

### **3 REPORTS ON THE PAST YEAR**

#### **3-1 Report by the President of ICOMOS**

Dear ICOMOS members,

Since our last General Assembly and Advisory Committee meetings in Sydney in September 2023 until today, the new Board has worked to continue the momentum of their predecessors and maintain a healthy, efficient, and inclusive ICOMOS. The Board met 12 times: in 2023 on September 9 (Sydney, hybrid mode), October 18, November 13 and 20, and December 18 (via Zoom); and in 2024 on January 17 (via Zoom); March 14 and 15 (Paris, hybrid mode); June 3 and 27, September 6, and October 2 (via Zoom). In Ouro Preto, two hybrid meetings are planned for November 10 and 13. As usual, the Vice-President of the Advisory Committee, the Director General, the Director and the Coordinator of the Network and Committees of the International Secretariat, and the Honorary Presidents attend the Board meetings in an advisory capacity without voting rights.

During the same period, the Bureau met six times: in 2023 on October 18 and November 20 (via Zoom); in 2024 on January 16 (via Zoom); March 14 (Paris, hybrid mode), May 24 and August 24 (via Zoom). A hybrid meeting is planned in Ouro Preto on November 10. The Director General, the Director, and the Coordinator of the Network and Committees of the International Secretariat attend the Bureau meetings in an advisory capacity without voting rights.

To facilitate communication, reduce costs, and lessen our environmental footprint, we conducted most of our working meetings digitally via Zoom, except for statutory meetings organized in hybrid mode. We also held countless working meetings, mostly electronically and in small groups, to address issues and solve daily problems. To ensure continuity and consolidate results, the Board was again organized into task teams, some continuing work initiated during the 2020-2023 term and others tackling new themes. The current themes of our work are as follows:

- Monitoring and Impact (GA2020-2022-2023 Resolutions) and WH (GA2017 Resolution) – coordinated by Grainne Shaffrey
- Monitoring of National Committees and International Scientific Committees (and their members) – coordinated by Riin Alatalu
- Cultural Diversity and Multilingualism – coordinated by Adriana Careaga
- University Forum – coordinated by Leonardo Castriota
- Communication and Sustainability – coordinated by Nupur Prothi and Monica Rhodes
- Fundraising and Finances – coordinated by Cyrill von Planta
- Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) – coordinated by Jurn Buisman
- International Day for Monuments and Sites, April 18 event coordination – coordinated by Zeynep-Gül Ünal
- Google Art and Culture – coordinated by Leonardo Castriota
- Monitoring and Crisis Response – coordinated by Zeynep-Gül Ünal
- Africa Initiative – coordinated by Chilangwa Chaiwa
- 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Venice Charter – coordinated by Mariana Pereira
- Review of Terms of Reference for Statutory Meetings – coordinated by Jurn Buisman
- Monitoring of International Working Groups and Review of the Eger-Xian Principles – coordinated by Grainne Shaffrey
- Review of the Doctrinal Text Adoption Process – coordinated by Grainne Shaffrey

- Organization of G20 Thematic Meetings (coordinated by Adriana Careaga)
- Ethical Issues and Conduct (coordinated by Grainne Shaffrey)
- Advancing Relations with Armed Forces and Defense Ministries (coordinated by Cyrill von Planta)
- "A Spot in the Horizon" (coordinated by Jurn Buisman)
- Governance for the AdCom (coordinated by Teresa Patricio)

The Board also has liaison members with the following ICOMOS bodies:

- Advisory Committee – liaison by Susan McIntyre-Tamwoy

And with the International Working Groups:

- Our Common Dignity Initiative–Rights-Based Approach – liaison by Adriana Careaga
- Indigenous Heritage – liaison by Susan McIntyre-Tamwoy
- Sustainable Development Goals – liaison by Marianne Knutsen
- Emerging Professionals – liaison by Mariana Pereira
- Syria and Iraq – liaison by Teresa Patricio
- Climate Action – liaison by Dana Firas
- Culture-Nature Journey – liaison by Nupur Prothi

Over the past 10 months, the Board has developed an enormous amount of work. Each Board meeting exceeded the scheduled time due to the overwhelming number of issues to discuss and decide upon, but the Board made collegial decisions even on difficult matters. We held several extraordinary meetings and had to deal with several urgent out-of-session decisions. We obviously tried to minimize this type of action. As in my previous reports, I will summarize the most representative topics of the work done since our General Assembly in Sydney.

