

# ICOMOS

**The 17th ICOMOS General Assembly and Scientific Symposium**  
27 November – 2 December 2011, Paris, France

**Call for Papers: “Heritage: Driver of Development”**  
**Deadline for abstracts: 31 January 2011**

The Scientific Symposium which will accompany the ICOMOS General Assembly taking place from 27 November to 2 December 2011 will explore the theme "Heritage: Driver of Development" as briefly illustrated below. Without claiming to cover the entire field, it is proposed to work according to four sub-themes whose boundaries we can possibly expand if deemed necessary.

The Symposium will be open to the public. The papers, among which 65 presentations of 20 minutes each and around one hundred brief 10 minute interventions during round tables, will form the scientific basis of the Symposium, and will feed into the discussions and resulting recommendations.

The ICOMOS members who wish to propose a paper for one of the four sub-themes, should **submit a concise half-page summary** (max. 1500 characters, please indicate the full title of the paper and the chosen sub-theme), in French or English, by email to **AG2011\_symposium@icomos.org at the latest by 31 January 2011 (18:00, Paris time)**. Please note that this deadline will be strictly adhered to. The abstracts should be accompanied by a short 5-line curriculum vitae and the author's full contact details (postal address, phone, fax, email).

Successful proposals will be selected anonymously by the Scientific Committee of the Symposium, which will determine the form in which the paper will be given (full presentation or brief intervention); to which sub-theme it is finally allocated, and will inform the authors by 1 March. Successful authors will be asked to provide a more developed proposal (3 pages or max. 9000 characters) by 1 May.

Paris, 20 December 2010

Pierre Antoine Gatier  
President of ICOMOS France

Benjamin Mouton  
Symposium Coordinator

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## **“Heritage - driver of development”**

The proposed theme of the Scientific Symposium that will form part of the General Assembly is the role of heritage in the creation of tomorrow's society.

The effects of globalization, which are manifested in growing trends towards standardization and westernization, bring various forms of instability to human societies. Until now, built heritage has been confined to the role of passive guardian of the past, and so has often been seen as a burden hindering development. In the future, it should be called upon instead to play a major role, re-establishing cultural identity and diversity as key reference points for development; these factors are currently endangered, yet vital. There is therefore a need to reassess the role of heritage in a constructive way.

### *Heritage as a driver for development?*

The concept of heritage, ranges between two extremes: from designated historic monuments to collections of memories, first needs a clear definition that identifies its inherent nature and sets out its boundaries and limits, now and in the future.

As it would be impossible to cover all these issues at the symposium, it is proposed to focus on the following four issues, chosen for their fundamental importance or contemporary relevance.

## 1 Regional Development

As more and more people abandon small towns and the countryside, migrating to large conurbations, urban development has become anarchic, *ad hoc* and difficult to control. This has already had serious, even catastrophic, results, in particular:

- The disruption of spatial scale and the loss of landmarks;
- The breakdown of social relationships, loss of communal solidarity, concerns over security, extremist and violent demonstrations;
- An imbalance between the city - where most concerns now focus and where most development projects take place - and the countryside, where the issue is no longer merely rural decline, but rather the complete socio-economic and cultural collapse of forgotten populations;
- The squandering of space, which is a non-renewable resource, and in particular the loss of farmland, resulting from both extensive urban encroachment and land being left to lie fallow; and the irreversible disfigurement of cultural landscapes.

It is vital to return to a more balanced form of development. This will be achieved at regional development level. This is where lessons from our heritage, associated with best participatory practice, will again be valued as a framework for new development: continuation of time-honoured boundaries, retention of traditional plot sizes, and methods of organization. The reinvigoration of secondary urban centres (small and medium-sized towns), and the revival of and development of methods of energy production (small-scale solar and hydroelectric power stations) and means of transport (by land, rail, water), will re-establish an essential balance in the urban-rural relationship, ensuring the sustainability of the population and its activities.

