

ICME



ICME NEWS

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Statue representing Two Cameleons, serpentine, 80 x 46 cm.

Artist: Richard Mteki (Zimbabwe).

WORD OF WELCOME

-From the editor.....	page 2
[Peter Bettenhausen]	
-Word of welcome.....	page 2
[Herbert Ganslmayr]	
-ICME's forthcoming conference on folk arts and crafts in Africa.....	page 3
[Peter Bettenhausen]	
-Museums of Ethnography and Human Rights...page 3	
[Wolfgang Mey]	
-ICOM's 15th General Conference in retrospective.....	page 4
[Harrie Leyten]	
-Report of ICME's vice-chairman to the General Session of ICOM.....	page 8
[David M. Boston]	
-Members of the Board of ICME.....	page 9
-ICME news.....	page 10

FROM THE EDITOR....

Dear Friends,

Taking over the secretariat of ICME is easier said than done, as I soon found out after my election as the new secretary of ICME during the last ICOM Conference held in The Hague, the Netherlands. Fortunately Harrie Leyten, who has been ICME's able secretary during the last six years and who happens to live in the same small country as I do, never minds to share his experiences. As a farewell contribution -in a formal sense- he wrote a lengthy and highly informative report on ICME's activities during ICOM 1989. For this and all the other work he did for ICME we are most grateful. Understandably, the largest part of this issue is devoted to the last General Conference of ICOM. Other contributions however deal with the future and give information on new workings groups, on plans to revitalise already existing ones and on forthcoming ICME meetings.

The success of all these future oriented plans and activities will largely depend on the contributions and participation of all ICME members. Therefore we are extremely happy with the generous offer from Térésa Battesti, to take care of the French version of this Newsletter, enabling us to reach more members.

Yours Sincerely,
Peter Bettenhausen,
Secretary of ICME

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Dr Annette B. Fromm
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Dear colleagues,

With this newsletter - the first one to come out after ICME's meeting in the Netherlands and the election of a new executive board - we want to inform you about the contents of our sessions and also about our programme for the next three years. Special mention should be made of the fact that at the General Assembly of ICOM, Peter Bettenhausen, our new Secretary of ICME, succeeded in getting one of the two resolutions submitted by ICME passed as an official resolution of ICOM.

The resolution reads as follows:

CULTURAL DIMENSION OF DEVELOPMENT

Nothing that existing and new museums and related institutions in many countries are not accorded their due priority especially in the allocation of funds,

the 16th General Assembly of ICOM meeting in The Hague, The Netherlands, on 5 September 1989,

Strongly urges all governments, especially those providing development assistance, to give a much higher priority to the cultural dimension of development, in particular to existing and new museums and related institutions.

This was an outstanding success, and at the same time it is an obligation. Therefore I have begun to compile a state-of-the-art report on cultural development aid and also on the cultural components of development. The report is meant to serve as a basis for the forthcoming activities of ICME but it should also stimulate ICOM to greater activity, especially in connection with the World Decade for Cultural Development.

A very important step as regards the cooperation among the members of ICME is the fact that from now on the newsletter will be published also in the French language. For that we are most grateful to our colleague, Mrs. Teresa Battesti of the Musée de l'Homme who has taken on the task of translating the text into French. Mrs. Teresa Battesti is a member of the executive board of ICME and at the same time corresponding secretary for the French-speaking ICME-members.

Apart from the many activities we are planning, there is one aspect of particular concern to me, an aspect which the ICME-members have been discussing for a long time. However, the results of our discussions have actually never been put into practice. We have been concerning ourselves with the tasks and problems of museums of ethnography outside of Europe who are presenting their own cultures, but we don't bother about the ethnographic museums doing the same in Europe. Within ICOM, they don't have an international committee of their own.

The centennial of the Museum for German Ethnography in Berlin, DDR, giving occasion for a scientific colloquium which I attended "History of Everyday Life in Museums of Ethnography - Possible Ways of Collecting and Presenting - Internationally Compared", was one opportunity to

take up again and discuss this question. So I talked to a number of European colleagues, and we agreed that steps should be taken to integrate such museums of ethnography into ICME.

ICME's programme and the make-up of its executive board are promising an active time for ICME. However, this will not come true unless the members, too, take an active part and come up with proposals of their own. Therefore I am asking you for your suggestions, and what I should also appreciate very much, will be your cooperation on the ICME-newsletter.

Finally, speaking on behalf of the executive board of ICME, I wish you all a good start of the new year, and that it may have in store for you success and happiness, in your private lives as well as in your work.

