

ICOMOS ISC Cultural Tourism

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Cultural Heritage Conservation & Sustainable Tourism for Development – “The Florence Declaration”

Submitted under **Article 58** and supported by (*fifteen ICOMOS members from five different Committees, or by five National Committees or five International Scientific Committees*) Contact – Sue Millar suemillar212@gmail.com

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Background information/Justification

The ICOMOS International Day for Monuments and Sites theme for 2017 was ‘Cultural Heritage & Sustainable Tourism’ - chosen to coincide with the United Nations International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development 2017(IYSTD)ⁱ. It provides a springboard for ICOMOS to reassert leadership in the field of cultural tourism and strengthen policies in the field of cultural heritage conservation and sustainable tourism and, in particular, sustainable tourism for development.ⁱⁱ

The ‘Florence Declaration’ is explicit in seeking to raise the profile and foster a greater understanding of the principles and practices of conservation and safeguarding heritage in the tourism context, at both developing and well established heritage tourism destinations including, but not exclusively, UNESCO World Heritage sites.

At an international level expectations are high in a fast changing scenario. Many countries rank culture as a priority for sustainable tourism for development. Increasing tourism pressures have both positive and negative impacts on conservation. The time is right for ICOMOS to regain the initiative. By positioning cultural (and natural) heritage conservation as fundamental rather than peripheral or tangential to sustainable tourism for development ICOMOS moves the conservation and safe-guarding of cultural heritage out from the shadows and into the foreground of cultural development and sustainable tourism strategic planning frameworks. Cultural heritage is centre stage in the discourse on mass tourism and ‘over-tourism’. In 1999 there were around 700 million international visitors. Now over one billion tourists cross international borders each year. The number is expected to reach 1.8 billion by 2030.

In the 20th century ICOMOS set standards and established principles articulating a symbiotic, synergistic and mutually beneficial relationship between the conservation and safeguarding of cultural heritage (tangible and intangible), local community development, visitor engagement and tourism. The first ICOMOS International Cultural Tourism Charter (ICTC) was adopted in 1976; the current Charter was endorsed by the ICOMOS General Assembly in Mexico in 1999. Our proposed resolution derives from the ICOMOS Florence Symposium on 18 & 19 May 2017, feeds into the Charter Review initiated by the ISC Cultural Tourism and complements work by the ICOMOS Task Force on Sustainable Development and United Nations (UN) Agenda 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), specifically Target 11.4. It also includes Target 8.9: “By 2030, devise and implement policies to promote sustainable tourism that creates jobs and promotes local culture and products”; which is closely allied to Target 12b: “Develop and implement tools to monitor sustainable development impacts for sustainable tourism that creates jobs and promotes local culture and products”.

Proposed Action

Our resolution is addressed to the whole membership and seeks executive action from the ICOMOS Board and Scientific Council. ICOMOS should consult widely amongst National Committees (NCs), International Scientific Committees (ISCs), Young Professionals (YPs) and wider membership with two aims: first, to raise awareness of the growing recognition and exploitation of the socio-economic value of cultural heritage at tourism destinations world-wide; and second, to establish intensive engagement with members about what current issues they perceive as significant in relation to conserving and safeguarding cultural heritage specifically in the context of sustainable tourism for development and more generally in strategic planning for sustainable tourism worldwide.

In parallel and importantly, ICOMOS International Secretariat (with the ISC Cultural Tourism) should move quickly to take a lead in convening a collaborative meeting with our external partner organisations IUCN, ICCROM, UNESCO and UNWTO to consider the formulation of a framework document providing guidance on Cultural (and Natural) Heritage Conservation & Sustainable Tourism for Development. In addition, in the light of the findings of 1999 Charter Review, consider supporting a new/ revised International Cultural Tourism

Charter for 2020.

