International Journal of Cultural Property (2008) 15:443–445. Printed in the USA.
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doi:10.1017/S0940739108080405

Report on the 16th ICOMOS General Assembly: September 29-October 4, 2008, Quebec, Canada

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The 16th General Assembly of the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) was held in Quebec, Canada, from September 29 to October 4, 2008. The events included the scientific, advisory, and executive committee meetings; Young Professional's Forum; a Scientific Symposium; and the General Assembly meeting including elections for the new executive committee. According to the ICOMOS official report, 853 participants from 77 different countries attended the event.

The Young Professionals Forum as well as the executive and advisory committee meetings were organized before the formal inauguration of the general assembly and parallel to each other. The two-day International Forum of Young Researchers and Professionals in Cultural Heritage took place on September 27 and 28, organized by Institute of Cultural Heritage, Laval University in collaboration with ICOMOS Canada and United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). The theme for the forum was similar to that of the Scientific Symposium, 'Finding the Spirit of Place: Reflecting on and Practicing the Spirit of Place'. The forum was divided into four workshops; the first three focusing on memory of place, threats to spirit of place, and safeguarding and transmitting spirit of place. The fourth workshop focused on summarizing the participants' ideas from the preceding workshops and discussions on the draft of the Declaration on Spirit of Place proposed for adoption during the ICOMOS general assembly. Each workshop started with four presentations on relevant subthemes, including researchers from different parts of the world. During the forum's two-day sessions, 12 papers and 21 posters were presented. In all 131 young professionals from 29 countries participated in the forum. The Raymond Lemaire Fund for the Next Generation Skills was also unveiled and launched. The objec-

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https://doi.org/10.1017/S0940739108080405 Published online by Cambridge University Press

tive of this new ICOMOS program is to encourage and provide support for the younger generations to develop skills and expertise in heritage conservation.

The meetings of International Scientific Committees (ISCs) of ICOMOS took place on September 29 with various workshops, discussions and tours of cultural/historic sites organized by the different ISCs. The 16th General Assembly of ICOMOS and its Scientific Symposium was officially inaugurated on September 30, with a formal ceremony at Palais Montcalm. The Scientific Symposium on the theme 'Finding the Spirit of Place' took place on October 1 and 2, with four sessions on each day. In turn, each session was carried out in five parallel subsessions having four paper presentations in each one of them. In all, almost 100 papers were presented in these sessions, in addition to the lectures given by experts on the theme of the conference during the opening and plenary sessions. The poster session of the Scientific Symposium included 151 poster presentations put on display throughout the General Assembly and Scientific Symposium. The subthemes of the symposium covered a wide range of issues dealing with tangible and intangible values of cultural heritage, emphasizing on the need to seek approaches for a balanced integration for these two aspects. The Scientific Symposium concluded with discussions on the 'Declaration on the Spirit of Place', which was adopted by the General Assembly on its final day and is now posted on the ICOMOS web site.

The Quebec Declaration deals with principles and recommendations to preserve the *spirit of a place*, defined as inclusive of both the tangible (physical) and intangible (spiritual) elements that give meaning, value, emotion, and mystery to a place, emphasizing on the importance of understanding the value given to a place when both aspects interact and mutually construct one another. An agreement for collaboration and cooperation was signed between representatives of ICOMOS and the International Federation of Landscape Architects (IFLA); and an understanding for further cooperation was reinforced with representatives of UNESCO, International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM), and the World Heritage Centre (WHC).

Two new charters were ratified: Interpretation and Presentation of 'Cultural Heritage Sites' and 'Cultural Routes'. The Interpretation and Presentation of Cultural Heritage Sites charter deals with the methods and technologies of effective, responsible public heritage communication and seeks to ensure that the fundamental issues of access, information sources, context and setting, authenticity, sustainability, research, and so forth are considered in public communication with all heritage stakeholders. The Cultural Routes charter (including natural routes of migratory birds, etc.) addresses the phenomenon of mobility and exchange; identifies the cultural values it produces as significant contributions to human history; and thus attempts to establish their definition, basic principle and specific methodology for identification, and research and proper assessment of these cultural routes. It also proposes guidelines for their protective management.

At a reception the 2008 Pierre Gazzola Prize was awarded to Carmen Añón Feliú, a landscape architect from ICOMOS Spain, who specializes in historic gardens.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0940739108080405 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Proposals for the theme of the forthcoming April 18th International Day of Monuments and Sites were also put forward: 2009, Heritage of Science; 2010, Heritage of Agriculture; and 2011, Heritage of Water. The General Assembly put forward 32 resolutions, which included issues of heritage protection, concerns on heritage at risk, encouragement and participation of youth, focus toward monuments of nature, accessibility to literature, and other organizational and doctrinal concerns. The working languages for all proceedings and meetings were English and French, with simultaneous translations in both languages.

The elections for the executive committee of ICOMOS took place on the last day of the General Assembly, where national committees participated in the voting process, through an electronic closed ballot system. The newly elected committee includes Gustavo Araoz (United States) as president; Kristal Buckley (Australia), Guo Zhan (China), Andrew Hall (South Africa), Francisco Lope Morales (Mexico), and Olivier Poisson (France) as the vice presidents; Benedicte Selfslagh (Belgium) as the secretary general; Jadran Antolovic (Croatia) as the treasurer general; and Sofia A. Kolonias (Greece), Alfredo Conti (Argentina), Gideon Koren (Israel), Kirsti Kovanen (Finland), Philippe La Hausse (Mauritius), Chirstophe Machat (Germany), Yasuyoshi Okada (Japan), Hea Un Rii (Korea), Angela Rojas (Cuba), Hristina Staneva (Bulgaria), Boguslaw Szmygin (Poland), and Wilfried Lipp (Austria) as members of the executive committee.

The General Assembly concluded with an announcement that the 17th General Assembly of ICOMOS will be held in Isfahan, Iran, from September 21 to 27, 2011. The 16th General Assembly president handed the ICOMOS flag to the president of ICOMOS Iran, Rasool Vatandost.

The city of Quebec, a World Heritage Site, proved to be an ideal location for the 16th General Assembly of ICOMOS. Commemorating its 400th anniversary Quebec offered to professionals and delegates attending the event an opportunity to enjoy the festivities and cultural experiences organized as part of its celebrations, making the experience more enriching.

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