CULTURAL HERITAGE PRESERVATION AND SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT: THE ICOMOS ICTC VISION AND ROLE TO CONFRONT PRESENT AND FUTURE CHALLENGES

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Free

Tourism is an activity with very broad **HISTORICAL, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL CONSEQUENCES** that has influenced our **understanding and perception of the world** in a way not only very intense, given the age of this activity, but also scarcely controlled.

Today, due to the **COVID-19**, and for the first time in its centenarian life, **international tourism has almost disappeared** from most of countries, landscapes and cities:

_ This have also deeply impacted our vision of cultural and natural heritage in a completely **unexpected** manner.

_ And it has provoked an **astonishing chain of effects** on human interactions and on the rights to travel and to access to cultural and natural properties highlighting their **vulnerabilities**.

This talk will deepen on how these vulnerabilities have changed our ideas about cultural heritage preservation and sustainable tourism presenting **ICOMOS and its International Scientific Committee on Cultural Tourism (ICTC) vision and action on this matter**.

ICOMOS
international council on monuments and sites
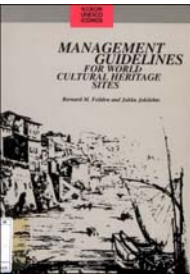
CONSCIOUS of tourism's deep and historic positive and negative impacts and of current situation **...**

... ICOMOS has been involved in achieving a **SUSTAINABLE AND FAIR TOURISM** for people and for cultural heritage for a long time:

1) The **assement and monitoring of world cultural heritage properties**, which in the pre-covid19 era implied dealing with tourism impacts very frequently.

2) Publications, scientific conferenfes, projects and debates on cultural heritage and tourism.

3) Participating in several UN and COE global policies, strategies and projects that are quickly reshaping heritage doctrine and we will discuss later:
• SDG's
• Climate Change mitigation strategies
• Human Rights based approaches to cultural heritage
4) INTERNATIONAL SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE ON CULTURAL TOURISM (ICTC)

MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES FOR WORLD CULTURAL HERITAGE SITES

Slide 1

ICOMOS
INTERNATIONAL CULTURAL
TOURISM COMMITTEE

ICTC__ NUMBERS AND MISSION

The ICOMOS International Scientific Committee on Cultural Tourism was established in the 1970s precisely to channeling all the organization work on this subject.

With 170 interdisciplinary members from 53 countries, the ICTC provides:

__ a forum for dialogue among heritage conservation and tourism professionals and academics.

__ and a platform for multi-disciplinary and multi-stakeholder research and activities.

with the aim of achieving HIGH STANDARDS IN POLICY DIRECTIONS AND MANAGEMENT of tourism at cultural heritage sites.

ICOMOS
INTERNATIONAL CULTURAL TOURISM COMMITTEE

International Conference on
CULTURAL TOURISM

Slide 2

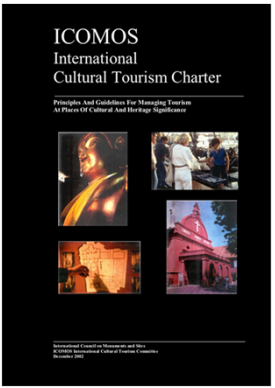THE ICOMOS INTERNATIONAL CULTURAL TOURISM CHARTERS of 1976 and 1999, regarded as two milestones of the international doctrine in this field, are among the most important pre-covid19 achievements of the ICTC

THE 1976 ICOMOS CULTURAL TOURISM CHARTER was an early precedent to:

Raise awareness about tourism's future grown and influence on heritage sites, describing it as an irreversible social, human, economic and cultural fact (it could not predict tourism absence but it anticipated tourism dependence).

The 1999 INTERNATIONAL CULTURAL TOURISM CHARTER provided:

__ a holistic vision of the diverse "SUSTAINABILITY" implications, introducing key concepts such as the limits of acceptable change, the impact of visitor numbers and the carrying capacity several dimensions;

__ an approach especially focused on COMMUNITIES, which had not been so carefully regarded until then and has not been fully implemented yet [!!!!!!!!!!!!].

