are numerous and difficult. International intellectual life, in the field of the protection of cultural goods, expects much from us. On several sides, our directives and our cooperation in the field of scientific research, of doctrinal framework, of the training of personnel are looked for, both from the point of view of direction as well as the carrying-out of various efforts. This will be a question of means, but especially of men who would be willing to devote themselves with love and disinterestedness to the difficult task of setting up a team of organizers, structured into study groups, research commissions, and advisory committees.

May our enthusiasm and our devotion to the great cause that brings us together be proportional to the scope of our task.»

Mr. Gazzola concluded his report with the following words:

«Interest in this effort was great on all the continents and it must be recognized that the specialists understood that intense contemporary activity, due to the exceptional economic situation, was becoming dangerous. Culture was remaining external to it and could provide ideas and initiative to a development which is often monstrous and uncontrolled.

During these last years, the danger of this separation and the necessity of placing these activities under the control of the mind, have been felt in all countries. It has been understood that any authentically modern people which desires to perfect its humanity and feel itself a valuable link in the chain that constitutes the development of history, must worthily preserve its cultural heritage. In this field, peoples of older civilizations received a profitable lesson from the younger nations; these, along with serious problems of fundamental importance, have attentively examined the necessities inherent in the preservation of their historic and cultural properties.

The drama of the defacement of historic centres, brought about by unharmonious urban development and by the absence of a solid cultural preparation in planning, is a phenomenon found almost everywhere. The same holds for the alteration of the countryside by the disordered establishments of industrial buildings. Lack of personnel and the necessity of ensuring that they have specialized training are also afflictions of the period through which we are passing.

Legislation for the protection of cultural goods, while taking into account the most valid needs of social life, is a problem whose solution cannot be awaited much longer. The Secretary-General concluded that it was for these reasons that the Congress was so highly appreciated. The Congress of Venice confirmed the role that culture, in the deepest meaning of the term, should fill, in an ever more active way, in each sector of the field of monuments.»

The comparative historical analysis thus now begins with this appeal for the «great cause that brings us together», to our devotion to this cause and to our enthusiasm. This analysis of facts and behaviour permits each of us and each of the Committees to draw up a balance sheet, to draw the lessons from the past and, above all, to undertake a broad, orderly and far searching debate.

We know that since the end of the 19th century thinkers from diverse backgrounds — from Burckhardt, Proudhon and Baudelaire to John Ruskin and Jack London — and in the 20th century, E. Majo, Lewis Mumford, Albert Schweitzer, Albert Einstein, the School of Frankfurt, etc. agreed in condemning in the severest possible way industrial civilization and foresaw the possible inauguration of an era of barbarism. Today, at the limits of technological growth and confronted by the increasing disintegration of society, the conviction of the decisive importance of the cultural dimension of real development makes its way. Contemporary thought (Erich Fromm,

Jacques Maritain) foresees in the near future a change in values that will have an impact on the socio-political and moral sphere and which will see the affirmation of «being» and no longer «having». From that moment on in society the importance of culture and its products (ancient and modern) will not cease to grow and the spiritual and moral values will be privileged, following an interpretation of life that will be different from the one that dominates today. It is precisely upon such values that will be founded the modern culture of the conservation of monuments. We must face the truth: the culture of conservation is, among others things (and it will be able to be more) one of the cultural factors that determines the balanced development of society. The influence of culture on the socio-economic transformations in progress is at the centre of the reflexion of the world scientific community and this is because of the fact that economics and culture are not opposing components in social development. But the day is still far off when, in practice, will be defined as a priority objective not only material well-being but also the quality of life and, consequently, the stewardship of cultural properities.

Therefore it clearly appears that to realize, develop and disseminate the culture of conservation we need new criteria, different from those in the past, but which form part of their continuity. We have to raise the bar, aim high and «think big». These are indications going in the sens of what we expect from the debate — a debate that will be useful if it supplies new ideas and proposals for the future. ICOMOS must be aware of the new and diverse problems that subsist — although with variable characteristics and tendencies according to the different parts of the modern world — in order to attain the objectives of conservation; but to each problem its own solution. It is a question of knowing how to renew our own cultural knowledge, to know how to undergo continuous reorganization, to know how to maintain compact and united all the forces that have confidence in the role of culture for man.

The General Assembly of Lausanne, which will reap the results of the work of the symposium, will know how to give ICOMOS new life in the new society of tomorrow, by favoring the biological regeneration of its cells (by combatting its sclerosis and fragmentation), following a precise plan of reform and modernisation that cannot be put off to another day.

Roberto Di Stefano, President

BIENVENUE DU PRÉSIDENT

Chers Collègues et Amis,

Je suis heureux de vous rencontrer ici à Lausanne à l'occasion de notre 9^e Assemblée Générale, organisée par le Comité National suisse de l'ICOMOS avec le professionnalisme et le dévouement le plus exemplaire.

Cette Assemblée Générale marque le 25^e anniversaire de notre association et non seulement pour les trois années à venir mais pour plus longtemps encore.

Je pense que notre association a accompli beaucoup durant le dernier quart de siècle, tout particulièrement dans le domaine des doctrines de conservation et dans sa collaboration avec l'UNESCO, plus précisément avec le Comité du Patrimoine Mondial. Mais nous vivons maintenant dans un monde différent: en 1965, l'ICOMOS était un petit groupe de pionniers qui avait rempli une lacune importante dans le monde de la culture; aujourd'hui, notre association est l'une, parmi des centaines, qui toutes travaillent pour la conservation. Durant les vingt-cinq dernières années, nous avons essayé de faire le plus possible, peut-être trop, et nous nous sommes éparpillés. Nous devons décider maintenant quel sera le rôle précis de l'ICOMOS dans le futur, pas seulement dans le monde de la conservation et de la culture, mais plus généralement dans la société.

Il ne me semble pas inopportun de dire que l'ICOMOS est dans une situation de crise, situation qui est partagée par bien des organisations internationales, aussi bien intergouvernementales que non gouvernementales. C'est tout à fait normal car les besoins de changement de la société affectent tout le monde.

C'est pourquoi je vous demande de contribuer aux débats pendant le colloque au maximum de vos possibilités. Et j'espère que la communauté de conservation mondiale sera représentée ici: si le débat est limité aux membres des nations développées alors les exigences culturelles des différentes régions ne seront pas entendues et l'ICOMOS ne sera pas capable d'assumer une vocation internationale initiale. Nous désirons entendre de nouvelles voix, voir de nouveaux visages et trouver de nouvelles énergies.

Quel est l'utilité de l'ICOMOS pour la société? Quels sont les domaines dans lesquels il doit concentrer ses activités professionnelles? Comment doit-il réformer ses structures opérationnelles, ses Comités Internationaux et Nationaux? Devons-nous décentraliser, si oui, comment? Qui seront nos partenaires?