



Task team 5

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To
ICOMOS Advisory Committee
John Hurd, Chairman

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Task Team 5: ICOMOS openness and transparency

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1. Introduction

In a letter of 1st October 2007 from ICOMOS Norway addressed to ICOMOS Advisory Committee a number of issues were raised.

The matters raised aim to express a purely positive concern for ICOMOS in its current situation, as observed and reflected by ICOMOS Norway Executive Board.

It is important for us to emphasize the following position:

Only through open constructive criticism and exchange of opinions, ideas and information can an international organization remain effective and able to respond meaningfully to the complex tasks with which it is charged.

To steer a complex and many-headed structure such as ICOMOS through the wide and international waters, remains challenging at all times. The duties of the leadership are many and its exposure to challenges is nothing less than continuous; a concurrently 'celebratory' and 'thankless' function.

In expressing our wholehearted respect for all the good work that is carried out by ICOMOS at a global level, we hope and anticipate that the ICOMOS leadership receives this contribution as one done in much seriousness, and in dedication and commitment to the future of ICOMOS.

The issues raised were asked to be clarified by the Advisory Committee meeting in Pretoria 10-11th October 2007.

The meeting decided that

1. *Items 2, 3 and 4 will be dealt with on the agenda.*
2. *A Task Team consisting of the following NC's be established: US, Norway, Sweden, South Africa, UK. Norway to chair.*



Be constituted to investigate and report on the matters raised by the Norwegian NC and that it report to the President and Vice-President of the AC by 30 June 2008.'

In Pretoria only issue no. 2 of the Norwegian letter was discussed.

Issues for the task team

We regard the issues raised in terms of relevance for the Task Team consideration to be:-

1. ICOMOS economy - not relevant; information and business issue to be dealt with by Bureau and Executive Committee..
2. The Macao Foundation - dealt with at Pretoria.
3. ICOMOS Xian Centre - not relevant; to be dealt with by Bureau and Executive Committee.
4. ICOMOS projects – a possible issue for the task team; outside scope of task as more information is required.
5. ICOMOS Bureau meeting in Christchurch - not relevant; information issue for the Bureau
- 6. Openness and information – natural/central vantage point for task team deliberations.**
7. Nomination of candidates to ICOMOS central offices – not relevant; overlapping with Task Team 1 mandate (Xian 2005 - Edinburgh 2006).
8. ICOMOS statutes - not relevant; within Task Team 1 mandate.
9. ICOMOS administrative functioning - not relevant; outside the scope for our task team. This topic should in hindsight have been presented by us not as a separate issue but as an overarching comment expressing a major underlying need.

In the following, the task team has therefore focused on the following issues:-

6. Openness and information (transparency etc).

The current Rules for the Advisory Committee seen as a constructive pilot case are referred to below.

2. Present situation

ICOMOS is a scientific organization working in the field of cultural heritage, contributing to cutting edge research and practice development. Development of scientific knowledge is dependent on an open discourse where all parties are able to contribute. Written presentations made available to all members are essential for open discourse, and the use of the web is today an ideal tool for such a purpose.

Unfortunately many of our members find ICOMOS a closed forum with information and meaningful dialogue difficult to find. This makes contributions to scientific development, development of solutions to major management and policy issues by consensus, and bringing benefits to the membership, developing and marketing ICOMOS as an organization less likely to take place.

Easy and frequent communication is a prerequisite for openness and transparency.

On ICOMOS openness on meetings and activities

ICOMOS Bureau and Executive Committee have approved an overarching principle of openness as regards information, with open circulation of meeting agendas and minutes. The ICOMOS pledge to post minutes of its meetings etc on the website shows in early May 2008 that:

- For 2007, 2 meetings are identified. Both took place in Paris in January 2007. No link exists, so no minutes of any meetings are available.
- For 2006 there are links to minutes of 4 meetings, with another 4 identified.

With this, the pledge of **open-information** seems to be functioning in a manner that is less than satisfactory.

