THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE ON ARCHAEOLOGICAL HERITAGE MANAGEMENT (ICAHM) - A STATUS REPORT

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Abstract

ICOMOS is an international non-governmental organization of professionals, dedicated to the conservation of the world's historic monuments and sites. ICOMOS provides a forum for professional dialogue and a vehicle for the collection, evaluation, and dissemination of information on conservation principles, techniques, and policies. The ICOMOS Charter for the Protection and Management of the Archaeological Heritage (1990) lays down principles relating to the different aspects of archaeological heritage management. These include the responsibilities of public authorities and legislators, principles relating to the professional performance of the processes of inventory, survey, excavation, documentation, research, maintenance, conservation, preservation, reconstruction, information, presentation, public access and use of the heritage, and the qualification of professionals involved in the protection of the archaeological heritage. ICAHM is the Archaeology Technical Committee of the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS). In this presentation, I will explain the organization of ICAHM, outline its goals and objectives and provide an update on its most recent activities and current priorities.

Résumé

L'ICOMOS est une organisation internationale non gouvernementale de spécialistes voués à la conservation des monuments et lieux historiques de la planète. Il offre aux spécialistes une tribune d'échange et un véhicule pour la collecte, l'évaluation et la diffusion de l'information sur les principes, les techniques et les politiques de conservation. Sa charte pour la protection et la gestion du patrimoine archéologique (1990) énonce les principes qui régissent les différents volets de la gestion du patrimoine archéologique. À ce chapitre, il faut compter les responsabilités des pouvoirs publics et du législateur, les principes auxquels sont assujettis les professionnels sur le plan des inventaires, des relevés, des fouilles, de la documentation, de la recherche, de la sauvegarde, de la conservation, de la préservation, de la reconstitution/reconstruction, de l'information, de la mise en valeur, de l'accès du public au patrimoine et de son utilisation de ce patrimoine et des compétences des spécialistes qui interviennent dans la protection du patrimoine archéologique. L'ICAHM est le Comité technique sur l'archéologie du Conseil international des monuments et des sites (ICOMOS). Dans mon exposé, je décrirai son organisation, j'énoncerai ses objectifs et je ferai le point sur ses activités les plus récentes et ses priorités actuelles.

Introduction

Before giving you a status report on the International Committee on Archaeological Heritage Management (ICAHM), I would like to put this committee in context by describing the larger international organization it is part of.

The International Council on Monuments and Sites, ICOMOS (web site: www. international. icomos.org) was established in1964. It is an international non-governmental organization of heritage professionals, dedicated to the conservation of the world's historic monuments and sites. ICOMOS provides a

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forum for professional dialogue and is a vehicle for the collection, evaluation, and dissemination of information on conservation principles, techniques, and policies. It has members from over 90 countries, each of which has a National ICOMOS Committee. It holds a General Assembly, and Scientific Committee meetings every 3 years. ICOMOS is interdisciplinary and has 21 Scientific Committees including two committees that relate specifically to archaeology. It is UNESCO's principle advisor regarding conservation and protection of monuments and sites and advises the World Heritage Committee and UNESCO on the nomination of new cultural sites to the World Heritage List, established by the World Heritage Convention.

The Archaeology Scientific Committee of ICOMOS is ICAHM, the International Committee for Archaeological Heritage Management, which was created in 1985. Its accomplishments to date include the publication of an international Directory of Archaeological Heritage Management, the 1994 Montreal Conference on *In Situ* Preservation and an associated publication entitled *"Archaeological Remains - In Situ Preservation"*. The Charter for Protection and Management of Archaeological Heritage was also produced by ICAHM in 1990. This charter lays down principles relating to different aspects of archaeological heritage management and describes responsibilities of public authorities and legislators. It also includes principles regarding professional performance of processes including inventory, survey, excavation, documentation, research, maintenance, conservation and preservation, reconstruction, information, presentation, public access and use of heritage, and the qualification of professionals involved in protection of archaeological heritage.

Recent Events

In October 1999, the 12th General Assembly of ICOMOS was held in Mexico, with the theme of Politics of Conservation and Sustainable Development. At that general assembly, ICAHM met and the following decisions were taken. The ICAHM Secretariat was transferred to Australia for the next three-year term. A new executive was elected and priorities were established for the next three years. These include:

- a review of the 1956 Recommendation on International Principles Applicable to Archaeological Excavations from the UNESCO meeting in New Delhi,
- an update of the International Directory of Archaeological Organizations
- the establishment of an ICAHM web page
- the establishment and enhancement of regional networks
- yearly ICAHM meetings at regional archaeology conferences
- comparative studies for World Heritage Committee of UNESCO
- the establishment of links with other ICOMOS technical committees such as Underwater Archaeology, Rock Art, Cultural Landscapes, etc.

At home, Canada's national committee, ICOMOS CANADA (website: icomos.org/canada) has 17 technical committees including ICAHM Canada. The goals of ICAHM Canada are to update the International Directory of Archaeological Organizations, to create an ICAHM Canada web page, revitalize its membership, organize regular ICAHM Canada meetings, perhaps yearly with the Canadian Archaeological Association, develop links with other Canadian archaeological organizations and regional links with ICAHM USA.

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