Dr. Herbert Ganslmayr
Chairman of ICME

THE CULTURAL DIMENSION OF DEVELOPMENT

-Folk Arts and Crafts in Africa-

ICME CONFERENCE IN HARARE,
ZIMBABWE, OCTOBER 1990

From Dawson Munjeri, member of the Board of ICME, more detailed information was received on the ICME Conference planned for October 1990 in Zimbabwe. This conference will focus on the important role folk arts and crafts can play or are already playing in the processes of development in Africa. Apart from working sessions and lectures there will be a number of highly interesting field excursions to different parts of Zimbabwe, a.o. to the sculpture centre Tengenenge, the Great Zimbabwe Monument, the Victoria Falls and the Nyanya craft centres in the Eastern District. The provisional dates for this conference are from October 14th (arrival) to October 26th (end of session), which means that this conference will nearly fit in between to other important ICOM activities to be held in neighbouring countries: the CECA and ICOM meetings.

The Residential Conference Fee, including hotels and transport, estimated at \$ 70 per person per diem, will be kept as low as possible, but will also depend upon the number of participants. As soon as the organisers have a clear idea of how many participants can roughly be expected, a reliable price calculation together with more precise details on the conference will be sent to those who are registered. A booking form will then be included. Registering is possible by means of the form to be found in this issue. If interested in participating please register as soon as possible, preferably before the end of this month.

Peter Bettenhausen,
Secretary of ICME

MUSEUMS OF ETHNOGRAPHY AND HUMAN RIGHTS

During the ICME session at the ICOM Conference in the Netherlands in August 1989 I proposed setting up an informal working group discussing the problem of violation of human rights in the framework of museums of ethnography. This informal working group should be an aspect of the Ethics Working Group. Many peoples, the material cultures of which we keep in our museums of ethnography, are threatened in their existence for a number of reasons. As museums are generally acquiring more and more social responsibility, I think we, working in museums of ethnography, should link up with this development and deal with questions of human rights violations more systematically. Though this question has already been raised by pointing at fundamental problems of survival in a number of special exhibitions, this has been done in the perspective of "3rd World Problems", regional political and cultural developments, etc., but not in the framework of violation of human rights.

I do not come forward here with a clear concept of how this should or could be done in future, I rather prefer to see such a concept developing as a result of cooperation of like-minded colleagues who have touched upon this subject in exhibitions and/or intend to do so in future.

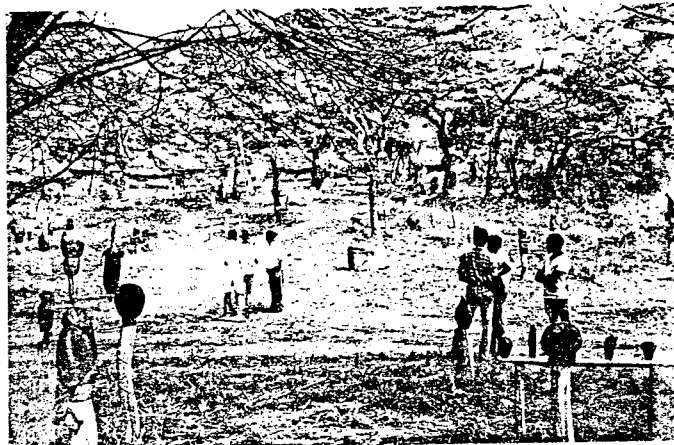
As a first step I call upon all colleagues who have organized exhibitions touching this subject to send information and, if possible, evaluations of respective projects to my address. I shall be glad to serve as a "clearing station" and to communicate whatever information I -hopefully- will receive from anyone who likes to cooperate.

Wolfgang Mey

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Tengenenge



ICOM - Triennial Conference
The Hague, the Netherlands
August 27 - September 5, 1989