## **1. Representing ICOMOS Worldwide – External Relations**

External relations are a significant topic for ICOMOS. An increasing number of actors are active in the heritage scene, with whom we regularly develop contacts and collaborations that help project ICOMOS' image worldwide and partnerships that allow us to develop thinking on current issues. Regarding our external relations policy, we must mention the official representations of the Board:

- European Commission - Expert group on cultural heritage (GRP-EAC.ExpGrp Cult Heritage) – Represented by Cyrill von Planta.
- European Commission - Subgroup Safeguarding cultural Heritage in Ukraine (GRP-CHEG - *Subgroup Safeguarding Ukraine CH*) – Represented by Riin Alatalu.
- European Heritage Alliance 3.3 – Represented by Sara van Rompay (ICOMOS Belgium), representing Riin Alatalu and Jurn Buisman.
- Europa Nostra - Advisory Council of the European Heritage Hub – Represented by Teresa Patricio
- Council of Europe - Steering Committee for Culture, Heritage and Landscape (CDCPP) – Represented by Jurn Buisman on behalf of Riin Alatalu.
- Davos Alliance *Baukultur* -Represented by Teresa Patricio, Focal point Riin Alatalu.
- WHIPIC - International Centre for Interpretation and Presentation of World Heritage Sites under UNESCO auspices, Republic of Korea – Represented by Marie-Laure Lavenir as Director General.
- ARC-WH Arab Regional Centre for World Heritage in Bahrain – Represented by Marie-Laure Lavenir as Director General.

In 2023, the Board participated in a large number of meetings, webinars, workshops, and conferences organized by other NGOs and institutions, playing a significant role in representation and knowledge dissemination. Overall, the Board participated in and represented ICOMOS in around 100 activities across five continents. Some examples include:

- International conference on cultural policies for the promotion of the European Democratic Memory, Madrid, 4 to 6 October 2023.  
An international meeting was held as part of the Spanish Presidency of the Council of the European Union to discuss actions for defending human rights and the commitment to "non-repetition" as an unequivocal ethical imperative for a democratic European society.
- First High-Level Ministerial Dialogue for Culture-Based Climate Action, co-chaired by the UAE Minister of Culture and the Brazil Minister of Culture during COP28, Dubai, 8 December 2023.  
COP28 marked a paradigm shift, with the formation of the Group of Friends for Culture-Based Climate Action (GFCBCA) and the first high-level multilateral ministerial dialogue on culture. Ministers from all regions of the world committed to making culture an essential vector for climate action. GFCBCA is an international coalition of United Nations Member States created to address the threat posed by climate change to cultural sites, traditional practices, and Indigenous knowledge systems.  
ICOMOS is one of the founding signatories of the global call to the UNFCCC to place cultural heritage, the arts, and creative sectors at the heart of climate action. Nearly 1,500 organizations and individuals have already signed this call.
- UNESCO International conference on Cultural Heritage and Peace: Building on 70 years of the Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict, The Hague, 13 to 15 May 2025.  
ICOMOS participated in a panel to discuss collaborations and the importance of international cooperation in preserving cultural heritage in emergencies, exploring the intersection of technology, law, and practical strategies for safeguarding cultural heritage in times of peace and crisis.

## **2. Ensuring Collaboration and Communication among ICOMOS entities and members**

Collaboration with our National and International Scientific Committees, and International Working Groups has become a key focus of my presidency since 2020. The Board participated in several activities.

In 2024, the University Forum was reactivated by the Board's task team, organizing an "international summer course" in collaboration with ICOMOS Slovenia and ICOMOS Austria. Our Emerging Professional Working Group also organized an online webinar on dissonant heritage, supported by the University Forum.

Furthermore, the Emerging Professionals are undergoing restructuring, and the Board is supporting their reflections. Since their formation, the EPs have been doing impeccable work, setting a high standard! I thank them warmly for their excellent work and their enthusiastic participation in activities. I take this opportunity to thank the colleagues who continue to work diligently as mentors.

## **3. Implementing ICOMOS' responsibilities under the World Heritage Convention**

As an Advisory Body to the World Heritage Convention, ICOMOS provides scientific and professional expertise to the World Heritage Committee through various initiatives, primarily:

- Evaluation of cultural and mixed sites proposed for inscription on the World Heritage List. For this work, ICOMOS currently organizes two World Heritage panels: one for preliminary assessments and a second for the evaluation of nominations.

- Participation in reactive monitoring missions and the monitoring of the state of conservation of cultural World Heritage properties, with the subsequent preparation of state of conservation (SOC) reports.
- Providing upstream advice to State Parties and assisting in the review of international assistance requests submitted by State Parties under the World Heritage Fund.
- When requested, preparing thematic studies and contributing to and supporting capacity-building activities.

