

Preface

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Resumen

Los accidentes y las catástrofes forman parte de la vida cotidiana y sería insensato creer que es posible preverlos y controlarlos completamente. No obstante, podemos hacer todo cuanto esté al alcance de nuestra mano en materia de previsión y control para estar más preparados a afrontarlos. El "Museums Emergency Programme" (MEP), iniciado por el ICOM, adopta un enfoque de la gestión de las situaciones de emergencia que se enmarca en una amplia estrategia general.

Résumé

Les accidents et les catastrophes font partie de notre vie quotidienne et il serait imprudent de penser qu'il soit possible de les prévenir tous et de les contrôler. Néanmoins, nous pouvons faire notre possible dans ce sens et mieux nous préparer. Le programme « Museums Emergency Programme » (MEP) initié par l'ICOM, développe une approche de la gestion des urgences inscrite dans une large stratégie.

Who could forget the dreadful pictures of the floods in Florence or Prague, the fire in Hampton Court or the palace in Antananarivo, the earthquake in Bam or the destruction of the Bamiyan Buddhas in Afghanistan and the Mostar bridge in Bosnia?

These are all pictures which have been etched into our memory. But there are many more, perhaps less spectacular disasters affecting our cultural heritage worldwide, almost on a daily basis. Vandalism, leakage or pollution can be similarly threatening and damaging.

Accidents and disasters are part of our daily life and it would be foolish to think that we can prevent them all. Nevertheless, we can do our utmost and be better prepared.

All over the world our colleagues working in the field of cultural heritage are taking preventive measures on risks: in the Caribbean islands they protect the windows in the local museum the day before a storm hits, and in the majority of museums worldwide fire extinguishers, at the very least, are part of the facilities installed; and I could go on to mention many, many more.

In times of war and destruction we see the true spirit of our colleagues. In some cases they are personally involved in protecting the objects, as was the case in the National Museum of Afghanistan and in Beirut during the civil war in Lebanon.

What is lacking is an overall, coordinated approach, and that is what our Museums Emergency Programme is aiming at. We will try to make as much information and knowledge available to as many colleagues as possible all over the world.

This is a great ambition and fortunately ICOM is not alone in embarking on this endeavour, for we will do this in close collaboration with local specialized institutions and regional organisations.

The Getty Conservation Institute (GCI) and ICCROM (International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property) both have long-standing experience in training and are therefore partners for the educational component of MEP, jointly developing an approach to Integrated Emergency Management.

MEP is a long-term programme which I consider to be a wise strategy. Partnership and long-term commitment are key words in ICOM's programme.

The meeting in Hyderabad has indeed been an excellent start for the programme. We have learned a great deal from the different participants and have been able to develop a clear outline for the programme for the years to come. With this perspective in mind, I see this volume of proceedings as a very useful tool.

I know we cannot prevent everything, but let us at least try to prevent as much as we possibly can.