

REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT  
PRESENTED TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
OF THE ICOM MEMBERS,  
9 JUNE 2009

Dear Colleagues,

Chers Collègues,

Estimados colegas,

L'assemblée annuelle d'aujourd'hui est la seconde, depuis l'adoption par la Conférence générale tenue à Vienne en 2007, de ce rendez-vous annuel statutaire. Elle se déroulera dans le respect des dispositions de la Loi française sur les « Associations déclarées » et des Statuts qui régissent notre Organisation.

L'année 2008 aura été pour l'ICOM une année de transition, une année de défis et une année de changements, tout en étant aussi une année de continuité, la 63<sup>ième</sup>, depuis que les musées du monde se sont dotés d'une institution internationale de services.

Yo añadiría, no sin orgullo, que el 2008 fue también un año de realizaciones importantes, como lo atestiguan las numerosas actividades de los Comités Nacionales e Internacionales, la participación activa de los miembros del ICOM en los Comités Permanentes, Task Forces y Grupos de Trabajo, el esfuerzo sostenido de nuestra Secretaría y el apoyo firme de los amigos del ICOM.

En primer lugar, 2008 fue un año de transición, en particular en la Secretaría donde dos de nuestros miembros, Piet Pouw y Robert Spickler, han realizado a su turno la interinidad del mando de la Secretaría, mientras el Comité de búsqueda del Consejo Ejecutivo realizaba la contratación de un Director general permanente. Deseo saludarles todos y otra vez expresar nuestros sinceros agradecimientos y nuestra grande apreciación.

Then, 2008 was a year of challenges and changes:

- The first year of implementation of the triennial Strategic Plan, approved in Vienna in 2007, which an impressive number of ICOM members had previously participated in drafting.
- The year of the nomination of the new Director General, Julien Anfruns, who assumed his functions on 1st of October last, and to whom was entrusted the most important mandate, which is also a sizeable challenge, of implementing ICOM's Strategic Plan and, accordingly, developing an action plan in order to meet its objectives, acting as ICOM's spokesperson to various institutions, the media and civil society, undertaking in systematic fashion the restructuring of the Secretariat, consolidating the programmes, modernising the membership services, while, at the same time, increasing ICOM's earned revenues through fundraising.

After barely 8 months since assuming his position, might I be permitted, not merely on my own behalf, but on behalf of the Executive Council members and, I am sure, on your behalf, to express our full support and satisfaction to Julien for his leadership and for the work accomplished to date. In the report he will be presenting to the General Assembly, the Director General will describe the actions undertaken under his direction, with the support of a dedicated staff in the Secretariat who all deserve an accolade.

I also wish, at this time, to acknowledge the support of the Friends of ICOM, in particular that of the ICOM Foundation, presided with great generosity and passion by Madame Christine Boël. The financial support of more than 270 ICOM Foundation members is for us all a source of inspiration and encouragement in the pursuit of ICOM's mission.

As President of ICOM, it is incumbent on me to now briefly describe the activities of the Executive Council for the year 2008. Let me first thank each of its members for their ongoing involvement to ICOM's cause.

A good portion of our work has been to complete the search and to finalize the selection and the hiring of the new Director General.

Since his appointment, the Council concentrated primarily on the most pressing actions reflected in our Strategic Plan, notably:

- expanding ICOM's presence on the international scene,
- participating in various conferences and international symposia;
- Strengthening our relations and intensifying our collaboration with various partner organisations, notably with UNESCO with whom we have now

signed a new framework agreement, ICOMOS and WFFM, through continuous exchange of information on museum and heritage issues, especially through the vigorous protection of the cultural heritage of many countries, and through our ongoing international campaigns of public information programmes.

The Executive Council also approved a comprehensive plan for reconfiguring ICOM Secretariat. This decision was taken after a thorough analysis of its impact on ICOM's finances and functionality.

It was made with the conviction that there was a great need to improve ICOM' services and to support more adequately and efficiently ICOM's National and International Committees, as well as our institutional and individual members.

2008 was also the year for nominating and/or renewing the membership of ICOM Standing Committees, Working Groups and Task Forces for the next three years. These appointments were made following an invitation which, in the spirit of democracy and transparency, was sent out to all members, via ICOM's Web site, to join one or another of these committees.

I wish to thank all the members who responded to this call for candidatures.

The Executive Council also took into consideration the recommendations made by the Advisory Committee, by its sub-committees of National and International Committees as well as those formulated by the Standing Committees on Ethics, Legal Affairs, Finances and Resources, and the Committee on the International

Committees. In this regard, on May 22<sup>nd</sup> last, I have responded, jointly with the Chair of the Advisory Committee, Knut Wik, to the pertinent issues raised by ICOM Advisory bodies. Most of our answers and clarifications will be reflected in greater detail in the Director General's progress report.

The Executive Council held its December meeting in Shanghai at which time the framework agreement for the next General Conference, which will be held in November 2010, was officially signed with ICOM China National Committee and the Chinese organising committee. The Conference, for which a progress report will be presented to the Advisory Committee, bears the theme "**Museums for Social Harmony**".

While in China, the Council also concluded an agreement for ICOM's participation to the Cultural Program of the prestigious Shanghai 2010 World Exhibition.

Finally, the Executive Council responded to various invitations extended by ICOM's International Committees, Regional Alliances, Affiliated Organisations and partners organisation through participating in various meetings, conferences and symposia, when it was felt strategically important by the organizing Committees or Museums, and when it met ICOM's general objectives.

I personally attended Conferences and meetings in South Africa, the Netherlands, Korea, China and Croatia – while other members of the Executive as well as the Director General represented the President in similar manifestations in Brazil, Canada, Belgium, the United States of America and Switzerland.

Dear colleagues, ICOM has now embarked on a series of positive reforms. I firmly believe that it will pave the way for enabling our Organization to improve ICOM's services to its members, to better promote the museum's role in civil society and to better foster its contribution to the cultural environment and the safeguarding of the tangible and intangible heritage.

Chers Collègues, au cours des trois prochains jours, l'Assemblée générale, le Comité Consultatif et ses sous-comités sont appelés à débattre de diverses questions qui concernent l'avenir de notre Organisation, à choisir le thème de la Journée internationale des Musées pour les deux prochaines années, et à sélectionner le pays et la ville de la Conférence générale de 2013.

Esto será también una oportunidad para los Comités Nacionales e Internacionales de compartir informaciones sobre sus proyectos actuales y futuros.

Espero sinceramente que nuestros intercambios serán enriquecedores y fructuosos y que nuestros debates serán constructivos y estimulantes.

At the end of this week's meetings, ICOM must itself be enriched by your insights to better pursue its role and to better convey the outcome of our discussions to our museum colleagues of the world.

Thank you. Merci. Gracias.

Alissandra Cummins

President of ICOM

9 June, 2009