ICOM's Triennial Conferences are festive occasions for reunions as well as opportunities to keep abreast with developments in the international museum-world. About 1500 museum professionals assembled in the Netherlands to meet for the XVth General Conference of the International Council of Museums. On Sunday August 27, there were meetings of the Advisory Committee and of the Executive Council, but for the majority of the participants it was the day of registration: checking in, finding one's way around, trying to obtain all the relevant information about meetings, schedules, lectures, activities, the programme of one's own committee as well as getting information on what other committees are offering in terms of lectures, excursions, meetings and even parties. The Hague Congress Centre hummed with the sound of so many languages meeting each other, with so many colleagues from all corners of the world, hugging each other, slapping each other's backs or politely shaking hands at the sight of yet another new face in the ICOM family. Monday, August 28, saw the official opening in a sober, yet impressive ceremony in the presence of H.R.H. Prince Claus. After the welcome address by the chairman of the Dutch ICOM committee, Geoffrey Lewis, President of ICOM, narrated how ICOM had survived the crisis of UNESCO in the past few years, and how ICOM was heading for a bright future. The President was very specific about one point: "that there is still a strong euro-centric bias to ICOM" and appealed that ICOM always considers "national or regional issues from an international standpoint". In his key-note speech the Director-General of UNESCO, Mr. Federico Mayor, observed that, whatever the theme of this conference, "culture generates museums". He gave examples of a genuine museum-boom in countries as far apart as Holland, China and Australia. He continued that there is "the clear and growing demand in many parts of the world today that museums should increasingly become crucibles in which culture is forged". In other words, there should be places in which past cultures emerge from the shadows to illuminate the present and to cast a finger of light over the future". Furthermore, according to the Director-General, "education is not dispensed by schools and I also see a challenge for museums in attempting to break new ground in non-formal or out-of-school education". He attached special priority to all forms of museum development in the less well-off countries, and this for several reasons, one being "that the developing countries of today are the guardians of cultures that have provided inspiration to creative artists the world over". In the afternoon four key-note speakers delivered their addresses. The organizers of the Conference had invited four internationally renowned speakers who were not from the museum profession. The first to speak was Mochtar Lubis from Indonesia. After narrating personal experiences with historical sites which tend to speak to the visitor much more than statues behind glass in museum buildings, he added how important it is to develop new ideas of museums. "Museums should not necessarily be housed in big palatial structures. Buildings suitable to climatic and other conditions of each country, open or eco-museums and new creative programs should be developed. (...) Museums can really function efficiently as centers for study and research, but also for enjoyment and enlightenment of casual visitors and the curious." Herman Crespo Toral from Ecuador next spoke on "New forms of presentation". The next speaker was Bela Kopecki

from Hungary on: "Cooperation for the future". But it was especially the last speaker, Neil Postman from the U.S.A., who made a great impression on the audience with his speech "Extension of the museum concept". To him a museum is an answer to the fundamental question: "What does it mean to be a human being? No museum (...) gives a complete answer to this question. One might say that there is a great conservation going on among the museums of the world. For each museum seems to make an assertion about the nature of humanity, sometimes supporting and enriching each other's claims but just as often contradicting each other. (...) But in saying that every museum gives us part of the picture, I am not saying that every museum is equally useful. To paraphrase George Orwell, all museums tell the truth but some tell more important truths than others. And how important a truth is depends on the time and place of its telling. For at different times, cultures need to know, remember, contemplate and revere different ideas in the interest of survival and sanity. Which is to say, a museum that was useful fifty years ago may be quite pointless today." The speaker elaborated this point by narrating now a particular museum in Orlando, Florida, U.S.A., wanted to celebrate the possibilities of humanity's future. But this museum strayed from its original intention and is now providing a mistimed truth to a people in desperate need of moral and civic guidance. This museum proclaims that "paradise is to be achieved through technological progress, and only through technological progress". Postman pleaded strongly for a museum that offers "alternative visions". "For as I see it, that museum is best that helps to free a society from the tyranny of a redundant and conventional vision; that is to say from the tyranny of the present." According to Postman the culture of the present dazzles us with electronic equipment. We don't need museums that celebrate that fact. "What we require are museums that tell us what we once were and what is wrong with what we are and what new directions are possible. At the very least we need museums that provide some vision of humanity different from the vision put forward by every advertising agency and political speech." On Tuesday, August 29, the 1500 assembled ICOM members met in 25 groups according to the International Committees for which they had registered. ICME had drawn up its own schedule. Continuing the discussion, started during the 1987 Leiden Conference, ICME had set three themes for this meeting:

- the relationship between museums of ethnography and the foreign cultures they represent.
- the relationship between museums of ethnography and the culture of their own society.
- the relationship between museums of ethnography and minority-groups in their own society.

The first day of the ICME conference took the participants to the Tropenmuseum in Amsterdam. Apart from the 40 odd ICME-members who made up the hard core of this ICME conference, there were an additional 30 ICOM-members who made use of the opportunity to see the Tropenmuseum. After a welcome-address by the museum's director, Mr. Henk Jan Gortzak, Dr. David Boston took the chair and introduced the first speaker: Mrs. Theresa Battesti of the Musée de l'Homme in Paris. Commencing from the Declaration of Man's and Citizen's Rights, issued during the French

Revolution in 1789 (almost 200 years to the date), she concluded that the basic task of the museums of ethnography consists in learning to appreciate other cultures. But in order to realize this goal ethnography would have to be seen in a wider perspective, that of the human sciences, including anthropology, sociology, history and linguistics. Museums ought to study the phenomenon of cultural symbiosis as a source, as a creative force for future cultures. Harrie Leyten, curator at the Tropenmuseum, Amsterdam, described the image-building which has been brought about by museums of ethnography. He cited the example of his own museum, formerly the colonial museum. By its marble and gold decorated main hall the building expressed a sense of achievement of superiority on the part of the Netherlands vis-a-vis its colonies, the Dutch East Indies, now Indonesia.