## 2 'Sustainable' Development or a return to the Art of Building

The second half of the 20th century was marked by the frantic exploitation of fossil fuels and is credited with the international spread of Western lifestyles and buildings, said to represent 'progress' but nevertheless creating a decisive break with traditional models. The goals we have today for energy saving and recycling require a fundamental change in the character of both new and old buildings, in line with the following three points:

- **Learning from the past:** Until the 1950s, heritage buildings - especially vernacular ones - provided countless examples of successful adaptation to the physical environment (location, orientation, protection from sun, wind, climate); use of local materials (earth, wood, stone, etc.); traditional techniques providing/guaranteeing the greatest opportunities to acquire and perfect artisanal skills; and an optimum capacity for recycling. The resulting buildings address today's requirements for sustainable development particularly well. Where historic buildings are capable of residential re-use according to modern sustainability criteria, we must be able to measure and maximise their current performance before adapting them according to new artificial design standards.
- **Expertise in building:** The excesses of Western and global styles in new construction, can be observed particularly in terms of scale (towers), and the use of materials and modern conveniences whose climatic impacts are highly negative. Debate in this area can be redirected based on recent research on materials, techniques, heating and ventilation methods, derived from the heritage field and traditional practices, and the increasing number of examples of highly creative contemporary architecture, which offer genuinely constructive and socio-economic alternatives.
- **Adapting to sustainable living:** Re-look at the way heritage buildings are used: rather than putting the entire onus on the buildings themselves, we must question our expectations about comfort and use. We need to abandon attempts to use sites for activities for which they are fundamentally not suited; modify usage according to the seasons (closing down places that are difficult to heat in winter); and, finally, reconsider our demands in terms of comfort, which have grown excessively and unreasonably over the last decades. The progress that will be made in the fields of environmental and public health is well known.

### 3 Development as Tourism

Heritage is a major part of the tourist industry, but at the same time, because of the mass consumption to which it is increasingly subject, it runs the risk of becoming meaningless, by fluctuating between preservation of museum pieces and theme-park caricatures. Cut off from its context, the real significance of heritage risks being drowned out by a feeble reflection, and its very nature is altered by excessive numbers of visitors and the facilities installed for them.

We must move towards the development of "sustainable tourism" which will protect and reveal the values of the heritage. Several courses of action are available, among other:

- Controlling visitor flow, so as both to limit physical erosion and to ensure the comfort of visitors and provide the best conditions for them to understand and appreciate the value of heritage. Some preliminary reports on trials successfully undertaken at a number of buildings and 'Grands Sites' [designated French cultural landscapes] may help in developing guidelines.
- But also, and above all, by means of an effective cultural programme, make the richness of the heritage and the spirit of the place perceptible, in both its tangible and intangible dimensions, by fully revealing and interpreting its elements and wider context, and by encouraging public awareness of history through education and the wider media.
- Fully re-integrate tourism activity within the local socio-economic context, and bringing the values of cultural identity to the fore.

### 4 The Economics of Development

'The amphitheatre at Nîmes and the Pont du Gard have brought more to France than they ever cost the Romans.' This quotation from Abbé Grégoire in the second year of the French Republic remains valid today. Investment in our heritage produces particularly beneficial returns.

The impact on real estate value is the first indicator of this: the cultural sector has fully understood this, but has adopted methods that have tended to be rather commercial. This investment must be better directed, by identifying targets and striving more for qualitative results rather than short-term profits.

The expected outcomes of sustainable development at the local level, and any socio-economic readjustments that may ensue, represent new economic resources for the medium and long term, which cannot be ignored, and must be fully appreciated.

The many papers, studies and debates that may arise from these different approaches could be organized into four sub-themes, the conclusions of which would be gathered together in a set of general recommendations. The symposium is primarily aimed at members of ICOMOS, but is also open to other groups, such as users, managers and practitioners in the fields of conservation and development, regional officials and investors.

On behalf of ICOMOS France  
Benjamin MOUTON, Honorary President  
20 December 2010  
(Translation from the French original)

#### References and bibliography:

- Various works
- ICOMOS France
- Claude Lévi-Strauss: *Race et Histoire* (1952)
- Françoise Choay: *Pour une anthropologie de l'espace* (2006); *Patrimoine en question* (2009)
- Henri Grégoire: Œuvres de l'Abbé Grégoire (1977) *Rapport sur les destructions opérées par le vandalisme, et sur les moyens de le réprimer*. Séance du 14 fructidor, l'an second (1794)