

Round Table Santiago do Chile ICOM, 1972

1 Basic principles of integral museum

Members of the Round Table on the Role of Museums in Today's Latin America, analyzing the leaders' accounts on the problems of the rural environment, of the urban environment, of scientific and technological development and of lifelong education, became aware of the importance of these problems for the future of Latin American society.

They agreed that solution of such problems depended on an understanding by the community of the technical, social, economic and political aspects involved.

Creation of awareness of the present situation and of possible alternative solutions was considered to be an essential step in achieving the integration envisaged. It was in this respect that the members of the round table believed that museums could and should play a decisive role in the education of the community.

Santiago, 30 May 1972

2 Resolutions adopted by the round table of Santiago (Chile)

Considering

That the social, economic and cultural changes occurring in the world, and particularly in many under developed areas, constitute a challenge to museology.

That mankind is living through a profound crisis; that technology has produced an enormous advance of civilization which is not matched by cultural development; that this has led to an imbalance between the countries which have achieved great material development and others which remain on the periphery of development and are still enslaved as a result of their history; that most of the problems revealed by

contemporary society have their roots in situations of injustice and cannot be solved until those injustices are rectified.¹

That the problems involved in the progress of societies in the contemporary world call for an over-all view and integrated treatment of their various aspects; that the solution is not confined to a single science or discipline any more than the decision concerning the best solutions and the way of implementing them belongs to a single social group, but rather requires the full, conscious and committed participation of all sections of society.

That the museum is an institution in the service of society of which it forms an inseparable part and, of its very nature, contains the elements which enable it to help in moulding the consciousness of the communities it serves, through which it can stimulate those communities to action by projecting forward its historical activities so that they culminate in the presentation of contemporary problems; that is to say, by linking together past and present, identifying itself with indispensable structural changes and calling forth others appropriate to its particular national context.

That this approach does not deny the value of existing museums, nor does it imply abandoning the principles of specialized museums; it is put forward as the most rational and logical course of development for museums, so that they may best serve society's needs; that in some cases, the proposed change may be introduced gradually or on an experimental basis; in others, it may provide the basic orientation.

That the transformation in museological activities calls for a gradual change in the outlook of curators and administrators and in the institutional structures for which they are

¹ The above preambular paragraph was approved by a majority of seven votes in favour (those of Mario Vázquez, Raúl González Guzmán, Hernán Crespo Toral, Luis Diego Gómez Pignataro, Luis Luján Muñoz, Carlos de Sola and Federico Kauffmann Doig) to four against (those of Mario E. Teruggi, Mrs Lygia Martins- Costa, Enrique Enseñat and Hector Fernández Guido) who disapproved of some of the terminology employed.

responsible; that, in addition, the integrated museum requires the permanent or temporary assistance of experts from various disciplines, including the social sciences.

That the new type of museum, by its specific features, seems the most suited to function as a regional museum or as a museum for small- and medium-sized population centres.

That on the basis of the above considerations, and bearing in mind that the museum is an institution in the service of society which acquires, preserves, and makes available exhibits illustrative of the natural and human evolution, and, above all, displays them for educational, cultural and study purposes, the round table convened by UNESCO in Santiago (Chile), from 20 to 31 May 1972 on the role of museums in today's Latin America.

RESOLVES

In general

1. That museums should widen their perspectives to include branches other than those in which they specialize with a view to creating an awareness of the anthropological, social, economic and technological development of the countries of Latin America, by calling on the services of advisers on the general orientation of museums.
2. That museums should intensify their work of recovering the cultural heritage and using it for social purposes so as to avoid its being dispersed and removed from Latin America.
3. That museums should make their collections available in the most convenient possible manner to qualified research workers and, so far as possible, to public, religious and private institutions.
4. That traditional museographic techniques should be brought up to date in order to improve the visitors' comprehension of the exhibits; that museums should preserve the character and atmosphere of permanent institutions, without resorting to the use of costly and sophisticated techniques and materials which might encourage a tendency to extravagance unsuited to Latin American conditions.

5. That museums should establish systems of evaluation in order to verify their effectiveness in relation to the community.

6. That having regard to the findings of the survey on current needs and the shortage of museum staffs to be conducted under the auspices of UNESCO, the existing training centres for museum staffs in Latin America should be strengthened and expanded by the countries themselves; that the system of training centres should be amplified with regional integration as an ultimate objective; that facilities should be provided at the national and regional levels for the re-training of existing personnel and provision should be made for training courses abroad.

Concerning rural areas

That museums should be used to help create wider awareness of the problems of rural areas, by the following means:

- (a) Exhibitions of technologies which might be applied to community improvement;
- (b) Cultural exhibitions setting forth alternative solutions to social and ecological environment problems with a view to increasing the public's awareness and strengthening national ties:
 - (i) Exhibitions relating to rural areas in urban museums;
 - (ii) Mobile exhibitions;
 - (iii) The establishment of site museums.

Concerning urban areas

That museums should be used to help create wider awareness of the problems of urban areas, by the following means:

- (a) City museums should lay special emphasis on urban development and its problems, both in their exhibitions and in the research facilities provided;
- (b) Museums should organize special exhibitions illustrating the problems of contemporary urban development;
- (c) With the assistance of the large museums, exhibitions should be held or museums established in suburbs or rural

areas with a view to acquainting the local populations with the possibilities and disadvantages of life in large cities;

(d) The offer of the National Anthropological Museum in Mexico City to try out the museological techniques of the integral museum by holding a temporary exhibition of interest to Latin America should be accepted.

