

DECLARATION OF ICOMOS MARKING THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS, 1998

Meeting in Stockholm, ICOMOS wishes to underline the importance of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, celebrating its 50th anniversary in 1998, in particular its recognition of the right of everyone to partake freely in the cultural life of the community.

In addition to the importance of specific conventions or legislation relating to cultural heritage and its preservation, ICOMOS affirms that the right to cultural heritage is an integral part of human rights considering the irreplaceable nature of the tangible and intangible legacy it constitutes, and that it is threatened to in a world which is in constant transformation. This right carries duties and responsibilities for individuals and communities as well as for institutions and states. To protect this right today is to preserve the rights of future generations.

- The right to have the authentic testimony of cultural heritage, respected as an expression of one's cultural identity within the human family;
- The right to better understand one's heritage and that of others;
- The right to wise and appropriate use of heritage;
- The right to participate in decisions affecting heritage and the cultural values it embodies;
- The right to form associations for the protection and promotion of cultural heritage.

These are rights ICOMOS believes must be respected in order to preserve and enrich World's cultural diversity.

These rights assume the need to recognize, appreciate and maintain heritage, and to improve and respect a framework for action. They assume appropriate development strategies and an equitable partnership between society, the private sector and individuals to harmonize interests affecting cultural heritage, and to reconcile preservation with development. In the spirit that animates such statements, they call for international co-operation in the conventions, legislation and other statutory measures.

These are responsibilities that all - individually and collectively - must share just as all share the wealth of the memory, in the search for a sustainable development at the service of Mankind.

Stockholm, September 11th, 1998