Leyten continued by stating that museums of ethnography ought to be aware of the image they radiate and of the process of decolonisation which has not been fully completed yet. He referred to an exhibition due open in December 1989 in the Tropenmuseum: "White on Black." An initiative from the black community in Amsterdam, the exhibition displays a collection of over 3000 objects showing blacks as depicted by whites: caricatures, stereotypes. In this exhibition an attempt is made to analyze the history of image-making, with regard to blacks both in Africa and in the western world, including images of slavery and abolitionism as well as the well known types: Sambo and Rastus, Jim Crow, Uncle Tom, Banania, Sarotti Mohr and Zwarte Piet (Black Peter). In revealing the mechanisms of discrimination and oppression of one group of human beings by another, the exhibition organizers hope to contribute towards a better understanding of the problems of race-relations. After lunch the participants had a guided tour of the Yemen-exhibition and many had the opportunity visiting the children's museum which currently has a programme on Senegal. Especially the latter event drew spontaneous and unanimous applause! In the evening the Committee visited the Amsterdam Maritime Museum where an Indonesian supper was served to all ICOM-members.

On Wednesday, August 30, the working-session was held in the Congress Centre at the Hague. Dr. Gosewijn van Beek, lecturer of anthropology of material culture at the University of Amsterdam, took the chair.

The first speaker was Mr. Dawson Munjeri, deputy Executive Director for Museums and National Monuments of Zimbabwe. His paper carried the title: "No prescription: the system is immune - Zimbabwe's experience."

Munjeri first gave a brief historical outline of the situation of museums in his country. In 1925 the admission of natives is limited to one day a week. No qualified African ethnographers or anthropologists were employed until 1984. No exhibitions on black African history were organized in the museums. But exhibitions on Cecil Rhodes, white settlers and white Rhodesians at war against black terrorists were major events. After the country's independence in 1980 and more so after 1983 when the first two blacks were appointed in positions of authority, the concept of Cultural Houses was developed. "In each of the country's 55 administrative districts there were to be a Cultural House with each of them housing a library, a museum, a crafts centre, an oral archive room, recreation area, a meeting-place

etc.. From the House would operate 'barefoot archaeologists' who would gather historical material from the locals. In this way the people themselves would become custodians of their traditional heritage."

Notwithstanding these noble objectives the first endeavours were not successful. The notion of a Culture House was not really grasped by the local population. In one area the reply was: "We are only children to answer. We must have spirit mediums here to answer. Traditionally tribal spirits cannot be told that a House should be built for them: the spirit tells the people." Having assessed the experiences with the first Culture Houses, the authorities opted for a different approach. One was aware that "the success of the Culture Houses would depend on the local interest and that their continuity and vitality would depend on the degree of identification which people entertained regarding their significance, their functioning and their accepted position in the society at large. It was also essential that the community be responsible for the choice and appointment of the custodians." Munjeri described briefly the latest Culture House, located near the ancient great Zimbabwe ruins, and showed how past experiences were incorporated in its realization. The next speaker in this session was Martin Proesler, an anthropology student at the University of Tubingen (West Germany). In his lecture, Mask in Museums and the Change of Culture, he reported on field-work in a new museum, the Ambalangoda Mask Museum, on the south-west coast of Sri Lanka. The results from a visitor-research were that mainly schoolchildren and members of the middle-class are visiting the museum. Adult local people are missing, especially those with a less high education. Proesler stated, that these observations are confirmed by authors from other countries and it seems to be a basic problem which needs some rethinking. According to Proesler, "the following (simplified) theoretical approach seems to be a fruitful one: We can understand museums as one institution within society. Institutions are dialectically interrelated with a symbolic system, and therefore with certain groups of the society." One example for the symbolic system underlying museums/museumwork is the 'de-contextualisation' and as a consequence the 'de-functionalisation' of objects. In other words a utensil, taken out of its environment, loses its function, when placed in a museum and considered as art-object. This 'museum-context' is an artificial one and therefore always an interpretation and a new creation of reality: "In this way the museum plays an active role in the cultural change." Most visitors of the A.M. Museum are middle class people, (...) so that "objects of the material culture are reflected in the symbolic system of the middle-class." A provocative conclusion could be, that the objects in the museum have more in common with this social group than with the symbolic and social context they are taken from." The experience with the A.M. Museum is, that it has been a sort of focal point for other -unexpected- activities, for instance the renovation of a famous temple gate. But now, the museum structure is quite strong and static to take up what comes back. (...) "The hope and aim is that the dialectical process between this institution, other local institutions and the community can go on less (pre-)determined. So, that structure and the underlying symbolic system can be shaped and shared by the community

and become an integral part of it."