ICOMOS
International
Cultural Tourism Charter

Principles And Guidelines For Managing Tourism
At Places Of Cultural And Heritage Significance

International Council on Monuments and Sites
ICOMOS International Cultural Tourism Committee
December 2002

Slide 3

INTERNATIONAL TOURIST ARRIVALS 1950 - 2030

2030: 1.8 Billion
2012: 1 Billion
1950: 25 Million

1950 1960 1970 1980 1990 2000 2012 2016 2020 2030
25 Mn · 166 Mn · 435 Mn · 669 Mn · 1 Bn · 1.235 Bn · 1.4 Bn · 1.8 Bn
· 69 Mn · 277 Mn

Source: © Highlights 2017 – World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), July 2017

The ICT Charters emphasized these PRINCIPLES, due to the need of:

__ fostering well planed and sustainable tourism positive effects on heritage maintenance, destinations' economies, international cooperation, and cultural dialogue;

__ mitigating poorly managed and mass tourism impacts, whose uncontrolled development was grounded on some unsustainable contradictions and inequities that the COVID-19 could help to avoid in the future.
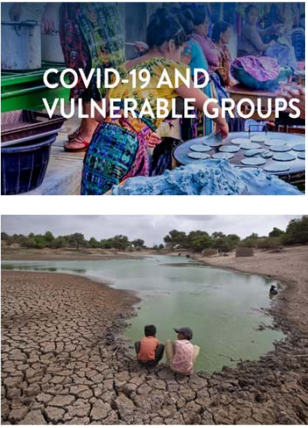
These inequities included several **UNBALANCES** among tourists and locals, among heritage conservation and exploitation, among tourism stakeholders, among tourism revenues and impacts on climate change, etc.

Framed in the wider context of a **HUMAN, SOCIAL, ECONOMIC, AND ECOLOGIC GLOBAL CRISIS** that the COVID-19 has accelerated and acentuaded **...**

... but that is not surprising, bearing in mind the **consumer and lacking in solidarity world** that preceded the pandemic.

A world that was **squandering public resources**, including health, cultural and natural diversity, the environment, and cultural heritage; that was **unfair** to people and to the nature; and which many believe has now reached **the end of a cycle** (which will be, hopefully, one of the few positive effects – if any- of the disease...).

COVID-19 AND VULNERABLE GROUPS

ICOMOS AND THE ICTC ARE RESPONDING TO THESE GLOBAL CHALLENGES WITH SEVERAL STRATEGIES:

1] Participating in several **UN and COE projects** such as:

• the **UNESCO Task Force** on Culture, Tourism and COVID-19: Recovery, Resiliency and Rejuvenation and associated webinars.

• the **UNITWIN Network/UNESCO Chair** in Culture, Tourism and Development.

• the **European Study on quality in 3D digitisation of tangible cultural heritage.**

2] **ICOMOS National Committees direct advise** to public authorities concerning COVID-19 impacts on conservation and the safe public visit to cultural properties.

3] Through the ICTC involvement and ICOMOS' leadership in addressing **today's social, economic, cultural, and environmental challenges** that, together with the COVID-19 itself, are increasingly framing and **re-orienting cultural heritage preservation and enhancement and should also reshape future tourism.** This is connected to the ICOMOS WG:

• sustainable development strategies and the **SDGs;**

• **climate change** adaptation and mitigation solutions;

• **rights based approaches** to cultural heritage, which include the rights of past, current and future generations, indigenous peoples and communities to take part of these global policies.

• **integrating** the focus of that work into the organization theoretical and conceptual frameworks, institutional operations and best practices in a **coordinated, collaborative, intergenerational, and transversal manner**.

4] **UPDATING THE 1999 INTERNATIONAL CULTURAL TOURISM CHARTER** to reflect ICOMOS approaches to pandemics, natural disasters and conflicts (and as part of the previous goal).

The ICTC started to review the 1999 International Cultural Tourism Charter in **2018** and was ready to circulate its second revised draft among ICOMOS membership and partner organizations when the **COVID-19's suddenly changed our lives and this sector...**

... and forced us to re-start the revision and the whole ICTC action bearing in mind the **PANDEMIC SIGNIFICANT IMPACTS:**

• **For tourism:** severe restrictions on travel, unprecedented decline in international tourism arrivals and tourism revenues, with subsequent effect on employment, on communities, on funding for conservation, etc.

