

Perspectives on the Board Meeting in Buenos Aires (Annual General Assembly 3-6 December 2018)

Today **ICOMOS** has:-

- around 10.100 Individual Members in 153 countries, (excluding those members who participate but who have not joined and paid their membership);
- 320 Institutional Members;
- 110 National Committees (some are ineffective with few members. Some 153 different nationalities are present at ICOMOS events)
- 28 International Scientific Committees. (some are ineffective with few members and little product of policy or advice)

But participation in ISCs and NCs depends upon voluntary action by the membership and not as a result of the Board setting targets for performance in conservation policy and growth.

Over the last 53 years and with its HQ in Paris, it is effectively subject to French Law and administrative discipline. Its Statutes and Rules of Procedure are good.

But ICOMOS is run on a shoe-string budget and this reduces its effectiveness.

Perhaps ICOMOS does not yet focus on the social and cultural qualities adequately to explain value – all values are intangible

ICOMOS does not market any philosophy of cross-cultural understanding and acceptance of difference in a world of rich diversity. This is much needed in a globalising world where shared disciplines and procedures for action are different to accepting and promoting cultural difference.

The Europe Section of ICOMOS International has 44 ICOMOS National Committees in Europe. The Europe Group holds an annual meeting, accompanied by a scientific conference and side-events, hosted on a rotational basis by one of the Committees, and a working meeting during the ICOMOS General Assemblies. The objectives of the Europe Group are to:

- Enhance cooperation among the European ICOMOS National Committees and heritage stakeholders and to improve their communication;
- Work jointly on issues related to cultural heritage, such as climate change or the impact of the economic crisis on the heritage sector;
- Share resources and create synergies for the implementation of common initiatives;
- Share information with members through meetings, research, dissemination etc.
- Monitor opportunities for participation of ICOMOS in projects with external partners.

It is hard to find energies to run regional programmes. The 3rd age (older) membership of ICOMOS reflects this fact. Other important areas are mentioned in Stephen Hughes report:- A Nordic Countries regional meeting; Climate Change and the adverse effects upon the world's heritage environment; Emerging Professionals; Sustainable Development; the great skills required to establish World Heritage Sites, where the importance of Education in this process of Inscription is vital. There were presentations of interesting projects underway in South America.

At the ICOMOS Board Meeting and Advisory Committee in Buenos Aires, the administrative machine took precedence over policy for the future. But there is, I believe, an opportunity for ICOMOS to strengthen its leadership in the world on matters for which it is uniquely equipped - helping the world to realise the value of the past and the importance of recognising those values in building the future. In addition, ICOMOS along with ICOM can help the world to accept and appreciate the diverse cultural values of the world's societies, which might lead to greater understanding of difference and acceptance of diversity.

For me, the vision for future ICOMOS will require enlarged membership, improved finances, forceful marketing of the excellent skills and experience of the membership, and promoting the ethically correct professionalism and integrity of its present ethical codes. These ideas were absent in the AGM, and there was a lack of debate.

With its administrative house now in order, the ICOMOS Board could lead the philosophy of conservation more forcefully, if membership is to increase, if finances are to improve, and if the range of possible services, research, education and benefits are to be realised.

Arising out of the Buenos Aires AGM, these are the challenges for ICOMOS as I see them.

Donald Hankey