Rules for the Advisory Committee (AC)



Current rules for the Advisory Committee were adopted in Paris in 1966, and were revised in Dubrovnik in 2001. The rules cover much important ground. A number of important issues are not considered in the rules, although they are central to contemporary operational needs (such as mandate definition, how to prepare and conduct meetings and business generally, minutes of meetings). Their absence should be corrected.

Advance presentation of subjects for meetings

It is essential to be able to study subjects included on the agenda in advance of the meetings. As a case in point from the last meeting in Pretoria, the reports by the President, the Treasurer General and the Director were not distributed in advance and presented verbally only at the meeting.

Discussions during meetings

Discussions on topics on the agenda, or topics raised in the meetings, frequently do not give a full picture of the topic due to restricted time and a lack of presented material in advance of the meetings.

Minutes

Minutes from meetings are essential documents for mutual information, and for improved understanding of matters of policy, strategy and technical issues.

Minutes should be distributed to all members of the committee, whether present or not, and within a short period after the meetings.

To illustrate, the first draft minutes of the previous AC meeting (Edinburgh September 2006) were distributed in November 2006. The final minutes were distributed in Pretoria, i.e. one year later.

3. Problems encountered

ICOMOS should be an open forum where all members can contribute. Without an open forum the development of ICOMOS will be restricted.

A major concern is the quality of communication between the ICOMOS leadership and advisory bodies. Maintaining confidence of the broader ICOMOS membership in decisions made by the leadership is central.

4. Task team 5 objective

The task team aims to present recommendations that may improve the 'two-way' flow of information and improve transparency.

5. Options to improve the system of operating

Within ICOMOS we have some opportunities to improve the present situation that is described in section 2 above. They concern in principle **adjusting rules and statutes**, and **adjusting business practice**. Adjusting statutes should prove to be an infrequent task, while reviewing and streamlining business practice, however, should become a task visited regularly. Both statutes and practice need to reflect in the best possible manner the dynamic framework within which ICOMOS is operating at any one time.

The task team should together consider areas in which to contribute to the above, taking the following issues as an initial proposal:

Simple rules are needed for normal leadership and administrative operations to all bodies of ICOMOS,



such as:

- The president/leadership, vice president and head of the administration are presumed always fully informed on all aspects of ICOMOS business.
- All parties involved in specific issues are kept informed. Reciprocity is essential.
- Prepared discussions improve their quality, and this discipline frees time for other discussions.

Rules for the Advisory Committee

For the current rules see (www.international.icomos.org/edinburgh2006/rules-advisory-e.pdf).
See comment above.

Proposals for amending rules to enhance openness and transparency

Attendance

All members of AC should be able to attend the AC meetings. This makes it important to know the date and place of a meeting well in advance.

Article 4a gives a reasonable time gap with deadline between notification and the meeting:

'The President shall notify the members of the Advisory Committee of the date and place of an ordinary session, at least thirty days in advance and at least thirty days in advance of the date and place of an extraordinary session.'

Agenda

It is important to be able to study the subjects raised for the meeting well in advance.

Article 5a gives an acceptable time limit with a deadline:

'The agenda of the meeting shall be communicated to the members at least thirty days in advance for an ordinary session and fifteen days in advance for an extraordinary session.'

Other subjects that members request to be raised, should also be distributed before the meeting, at least 15 days in advance of the meeting.

An extraordinary session should, on its agenda, only have the subjects communicated to the members in advance.

Minutes

A 'rapporteur' for the meeting minutes shall be elected at the beginning of the meeting.

Minutes shall be taken by the 'rapporteur' during the meeting, and be distributed to all members of the AC whether members are present or not, and within two weeks of the meeting.

6. Recommendation

The rules of the Advisory Committee should be amended for article 5 Agenda (subjects to the agenda) and an additional article 9 Minutes, as discussed above.

The task team is raising issues that are regarded important for improved handling of business and operations of ICOMOS bodies. We suggest that the document is presented to the Executive Committee for possible inclusion into statutes and rules for ICOMOS.

Gisle Jakhelln
President
ICOMOS Norway

Marie Louise Anker
Member
ICOMOS Norway Executive Board

Enclosed:

Letter of 1st October 2007 to the President, ICOMOS Advisory Committee, from ICOMOS Norway Executive Board.