This work takes up much of our time as an Advisory Body. It is a delicate yet rewarding mission, one that I am committed to approaching with professionalism and independence! Approximately 450 ICOMOS members participate in this work annually, and I would like to thank them, as well as the two Directors of the World Heritage Units and their teams.

To improve the implementation of the World Heritage Convention and address current and future challenges, since January 2022, ICOMOS has initiated close exchanges with State Party delegations at UNESCO. In 2024, we continued this effort by engaging in dialogue on World Heritage issues, explaining the importance of ICOMOS' work in the World Heritage nomination process and the state of conservation process. To continue this initiative, ICOMOS organized, for the third time, a meeting to present the nomination evaluation procedure to State Party delegations, focusing on the changes introduced in recent years, such as the new preliminary evaluation procedure, to enable more dialogue during the evaluation cycle. A total of 111 delegates representing 86 delegations participated in the meeting, which took place at UNESCO headquarters on 11 September 2024, and we were pleased to have the participation of the Director and Head of the World Heritage Nominations Unit of the World Heritage Centre, as well as the participation of the Program Director of World Heritage at the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).

This year, for the first time, we organized information sessions with the European and African Regional groups. Three sessions were held, with the following themes: 1) The role of ICOMOS International Scientific Committees and National Committees in the nomination process, 2) The Preliminary assessment, 3) The monitoring process. We hope to extend this work to other regions.

#### **4. Monitoring and Responding to Crises**

Monitoring and responding to crises affecting heritage and our National Committees is a crucial task for the Board. Our Crisis and Conflict Monitoring Unit, coordinated by Zeynep-Gül Ünal, a Board member and ICORP vice-president, maintains contact with our members and monitors various crisis situations worldwide. This year, we have followed situations in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea (Ukraine), Sudan, Ukraine, and Gaza, among others.

For this work, we are in contact with our National Committees and organizations such as the Blue Shield, ICCROM, and UNESCO to exchange information, define actions, and prepare projects. We are currently participating in UNESCO's coordination workshops and meetings for Ukraine, Gaza, and the Middle East, ensuring liaison with partner organizations in our field.

The Russia-Ukraine war is causing significant damage to all forms of cultural heritage. Since 2022, ICOMOS has focused its resources and efforts on supporting our colleagues in Ukraine and organizing the transport of protective and documentation materials. Currently, we are in the final phase of the project with UNESCO, "Support for Ukraine in Culture and Education through UNESCO: Emergency Response for World Heritage and Cultural Property; damage assessment and protection," generously funded by the UNESCO/Japanese Funds-in-Trusts. The objectives are as follows:

- Preserve and protect Ukraine's World Heritage properties and sites on the Tentative List, as well as key damaged cultural heritage sites;
- Ensure the adequate protection of a selection of damaged cultural properties by implementing emergency measures and providing equipment to prevent their deterioration, destruction, or looting;

- Strengthen damage monitoring and assessment (both remotely and on-site) of cultural properties, including all World Heritage and tentative list sites, and prepare emergency intervention plans.

The project is being carried out in partnership with Ukraine's Ministry of Culture Strategic Communications, the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR – monitoring and assessment activities via remote and satellite image analysis), and ICCROM. A team of ICOMOS members from our Scientific Committees and Working Groups is involved: disaster preparedness (ICORP), historic towns and villages (CIVVIH), documentation (CIPA), and Our Common Dignity - Rights-Based Approaches (RBA WG).

Our World Heritage Units also monitor sites in crisis zones and work jointly with UNESCO, the World Heritage Centre, and State Parties on both emergency listings on the World Heritage List and the state of conservation process. Work on the state of conservation of sites in crisis zones highlights a series of challenges for their protection and management.

Civil unrest, conflict, and wars continue to pose a major threat to communities and their heritage. In conflict or post-conflict situations where on-the-ground missions and actions are not possible, we try to support our National Committees.

The war in Gaza is causing unimaginable damage to all forms of cultural heritage (movable and immovable, tangible and intangible, cultural and natural) at the heart of the populations' identity. Throughout this very challenging year, the ICOMOS Crisis and Conflict Monitoring Unit, along with ICORP, has maintained contact and inquiries with the ICOMOS Palestine National Committee and is monitoring the situation. The Palestinian National Committee works tirelessly to document, share, and alert on the state of their heritage. I thank them for their courageous and dedicated work! As I write this report, the conflict is spreading throughout the region, and we will have to adapt our working methods to the scale of the damage.

