As chairman of ICOMOS China, I am very pleased that the 15th ICOMOS General Assembly and Scientific Symposium are held in Xi’an, China.

The world today is in a period of rapid economic development, and the challenge to cultural heritage preservation has become increasingly grave. Experts and scholars from various countries will meet here and discuss the theme “Monuments and Sites in their setting – Conserving cultural heritage in changing townscapes and landscapes”. This is undoubtedly of great benefit to the international cause of historical sites preservation.

The Chinese government attaches great importance to cultural heritage preservation. While working hard to improve the living environment of the people and pushing forward economic and social development, it has been intensifying efforts in cultural heritage preservation and properly handling the relationship between construction and preservation. In the course of faster urbanization, China has been gradually expanding the scope of cultural heritage preservation, from heritages themselves to historical streets and communities and even to whole historical cities. As a result, the natural and human environment for heritages has been effectively protected.

The essay solicitation has won extensive response and support from experts and scholars in various countries. Within a short period of time, 536 essay summaries were received, out of which the review panel selected 171. This collection contains the full texts of ___ essays. Those from the Xi’an Municipal Bureau of Cultural Relics and the Xi’an University of Architectural Technology have made painstaking efforts, making it possible for our collection to reach you before this meeting. In particular, I would like to thank the ICOMOS China colleagues in Xi’an for the wonderful job they have done in editing and publishing this collection.

I also want to take this opportunity to thank ICOMOS for selecting China’s Xi’an as the meeting place and to thank the International Scientific Committee for what it has done in selecting papers for this symposium.

May the 15th ICOMOS General Assembly and Scientific Symposium be a great success!

Zhang Bai
President of ICOMOS China