Dr. Wolfgang Mey of the Education Department at the Museum of Ethnography, Hamburg (West Germany), added his own report of the same Sri Lanka museum experiment in his paper: "Rethinking Rituals. Some preliminary remarks on the production of culture ideology in Sri Lanka."

Mey described the town of Ambalangoda, famous for its mask carving and its dancing rituals. The declining economy however threatened the cultural and religious identity of the community. Then, in 1987, the eldest son of one of the previous religious leaders had a museum established with a library, which in turn generated a spectrum of activities, ranging from a rebuilt local shrine to a dancing school. But enumerating the facts of recent developments tends to overlook the social, cultural and religious mechanisms, which influence the development-process. The local people interpreted a number of events in a Karma-context, adding an explanation of a different category. Mey concluded that a survey of the museological discussion shows that such indigenous parameters of understanding are not really considered, mythology is not supposed to play a role in the development-process."

Mrs. Colette Jourdain, museologist at the Musée d'Aquitaine, Bordeaux, France, read her paper "Protection et conservation des objets ethnographiques dans les pays Africaines."

She emphasized that objects from African civilization are being considered art in European and American collections but we have to study them both from an esthetic and ethnographic point of view, without forgetting that they have been perceived originally in a ritual and not in a commercial or simply decorative context.

According to Mrs. Jourdain, gathering and preserving these objects, that is to say the few objects that still remain in Africa, is the most urgent task for the African Museum, much more than thinking of how to present them to the public. But for this purpose many African museums lack the required facilities, buildings and equipment. The speaker made a strong appeal to all concerned to make use of materials for restoration, which can be found locally and of restoration-/preservation techniques, still known to the elders of the community. She also recommended in-depth research into traditional techniques of preserving precious wooden objects such as found with the Mandinge, Peul, Fon and peoples of Gabon and Congo and of preserving the raphia cloths of the Bateke in Congo. This day of the conference was concluded by a trip to the Old Harbour of Rotterdam where drinks and food were served in a relaxed and pleasant atmosphere.

On Thursday, August 31, the chair was taken by Ulla Wagner, director of the Museum of Ethnography in Stockholm, Sweden. This morning's first speaker, Dr. Annette Fromm, had to be excused as she had fallen ill.

Dr. Artemio Barbosa of the National Museum of the Philippines, spoke of his museum as an agent in the preservation of Filipino culture. In his lengthy discourse he explained his government's museum policy and the different goals of the National Museum in education, research and cultural projects. He stated that the museum's goals are no longer just the collection and preservation of material culture, but to interpret the collections to the diverse audiences they serve. Yet the museum is confronted with problems most of which "boil down to insufficient funds

for, acquisition, insurance, reference-books, scientific journals and materials, scientific and office equipment, transportation facilities and various other services."

Mrs. Christine Kreps from Oregon, U.S.A., next spoke on "Issues of Power in Museums of Anthropology." Referring to the colonial tradition in most museums of anthropology, she stated that they "reflect the history of western thinking about 'others'." And also: "The non-western heritage they dutifully store is subservient to western interests, either scientific, aesthetic or economic. In brief, anthropology museums are meeting places of sharply contrasting cultural traditions and interests." Kreps explained the case between some groups of native Americans reclaiming the skeletal remains of their ancestors, and scholars, museums and related institutions reluctant to return these remains. She cited James Clifford who had criticized the way anthropologists "have studied other people, become 'experts' on them and collect their material culture, thus exhibiting both a physical and conceptual possession of 'the other'." Objects taken from 'others' are placed in museums and given value in systems of meaning whose function it is to confirm the knowledge, identity and taste of possessive westerners." Kreps next raised the question "on what level can we begin to better appreciate the values and meaning people give the materials we house in our museums?" After having given examples of native Americans working alongside white anthropologists, she strongly emphasized "that as anthropologists and museum-professionals I believe we need to constantly critically examine and evaluate our work to become ever more aware of the ideology behind it, to question whose interest are being served and for what purposes." The next speaker was Soroi Eoe, director of the National Museum of Papua New Guinea, Port Moresby. Mr. Eoe made it very clear that museums have to change, if they want to survive into the 21st century. They should therefore make every effort to promote and actually achieve a two-way communication. Museums should not wait for the public to come to them but indeed go to the public themselves. They should reformulate their programmes so that they break away from their isolated position in society. In this context museums should develop projects, geared towards the needs of the youth. Museums should serve the public. They should incorporate development projects into their policy. An example can be found in the campaign against deforestation. Museums should make it clear that the destruction of forests implies the destruction of peoples and cultures. Also museums should organise exhibitions in close relationship with experts from different disciplines, such as agriculture, ecology, medical care and others. The last speaker of the morning session was Mr. Peter Bettenhausen, curator at the Museum, The Hague. He gave a short introduction to an exhibition in his museum: "At home in another country", in which it was made clear that over the past 2000 years countless numbers of strangers have entered the Netherlands. They have come in waves, in smaller or larger groups, for economical or political reasons. The exhibition appeals to the visitor to be aware of the relativity of the concept 'native-born' and 'immigrant'. He next invited the meeting to follow him into the museum-gallery for a visit to the exhibition. In the afternoon ICME-members had the opportunity to attend meetings of other international committees.

