

DECLARATION OF ASSISI

1. Introduction

1.1. Experts from all over the world met in Assisi on 27-28 February 1998 for a workshop organised by the ICOMOS Scientific Committee for the Analysis and Restoration of Structures of Architectural Heritage.

1.2 The experts express their solidarity with the local population, and with the public and religious authorities of Assisi and the Umbria and Marche Regions, in the resolute action that they have taken to repair the damage caused by the series of earthquakes in the autumn of 1997. They also remember the colleagues who cost their lives in attempting safeguard measures during the earthquake.

1.3 The experts express their support to the emergency measures taken in view of mitigating the damage caused to the Basilica of San Francesco of Assisi and of preventing future collapse.

1.4 The experts express the wish that lessons be drawn from the catastrophe and evaluated critically in the light of the specific characteristics of each region. This should encourage the development of preventive measures and appropriate risk-preparedness policies in countries, in order to prevent and/or limit the effects of natural disasters. To implement such policies, relevant guidelines should be produced according to good practices.

1.5 In complimenting the authorities for the successful workshop, the participants expressed their gratitude to the Franciscan Community of the Holy Convent of St Francis of Assisi for the generous invitation to welcome next year a similar workshop and to establish what has been proposed to be the "Group of Assisi".

2. Importance of Preventive measures and Risk Preparedness Policy

2.1 Co-ordinated maintenance should be a priority for the conservation of the architectural heritage.

2.2 When natural risks endanger monuments, sites or heritage landscapes, preventive actions represent the best policy for the safeguard of cultural heritage.

2.3 Risk preparedness provides indispensable strategy and organisation for the management of emergency situations and the prevention and limitation of damage.

2.4 Risk preparedness in respect of cultural heritage should be considered within the framework of the general policies developed to protect people, infrastructures, and properties.

2.5 Such an organisation requires the involvement of all the authorities concerned, starting at the local level, in dialogue and collaboration with voluntary organisations.

2.6 Resources should be allocated to these objectives, the prevention of causes of damage being in general more economical than repair

3. Three Moments to be considered: before, during and after disaster.

3.1 Risk assessment and Preventive measures .

3.1 I Risk assessment should be organised on the basis of a general programme, starting with preliminary investigations, including relevant research, systematic and comprehensive documentation, and progressively analysing the complexity of buildings.

3.1.2 Risk assessment requires expertise and time, and should be allocated appropriate funding.

3.1. 3 The different types of risks and appropriate responses should be identified and analysed specific to each location fire, floods, earthquakes, storms, land slides, etc.

3.1.4 Risk assessment should aim at the identification of the relevant safety levels and the potential risks according to the specific characteristics of each region and locality, collected systematically and presented in the form of a 'risk map'.

3.1.5 A scale of priorities should be established related to the cultural values of the properties, their vulnerability, and the potential risk.

3 1.6 Co-ordinated management plans, including practical operational guidelines, should be developed as essential tools for protection, in order to reduce risks and for advance warning

3.1 7 Risk assessment and the development of relevant preparedness measures form a crucial phase, when the strategy for emergency response has to be decided and developed in detail.

3.2 Emergency response

3.2.1 The response plan must be available and immediately implemented by all agents.

3.2.2 Mitigation measures should be a compromise based on a balanced judgement: on the one hand, avoiding alterations in the original conception, technique and technology, and, on the other hand, providing the required safety level. The measures should be applied only after having clearly identified the risk levels and the most vulnerable zones. It is necessary always to pay particular attention to the protection of people involved in the operations

3.2.3 Amongst the possible effective measures, priority should be given to compatible and reversible measures.

3.3 Restoration and reconstruction

3.3.1 The works should comply with the generally accepted conservation principles.

3.3.2 In case of provisional relocation of inhabitants during emergency and repair periods, the occupied areas should be submitted to a physical planning with due respect to the significance of heritage landscape and environment

4. Training and Public Awareness

4.1 Risk assessment and emergency response require people with adequate training and skills.

4.2 Site managers should be aware of, and adequately trained to effectively implement risk preparedness measures and operational guidelines.

4.3 Property owners and the general public should be made aware of the necessity of maintenance and respect of historic structures.

4.4 Decision-makers should be made aware of the importance of risk preparedness and implement relevant policies.

5. Reference

The present declaration is based on recommendations and conclusions of several existing documents, such as:

5.1 Council of Europe Recommendation of 1993 'On the protection of the architectural heritage against "natural disasters"', and especially the recommendation of the 1988 Skopje Workshop.

5.2 UNESCO Conventions and Recommendations.

5.3 ICCROM training programmes

5.4 Eurocode no. 8 'Design provisions for earthquake resistance of structures'.

5.5 Reports of the round-tables organised by ICOMOS since 1993 for the Interagency Task Force.

5.6 The "International Committee of the Blue Shield", initiative developed jointly by ICOM (International Council of Museums), ICOMOS (International Council on Monuments and Sites), ICA (International Council of Archives), and IFLA (International Federation of Librarians Associations) with the support of UNESCO and ICCROM