



ICOMOS Intervention for the Thematic Session (2) on Culture for sustainable development, Mondiacult + 40 Conference

28 September 2022

Good afternoon, your excellencies, and colleagues. **My name is Mario Santana Quintero**, and I am speaking on behalf of ICOMOS, as its Secretary General.

The International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) is a non-governmental, not-for-profit international organization and **has been a partner to UNESCO and its member states for numerous projects and initiatives**. Over the last 50 years, we have been **a pillar in the implementation of the World Heritage Convention**, the most comprehensive international instrument that integrates protection efforts for both nature and cultural properties that has allowed to mobilize communities in more than 160 states parties to care for these sites.

ICOMOS is a partner for developing and engaging reflections about today's global challenges to build a more robust and resilient cultural sector, fully anchored in public policies, community needs and sustainable development perspectives.

ICOMOS held several preparatory events for Mondiacult 2022; five regional consultations were held between December 2021 and February 2022, a ResiliartxMondiacult in February 2022, two online culture forums in May and July 2022, and one hybrid online-in person event in Mexico City in September 2022.

We have identified six issues to deal with in future cultural policies:

1. Climate action as a priority for cultural policy

Cultural policies need to go beyond their traditional boundaries, as climate change and biodiversity loss now form part of our everyday reality. Ambitious, forward-looking actions are needed that acknowledge that culture, heritage, creativity, indigenous peoples' and local communities' languages, wisdom, knowledge systems, and traditional crafts and materials offer a wealth of climate solutions. We need to advocate for culture and cultural heritage policies that support inclusive, transformative, and just climate action.

2. Promotion of Cultural Pluralism in cultural policy

Policies need to be strengthened to promote cultural pluralism using intercultural dialogue that is aware of inclusion and inequalities. Digital technologies are a strong means of preserving cultures and presenting cultural diversity to the global community, while providing access to previously unknown resources to recover assumed lost intangible heritage. Legal protection of cultural diversity, focusing on collective human and cultural rights and communities need to be



part of cultural policies. Social justice and peace need to form part of overarching aspirations of cultural policies for the future.

3. Government and Civil Society cooperation for cultural policies

It is time for governments to work more closely with civil society to promote new resilient development models that are human rights centered, diversity-conscious, environmentally respectful and sustainable. Civil society actors have a key role in engaging citizens and communities and a clear mechanism for meaningful feedback to government policies is needed to effectively develop innovative yet grounded cultural policies for the future.

4. Tangible and intangible heritage as drivers for socio-economic growth

Tangible and intangible heritage can be used for positive socio-economic growth through engaging with the community to best understand and encompass their cultural approaches and promote well-being. Traditional practices and knowledge can be used to develop non-anthropocentric policy and socio-economic activities that best serve our global community and provide protection against climate change, conflict, environmental loss and potential biohazards.

Engagement with culture at all levels of education can encourage innovative development of culture-based development and provide long term protection for cultural sites and practices as education promotes ownership, which leads to caring about it.

5. Damage through present and historic conflict

Any damage to heritage or culture impacts all of humanity, however the accidental or intentional harm to cultural sites during conflict is especially felt. Monitoring of on-going conflicts to hold people accountable is the first stage in decreasing the damage. Conservation then provides healing for the impacted communities. A balanced approach to restitution of cultural objects, through education and support, and the protection of heritage objects, agency can be returned to the community.

6. Culture as the fourth pillar for development

While culture is a linking issue for the three recognised pillars of sustainable development, economic, social and environmental, new development models are needed at all levels that elevate culture as a pillar of sustainable development. Citizens need to be at the center of such policies, and effective, easy to understand tools need to be developed to promote holistic sustainable development actions that celebrate cultural life, creativity, and diversity of cultural



expressions. ICOMOS supports the development of a Culture goal for inclusion in the post 2030 Agenda.

We look forward to more discussions with you, after the Mondiacult 2022 World Conference, and collaborating in various ways as we move forward to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda.

Thank you very much.