Quite a few members made use of this occasion. In the evening there was a reception and ballet performance by the Dutch Dance Theatre at the invitation of the Hague Municipality. Friday, September 1, at 8 o'clock a bus took about 45 ICME-members to the City of Antwerp, Belgium, where we arrived at slightly past 10.00 a.m.. We were met by the Director of the newly opened Museum of Ethnography of the city. However, we had our regular ICME-session before venturing into the museum. Two speakers had fallen ill, and had not been able to join the bus. The meeting was chaired by Dr. Thorben Lundbaek, Head of the Department of Ethnography of the National Museum of Denmark, Copenhagen. The only paper of this session was read by Mr. Jaertelius, Nordiska Museet, Stockholm, Sweden: "Where do majority and minority meet when we (i.e. the majority) do exhibitions on minority issues?" He opened his address by some strong statements about racism and discrimination as we observe it in our immediate surroundings, every day again. But although there are so many Turks and Maroccans in Sweden at present, they are not represented in the libraries and archives. There are no books in their languages. This is part of what Jaertelius calls "institutionalized discrimination". Whatever information there is -and there is a lot- is from the majority's point of view. "We want them to be like us, as soon as possible." He then reported on a project of travelling exhibitions for 15 ethnic groups, each of which had had reasons to migrate into Sweden at a different place and time and for different reasons. Their main objective is to promote mutual understanding between majority and minority but taking into account the distinctions between first, second and third generations. They aim at making minorities visible to the majority, to explain the minorities what the majority is about and to show the interaction between ethnic and cultural groups. As usual during Triennial Conferences, ICME organized its elections. The meeting unanimously agreed to have a vice-chairman elected, so that the work could be divided between him/her and the chairman. The meeting also decided to vote for each of the offices separately. There were two candidates for the chairmanship: Herbert Ganslmayr and Harrie Leyten. Notwithstanding several attempts to persuade the latter's director, he did not approve of Harrie Leyten's candidacy for chairman of ICME. Herbert Ganslmayr subsequently was re-elected chairman of ICME for the period 1989-1992. David Boston, Director of the Horniman Museum, was elected vice-chairman. Peter Bettenhausen, curator at the Museon, the Hague, was elected secretary. The following board-members were elected: Ulla Wagner, Director Museum of Ethnography, Stockholm, Sweden; Helmut Fuchs, Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto, Canada; Annette Fromm, Director Fenster Museum, Tulsa, Ok, U.S.A.; Dawson Munjeri, Deputy Executive Director, Harare, Zimbabwe; Teresa Battesti, Curator Musee de l'Homme, Paris, France; Pascal Makambila, Directorate of Museums, Brazzaville, Congo; Suwati Katiwa, Director National Museum, Jakarta, Indonesia; Soroi Eoe, Director National Museum, Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea; Wolfgang Mey, Museum of Ethnography, Hamburg, West-Germany (FRG); Ralph Ceplak, Mestni Museum Ljubljana, Yugoslavia; Lothar Stein, Museum of Ethnography, Leipzig, East-Germany (DDR). Because the election session had gone on longer than expected everybody had a quick lunch in the city, in order to be back on time for the guided tour in the Ethnographical Museum. The ICME-members were divided into two

groups: one was guided through the African department and the other through the Asian department by the respective curators. After having admired the splendid collections, a reception was offered to the members by the museum. There the Lord Mayor of Antwerp joined us to welcome us in the newly opened museum; a catalogue of the work of the famous Flamish painter Rubens was given as a present to all members. Work of this famous painter is to be seen in the Museum of Fine Arts, where yet another reception was given in our honour. Almost everybody took the opportunity to taste the delicious Belgian beer, which was served in large quantities. The last item on our program was a concert on authentic baroque instruments in the museum 'the Vleeschhuys', which was offered both to Cimcim and ICME. Some of us, however, were tired and hungry and took refuge in a restaurant. At 8.30 p.m. the bus took almost everyone back to the Hague. Those who wanted to stay a bit longer in Antwerp could join the Cimcim bus, which departed at 10.00 p.m.

Harrie Leyten,
former Secretary of ICME

ICOM '89

FIFTEENTH GENERAL CONFERENCE OF ICOM

The Hague, Netherlands

Report by the Vice-Chairman, International Committee for Museums of Ethnography (ICME) to the General Session of 4 September 1989 on the Conference Theme.