• **For the key aspects of the Charter review:** since mass tourism, carrying capacity, site interpretation and presentation, communities' involvement, climate change, SDG's... need to be re-defined again too.

We are therefore UPDATING THE CHARTER SPIRIT:

_ deepening on the **short, medium and long-term effects of COVID-19** on the Charter main topics, and beyond them...

_ trying to take certain **"advantage"** of this clearly un-advantageous situation:

• **rethinking tourism** and the diversity of coordinated approaches to its cultural, social, economical and environmental sustainability;

• exploring and enhancing cultural tourism **destination resiliency;**

• including the priorities and recommendations that **ICOMOS, UNESCO and the UNWTO** are developing to confront these challenges;

• addressing the need for **specific recommendations** on this field at different levels; and

• producing a **major, relevant updated Charter** for the years, and potentially decades, to come.

We are also updating the charter **PRACTICAL ASPECTS, focusing on some opportunities:**

_ **putting people, communities and cultural heritage health first** and over any other considerations "however justified these may be from a social, political or economic point of view";

_ **adapting to current tourism national and international trends** (the rise of proximity, domestic, rural and open spaces tourism –if any– versus long abroad and urban travels that will take longer to recover and opportunities for small tourism niches);

_ **assessing and monitoring the new security and safety measures** in heritage sites, which will naturally shape their carrying capacity in the next and maybe long future and – as a secondary effect- increase the quality of the visitor experience;

_ **seeking for new tools to persuade the tourism industry to invest in cultural heritage protection,** calling upon its **corporate social responsibility** and bearing in mind that the fall of visitors might be positive from the sustainability and carrying capacity perspectives, but negative for funding heritage conservation and dissemination.

CONCLUSIONS

The new tourism will depend, as it has always done, on the international macro-scenarios, now conditioned by the pandemic's evolution, the climate change and the SDGs agendas, and the **perception of security and responsibility.**

However, the second confinement that many European countries are facing, the subsequent second international and even domestic tourism fall, and the human, social, economic and ecologic crises, are **putting millions of livelihoods at risk,** threatening to roll back progress made.

Indeed, the huge loss of tourism revenues might lead to **regard cultural heritage and tourism from a purely economic perspective**, leading to the same unsustainable exploitation that characterized part of their relationships in the last 20 years.

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Although tourism has demonstrated its extraordinary resilience over the centuries and in the face of previous global crises, and will certainly recover from the COVID-19 nightmare, **CULTURAL HERITAGE IS NOT AS RESISTANT AND RESILIENT AS TOURISM ITSELF**.

Its ability to generate emotion, experiences, creativity, added value – and therefore tourism and wealth- is infinite, but it depends on its state of conservation. It therefore requires **respect, care, and a level of awareness** that were not guaranteed in the previous economic model, nor (and much less) in the current one, where **cuts in public policies like culture** are prevailing to alleviate other pressing problems, such as the scarcity of health resources and the increasing unemployment.

To reverse this situation, it is crucial to:

_ **disseminate and defend the essential nature of cultural expressions to help humankind recover** from human-made and natural disasters and sustainably adapt to challenges;

_ **diversify** tourism more dependent economies;

_ **enhance cooperation, coordination and dialogue** among all cultural tourism and cultural heritage stakeholders.
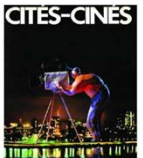

Given the **ECONOMIC PRESSURE** that cultural tourism will face when it recovers, seeking to be the same direct and induced source of income that was before 2020, is also urgent:

_ to consider how its distribution could be more **sustainable, fair and equitable** from a social, cultural, environmental, economical, and regional perspective;

_ and to implement **new and more creative uses** of cultural heritage which, going beyond tourism, aim to ensure its enjoyment and appreciation by citizens:

THIS APPRECIATION WILL CERTAINLY INCREASE CULTURAL HERITAGE RESILIENCE IF OTHER GLOBAL CRISES COME

THANKS FOR YOUR ATTENTION & SUGGESTIONS!

CELIA MARTÍNEZ YÁÑEZ. PhD. ART HISTORY DEPARTMENT, UNIVERSITY OF GRANADA
ICTC VICEPRESIDENT; ICOMOS SPAIN EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBER
celiayanez78@yahoo.es