Recalling

UNWTO United Nations International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development 2017 (IYSTD)

UNWTO Chengdu Declaration on 'Tourism and the Sustainable Development Goals', adopted on 13 September 2017

UNESCO Hangzhou Declaration on 'Placing Culture at the Heart of Sustainable Development Policies' adopted on 17 May 2013

Recognising UNESCO UNWTO Siem Reap Declaration on Tourism and Culture - Building a New Partnership Model, 5 February 2015, highlights the importance of relationships between Tourism and Heritage Sectors at national government and international institutional levels, and made an important contribution to the UN SDGs 2030. Reaffirming a commitment to new partnerships models between tourism and culture while promoting and protecting cultural heritage it aims at fostering sustainable development through cultural routes; establishing closer linkages between tourism, living cultures and cultural and creative industries; and supporting the contribution of cultural tourism to urban development.

Acknowledging the Statement by ICOMOS on the Adoption of the UN Sustainable Development Goals, issued on 8 October 2015 and the ICOMOS Concept Note 'Cultural Heritage, the UN Sustainable Development Goals, and the New Urban Agenda', February 2016.

Considering the recent historical decision by UNWTO to approve a Framework Convention on Tourism Ethics, 15 September 2017. The Convention, approved at the 22nd UNWTO General Assembly transforms the Code of Ethics for Tourism into an international convention, the first in the life of the Organization. The Convention covers the responsibilities of all stakeholders in the development sustainable tourism, providing a framework that recommends an ethical and sustainable modus operandi, including the right to tourism, the freedom of movement for tourists and the rights of employees and professionals.

Accepting UNESCO World Heritage Convention 1972 only mentions tourism once and it does so in the context of threats of a magnitude potentially great enough to warrant putting a site on the List of World Heritage Sites in Danger. Unlike earlier versions the 2016 Operating Statement covers tourism in terms of visitor management and providing appropriate facilities and interpretation for visitors emphasising the potential economic benefits tourism can bring to world heritage destinations.

Building on ICOMOS charters, declarations, and reports specifically:

- International Charter for the Conservation and Restoration of Monuments and Sites (The Venice Charter) - 1964
- The Nara Document on Authenticity -1994
- International Cultural Tourism Charter –Managing Tourism at Places of Heritage Significance -1999
- The Paris Declaration on Heritage as a Driver of Development -2011
- ICOMOS IUCN Connecting Practice Report 2015
- *Our Common Dignity: advancing rights-based approaches to heritage conservation*, presented to ICOMOS Advisory Committee 2016

Reinstating the importance and relevance of ICOMOS International Cultural Tourism Charter in today's world and recognising it was forward thinking almost 20 years ago. In acknowledging tourism as a vehicle for cultural exchange, providing 'a personal experience, not only of that which has survived from the past, but of the contemporary life and society of others' and the need to provide a worthwhile visitor experience, ICOMOS International Cultural Tourism Charter presaged not only the broadening of the concept of cultural heritage and the need for the promotion of authentic products and programmes of host communities but also the wide enjoyment of the heritage of others as an inclusive and no longer an elitist leisure past time. The six principles remain largely relevant today.

Noting through an emphasis on stakeholder involvement with communities of interest, the Nara+20 process 'On heritage practices, cultural values, and the concept of authenticity' 2015 implicitly signals the diminishing role being played by the State in the heritage field and by extension that of the expert and the scientific discourse from which modern conservation evolved.

Affirming the importance of the role – and responsibilities - of tourists as major stakeholders in safeguarding

and protecting cultural heritage and cultural diversity through their multiple and dynamic interactions with the places they visit and the people they encounter in formal and informal settings at a destination. Empowered by and with digital technologies tourist choices of where to go, what to see, how to engage in a valued distinctive experience are a complex inter-weaving of received promotions and individual interests. In the words of Irina Bokova, Former Director-General UNESCO: "Every tourist must be a custodian of world heritage, an ambassador of intercultural dialogue. This is why safeguarding cultural heritage must move forward with sustainable tourism".

Taking into account the economic influence of private sector interests on conservation decision-making and priorities relating to the historic built environment; living heritage in urban areas as well as on individual monuments and sites. Also, the public sector's focus on cultural tourism development within strategic planning processes designed to redevelop, reenergise and encourage community enterprise as part of the regeneration initiatives. Initiatives that all too frequently lead to the gentrification and homogenisation of historic urban landscapes and disappearance of local communities in favour of the creation of the 21st century phenomenon of the 'tourist historic city'. (UNSDG Target 11.4).