Concerning scientific and technical development

That museums should be used to help create wider awareness of the need for further scientific and technological development, by the following means:

- (a) Museums should stimulate technological development based on actual conditions in the community;
- (b) Museums should be included in the agendas of meetings of ministries of education and other bodies specifically responsible for scientific and technological development as one of the means for disseminating the progress made in those fields;
- (c) Museums should promote the dissemination of aspects of science and technology by decentralizing themselves through the organization of mobile exhibitions.

Concerning lifelong education

That museums should intensify their function as the best possible agent of lifelong education for the community in general by making use of all the communication media, by the following means:

- (a) An educational service should be included in museums which do not possess one, and provided with adequate equipment and resources to perform its teaching role inside and outside the museum;
- (b) Services to be offered by museums on a regular basis should be included in the national educational policy;
- (c) Audio-visual programmes on important subjects should be diffused for the use of schools, including those in rural areas;
- (d) Duplicate materials should be used for educational purposes, through a system of decentralization;
- (e) Schools should be encouraged to make collections and hold exhibitions of items from their cultural heritage;

(f) Training programmes should be established for teachers at different educational levels (primary, secondary and university).

These recommendations reaffirm those made at various seminars and round tables on museums organized by UNESCO.

2. For the creation of a Latin American Association of Museology

Considering

That museums are permanent institutions in the service of society which acquire and make available exhibits illustrative of the natural and human evolution, and, above all, display them for study, educational and cultural purposes;

That, particularly in the Latin American region, they should meet the needs of the broad masses of the population, which is striving to attain a better and more prosperous life through a knowledge of its natural and cultural heritage, past and present, which, in more highly developed countries, are performed by other bodies;

That, with few exceptions, Latin American museums and museologists encounter difficulties of communication owing to the great geographical distances which separate them from each other and from the rest of the world;

That the significance and potentialities of museums for the community are not yet fully recognized by the authorities nor by all sections of the public;

That at the eighth General Conference of ICOM in Munich and at the ninth General Conference in Grenoble, the Latin American museologists present referred to the need to set up a regional organization.

The Round Table on the Role of Museums in Today's Latin America convened by UNESCO in Santiago, Chile, from 20 to 31 May 1972,

Resolves:

I. To set up the Latin American Association of Museology (ALAM), open to all museums, museologists, museographers and research workers and educationists employed by museums, for the following purposes and by the following means:

Providing the regional community with the best museums, based on the total experience of all the Latin American countries;

Creating a means of communication between Latin American museums and museologists;

Promoting co-operation among the museums of the region through the exchange and loan of collections, and exchange of information and specialized staff;

Creating an official body to express the desires and experiences of museums and the profession in relation to its own members, the community, the public authorities and other related bodies affiliating the Latin American Association of Museology to the International Council of Museums and adopting a parallel organizational structure, its members being at the same time members of ICOM;

Dividing for operational purposes the Latin American Association of Museology into four sections corresponding, provisionally, to the following four areas:

Central America, Panama, Mexico, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, Haiti and the French West Indies; Colombia, Venezuela, Peru, Ecuador and Bolivia; Brazil; Chile, Argentina, Uruguay and Paraguay.

2. That the undersigned, participants in the round table of Santiago, Chile, constitute themselves as an Organizing Committee of the Latin American Association of Museology and appoint a working group of five members, four representing one each of the four above-mentioned areas and the fifth acting as general co-ordinator; that this group will be responsible, within a period of six months at the most, for:

Preparing the association's statutes and regulations;

Agreeing with ICOM on forms of joint action;

Giving extensive publicity to the new organization, and calling elections for constituting the various organs of ALAM;
Fixing the provisional headquarters of this association at the National Anthropological Museum in Mexico City;
Composing the above-mentioned working group of the following persons representing their respective areas: Area 1, Mr Luis Diego Gómez (Costa Rica); Area 2, Dr Alicia Dussan de Reichel (Colombia); Area 3, Mrs Lygia Martins-Costa (Brazil); Area 4, Dr Grete Mostny Glaser (Chile); co-ordinator, Professor Mario Vázquez (Mexico).
Santiago (Chile), 31 May 1972

3 Recommendations presented to UNESCO by the round table of Santiago (Chile)

The round table convened by UNESCO in Santiago (Chile), from 20 to 31 May 1972 on the Role of Museums in Today's Latin America presents to UNESCO the following recommendations:

1-One of the most important achievements of the round table has been to identify and define a new approach to the activities of museums: the integral museum, designed to give the community an over-all view of its natural and cultural environment; the round table suggests that UNESCO use the publicity methods at its disposal to promote this new trend.

2- UNESCO would continue and extend its assistance in the training of museum technicians-both at intermediate and at university level-as it does at the Paul Coremans Regional Centre.²

3- UNESCO would promote the establishment of a regional centre for the preparation and preservation of natural specimens, for which the existing Regional Centre of Museology at Santiago might serve as a nucleus. Apart from its teaching function (training of technicians), its professional

² Centro Latino-Americano de Estudios para la Conservación y Restauración de los Bienes Culturales. Convento de Churubusco, Mexico

museographical function (preparation and preservation of natural specimens) and the production of teaching materials, the regional centre would play an important role in the protection of natural resources.

4- UNESCO would grant research and training facilities for museum technicians at intermediate educational level.

5- UNESCO would recommend that education ministries and bodies responsible for scientific, technological and cultural development should consider museums as one means of disseminating the progress made in those fields.

6-In view of: the magnitude of the town-planning problems in the region and the need to inform people about them at various levels, UNESCO would arrange for the publication of a work on the history, development and problems of Latin American cities; such a work would be published in two versions: scientific and popular. In addition, to reach wider sectors of the population, UNESCO would produce a film on the subject, designed to appeal to all types of audience.