The Crisis and Conflict Monitoring Unit is also following the conflict in Sudan. Close contacts are maintained with the President of the National Committee, who regularly sends us reports on the situation on the ground. I thank him for this important work! The reports we receive allow us to identify the key needs for emergency response and provide technical advice on damage and risk assessments.

We work closely with UNESCO and other institutions and organizations, particularly in the Arab region, using innovative digital approaches to identify damage and implement necessary protective measures as soon as possible.

We also work on situations where heritage is negatively impacted by extreme weather events and other natural disasters. The joint ICOMOS and ICCROM publication, *Guidance on Post-Disaster and Post-Conflict Recovery and Reconstruction for Heritage Places of Cultural Significance and World Heritage Cultural Properties*, published in January 2024, provides a useful and welcome framework for professionals working in the field of heritage conservation, offering a framework for recovery efforts to address and overcome the trauma associated with destruction and loss.

Development pressures continue to affect heritage in general and World Heritage in particular (large-scale infrastructure development, urban development, mining and extraction, border barriers, tourism infrastructure development, etc.). Responses to these pressures require strong governance and legislation, as well as rigorous assessments of heritage impacts. The Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage have proven to be an effective tool in helping State Parties meet their obligations. Recognizing the need for heritage professionals to strengthen their expertise in implementing heritage impact assessments (HIA), ICOMOS launched a series of workshops in 2024 titled "Capacity Building for Impact Assessment in a World Heritage Context".

In our work, we emphasize that for the governance processes of cultural heritage, it is necessary to use a human rights-based approach that respects the rights of Indigenous peoples and local communities. We also stress this within the framework of World Heritage, where increased attention is needed. This represents a significant new challenge for our societies and for an inclusive implementation of the World Heritage Convention. ICOMOS is pleased to have addressed this issue during our General Assembly in 2023 and has continued, tirelessly, to support human rights-based approaches.

## **5. Communication and Institutional Memory of ICOMOS**

Since 2022, several actions have been taken to improve our image and create a strong visual identity. This is a long-term task, and I thank our Communication Coordinator, Yuna Mathan, for her dedicated work. The main orientations of this work and a roadmap were prepared in 2023 to define different communication strategies, redesign the visual identity, and launch a new website planned for 2025.

The institutional memory of ICOMOS is also a key concern, and we are in the process of repositioning our Documentation Center in a world where digital online resources have taken precedence. We aim to improve our ability to make our documents more accessible, user-friendly, and widely promoted. For this work, I sincerely thank the meticulous work of Bertrand Bellet, our Documentation and Archives Manager. I emphasize the importance of the work of our National and International Scientific Committees and urge everyone to deposit their productions in the Open Archive to preserve our institutional memory.

### **5. The Institutional identity of ICOMOS**

This year, the Board faced a variety of issues concerning different National Committees, particularly relating to economic, statutory, and institutional identity issues. The Board, together with the International Secretariat, worked directly with the National Committees when necessary. Specific working groups were organized to resolve problems more efficiently. For this work, collaboration with our International Committee on Legal, Administrative, and Financial Issues (ICLAFI) is essential to producing high-quality teamwork. I thank all those who collaborate with us.

In conclusion, I would like to thank the members of the Board for their commitment and dedication. I also thank the teams working at ICOMOS Headquarters for the extraordinary results achieved in all meetings and for supporting our various National and International Committees and Working Groups. I thank our Secretary General and the ICOMOS International Secretariat for tirelessly accomplishing this essential task: drafting agendas, reports, and meeting minutes, and preparing working documents.

I also share my immense gratitude to our World Heritage Units, the ICOMOS World Heritage Panel members, our advisors, and the hundreds of ICOMOS members who work anonymously each year to ensure our success in World Heritage matters.

I congratulate and thank our Director General for her competence and work, always characterized by efficiency and an impeccable commitment to fairness and continuity. I also congratulate and thank the entire International Secretariat, especially their Director, for her unconditional dedication, and the two Directors of our World Heritage Units. Their commitment allows us to develop high-quality work each year, recognized and appreciated worldwide, especially in heritage conservation circles.

As always, I will conclude with a wish: to continue participating in this work of scientific and operational excellence, which is based on solid structures but, above all, on the involvement and commitment of ICOMOS members. Engage in this dynamic, as everyone contributes to collective success. Thank you all!

Teresa Patrício,  
President of ICOMOS  
Paris, 1 October 2024