Conscious too that in creating and providing local cultural products and services to visitors - fostered by, for instance, creative hubs - cultural heritage is a key source of job creation and poverty alleviation in towns and cities and across rural territories worldwide. Target 8.9 of the UNSDGs promotes culture as defining distinctiveness and difference for visitor engagement at a tourism destination. There is an increasing awareness that in exploiting cultural resources heritage values and notions of authenticity and integrity can be enhanced sustained or destroyed. A virtuous cycle of sustainable development allows simultaneously for protection and dynamism, playfulness and core values to work in harmonious rhythms enabling the restating reinforcement and reinvention of cultural heritage through visitor engagement.

Urges ICOMOS Board to support - in the context of tourism - formulating a framework for a holistic integrated place-based approach to protecting and safeguarding the tangible and intangible cultural heritage; encouraging the empowerment of multi-cultural as well as mono-cultural and indigenous communities; and developing various methods of engaging visitors directly or indirectly in contributing to the enhancement of tangible and intangible heritage values. A shared experience that explicitly or implicitly supports heritage conservation is - we contend - an essential pre-requisite for distinctive self-confident communities as well as individual well-being.

Reiterates that heritage, is a way by which societies culturally value, represent and understand the past and is widely recognised not only as an increasingly important resource, one which is produced, exhibited and consumed, but is also a key element in shaping, projecting and challenging identities from the level of the individual to that of the nation state. Without a set of parameters for cultural heritage and tourism development, it is all too easy for the balance to be shifted in favour of exploitation at the expense of shaping identities. In an era tendentiously described as 'mass cultural tourism' the struggle to maintain a balance and diversity within the dynamic interchange of development and conservation is critical and on-going.

Strongly recommends ICOMOS' Board, in collaboration with IUCN, ICCROM, UNESCO, UNWTO and other international bodies concerned with setting standards for heritage conservation, formulate an agenda to provide a framework document to address pertinent issues and provide guidance on Cultural Heritage Conservation & Sustainable Tourism for Development including inter alia

1. Management of the visitor experience to support sustainable tourism for development
2. Planning to enable positive interactions between local people and visitors
3. Regulation to counter over-tourism in historic towns and cities and iconic World Heritage sites
4. Guidance on the appropriate use of replicas
5. Promotion and engagement of visitors in conservation practices and activities
6. Parameters for immersive living heritage experiences
7. Awareness of decision making priorities for conservation in the sustainable tourism context
8. Measures to countenance the invisibility of many varied and creative conservation achievements relating to the historic environment
9. Methodologies for harmonising the exploitation of cultural and natural heritage resources with their protection
10. Local economic development that complements and enhances heritage values rather than abuses and diminishes them
11. Inclusion of cultural resource management practices in visitor management at natural heritage destinations

12. Participation of tourists in supporting communities in heritage reconstruction following natural disasters and armed conflict

Confirms the position stated by ICOMOS to UNWTO in response to the invitation from UNWTO to contribute to the Discussion Paper on “Sustainable Tourism for Development” June 2017.

“For ICOMOS it is axiomatic that where cultural heritage is concerned tourism development cannot be described as sustainable if heritage protection, safeguarding and actions in favour of conservation are compromised over the short, medium and long term.”

ⁱ The IYSTD five themes focus on tourism as a sustainable tool for development: 1. Inclusive and sustainable economic growth; 2. Social Inclusiveness, employment and poverty reduction; 3. Resource efficiency, environmental protection and climate change; 4. Cultural values, diversity and heritage; 5. Mutual understanding, peace and security.

ⁱⁱ There is an element of confusion and interchangeability between the terms *sustainable tourism* and *sustainable tourism for development*. The latter expression appears to take particular account of developing countries: it veers towards encompassing notions of poverty alleviation and an inclusive society - empowering communities through the positive exploitation of cultural and natural heritage assets - in line with the thinking underpinning the UNSDGs 2030. Whereas the widely used and well-established term *sustainable tourism* is all encompassing denoting tourism strategies, products and services designed to enhance and sustain the interface between visitors and host communities at a tourist destination – so better protecting local people’s special places and way of life.