MUSEUMS: GENERATORS OF CULTURE

The Vice-Chairman of ICME recorded the attendance of some 60 members out of a total of nearly 400 ICME members.

In examining the theme of Museums as Generators of Culture, the members of ICME took particular note - among other keynote addresses - of that concern expressed by the Director-General of UNESCO, Federico Mayor, that a priority must be attached to all forms of museum development in less well-off countries and that the necessary resources must be invested to this end at the start of the World Decade for Cultural Development. The Committee also noted that a leading Dutch paper (The NRC Handelsblad), after reviewing the opening session of the Conference, had concluded that in the coming congress week, the programme would be packed with museum excursions, sightseeing trips and 'cocktail hours' so that these problems would remain in the background.

We cannot speak for other committees, but ICME devoted much of its time and attention to discussions and to the problems of museums in developing countries, while testing ideas with specific visits to a limited number of institutions. This provided an opportunity to see the evolution of the ethnographic museum in the Netherlands from the time when the concept of the Colonial Museum held sway, to the present concern with contemporary cultural and environmental issues around the world, and to the expanding educational role of the ethnographic museum in relation to all sections of the community.

Nevertheless, the European scene provided much food for thought, whether in examining new requirements of museum visitors arising from the vast increase in travel abroad, or the nature of a new international technoculture or - as in a Swedish example - the need to study and to disseminate knowledge through exhibitions on the situation of minority/immigrant groups. It is hoped that the latter project will culminate in a publication in time for the next Triennial Conference and has underlined the need for a Working Party on this issue.

From large-size institutions in the Netherlands and in France, as museums presenting foreign cultures, we were able to turn to institutions of varying form in other continents but having in common a responsibility for presenting their own cultures. At this conference, ICME has been singularly fortunate to have such strong representation from outside its European membership. Some 24 countries have been represented.

While there may be a proliferation of museums in

many parts of the world, it was pointed out that museums established in the Pacific in the colonial period, such as those in Papua New Guinea, the Solomons of Fiji, could be seen by many as unimportant relics of the past, with a consequent loss of financial support. Museums need to be anchored firmly in the living societies that maintain them. In order to share adequately in national budgets, evidence is required of a new form of museum concern with participation in cultural and environmental projects, with questions of poverty, literacy, disease and malnutrition. Special problems in the Phillipines were also discussed: here, museums tended to be regarded as a luxury, placed correspondingly at the bottom of the list for funding.

Experience in Africa has shown the need for community involvement to be total as evidenced in Zimbabwe by the difficulties experienced in establishing around the country the concept of 'cultural houses'. (A type of combined Library-museum-archive centre). Attempts to impose a formula from above on societies unfamiliar with such ideas face severe handicaps: In contrast a recent project for a living craft village museum near the World Archaeological site of Ancient Zimbabwe itself, has been launched successfully through the involvement of local people with museum professionals.

In Asia, one of the most remarkable examples of a museum as a generator of culture arose from German fieldwork in south-west Sri Lanka where it was local wishes to develop their own Mask Museum that acted as a catalyst for the renaissance of the related local dance tradition.

While such issues occupied the greater part of ICME's time, the needs of conservation and documentation were not overlooked as among the basic requirements for museums to become generators of culture.

At the end of its deliberations, ICME has further strengthened its network outside Europe with increased membership on its Board from Africa, Indonesia and Papua New Guinea, an indication of the future thrust of ICME's strategy, resources permitting.

Rather than theoretical discussions in Europe about the needs of other parts of the world, ICME proposes a series of regional meetings to support the needs of local members related to practical activities and workshops in Africa, Asia and America in successive years. Thus it is intended to visit Zimbabwe next year in order to explore in particular aspects of Folk Art and Crafts in conjunction with the nine members of SADCC. (Zimbabwe, Zambia, Tanzania, Malawi, Mozambique, Angola, Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland). Subsequently it is hoped to visit Jakarta where a Working Party on Museum Anthropology in Developing Countries could take preliminary discussions further in conjunction with colleagues from Asia and the Pacific. Finally there is a proposal for a pre-conference field study to see Canadian Indian programmes for the establishment of their own museums and their role as generators of culture. The underlying hopes of ICME are embodied in the resolutions forwarded for consideration.

Firstly: The Committee emphasised the need for support to all those groups striving to preserve

and to shape their cultural and environmental values in a local context.

Secondly: ICME strongly urges the governments of affluent countries to give a much higher priority to the cultural dimension of development in their aid-programmes, by freeing money for existing and new museum projects in the Third World.

In conclusion, the Vice-Chairman drew attention to coverage of the work of ICME on Netherlands Radio. He recorded the Committee's thanks for the kindness and hospitality of their Dutch hosts that made such a contribution to the progress of the discussions during the Conference and thanked the Chairman of the session, Maarten Mourik, former Ambassador for International Cultural Relations in the Netherlands.

David M. Boston
Vice-Chairman, ICME

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ICME NEWS

RESULTS OF THE ELECTIONS for the ICME-Board 1989-1992, held on Friday, September 1st 1989, during the XVth General Conference of ICOM, The Hague, The Netherlands:

President Herbert Ganslmayr,
Fed. Rep. of Germany
Vice-President David Boston, U.K.
Secretary Peter Bettenhaussen,
the Netherlands
Members: Teresa Battesti, France
Rolf Ceplak, Yugoslavia
Annette Fromm, U.S.A.
Helmuth Fuchs, Canada
Suwati Kartiwa, Indonesia
Pascal Makambila,
Rep. Pop. du Congo
Soroi Merepo Eoe,
Papua New Guinea
Wolfgang Mey,
Fed. Rep. of Germany
Dawson Munjeri, Zimbabwe
Lothar Stein,
German Democratic Republic
Ulla Wagner, Sweden

PROPOSALS FOR THE 1989-1992 TRIENNIAL PROGRAMME OF ICME, discussed and agreed upon during the meeting of the newly elected board on Saturday, September 2nd, 1989:

WORKING GROUPS:

FOLK ARTS AND CRAFTS

It is hoped that this already existing working group can be revitalised. Annette Fromm, coordinator for this working group, has been promised support by the boardmembers David Boston, Dawson Munjeri and Ulla Wagner. ICME-members who are interested in participating are kindly requested either to contact one of the boardmembers mentioned or the secretary of ICME. During the forthcoming ICME meeting in Zimbabwe (see below) there will be ample opportunity to present papers on this topic and exchange views.

MINORITY ISSUES

Following the lively interest during the conference in this theme, which during the discussions was linked with human rights, land rights and immigrant groups, it was decided to create a special working group on these and related issues.

Mr. Jaertellius from the Nordiska Museet, Stockholm, Sweden, who gave a lecture on museums as meeting grounds for minorities and majorities has offered to compile a publication on the way (European) museums approach and deal with this important issue. It is hoped to present this publication during the forthcoming General Conference in Canada. The boardmembers Wolfgang Mey, Lothar Stein and Teresa Battesti have offered their support to this working group. Christina Kreps, U.S.A., who presented a stimulating paper during the conference in the Hague on Issues of power in museums of anthropology, has offered to join them.

However, to make this and our other international working groups really work, more support is needed. ICME-members interested in participating are invited to contact one of the boardmembers on this working group or ICME's secretary.

MUSEUM ANTHROPOLOGY

A proposal for a working group on museum anthropology was made by Pienke Kal (Tropical Museum Amsterdam) and Victorine Arnoldus (Ethnographical Museum Groningen), both from the Netherlands. It was decided that "Inventory of collections" should be included in the activities of this working group, which further plans to give special attention to questions such as:

- how to present one's own culture for one's own public?
- are museums the best institutions to preserve and present material culture, especially in developing societies where there often can be a great barrier between museums and the public? What are the alternatives?
- collecting for the future, what, how and by whom?

A keen interest for this working group was shown by the boardmembers Soroi Eoe, Pascal Makambila, Ralf Ceplak and Wolfgang Mey, and further by the ICME-members Christine Kreps (U.S.A.), Martin Poessler (Fed. Rep. of Germany) and James Jijide (Zimbabwe). On the suggestion of Ulla Wagner, Irianne Swensson (Sweden), was added to the list. More support and discussion points are welcomed. Those who want to join are invited to contact Pienke Kal, Tropical Museum, Linnaeusstraat 2, 1092 CK, Amsterdam, the Netherlands, or ICME's secretary.

CONFERENCE PROPOSALS

The government of Zimbabwe, through its board of trustees of the national museums and monuments has kindly invited ICME to hold symposium on the cultural dimensions of development, which will focus on the contribution of arts and crafts. In the programme of this meeting, planned to be held at the beginning of October, 1990, in Harare, Zimbabwe, there will be ample room for field excursions. More information will be given as soon as possible.

Museum anthropology in developing countries will be the theme of a conference, proposed by Suwati Kartiwa, director of the National Museum in Jakarta, Indonesia on behalf of the Ministry of Culture and Monuments. This conference, which will a.o. focus on the presentation and studies of the culture of Nias, is planned to be held in the middle of 1991 in Jakarta, Indonesia.

Helmuth Fuchs (Royal Ontario Museum, Canada), has proposed a pre-conference tour and meeting on American Indians museums, to be held in Canada on the occasion of ICOM's General Conference in 1992. The theme of the conference itself will be Museums, are there limits? The Hague, 7/9/1989
Drs. Peter Bettenhaussen
Secretary