

THE BUENOS AIRES MEMORANDUM ON CULTURAL LANDSCAPES AND HISTORIC GARDENS

Buenos Aires, Argentina, October 19th., 2001.

INTRODUCTION

1.0 This Memorandum has been prepared by the ICOMOS-IFLA International Committee on Historic Gardens and Cultural Landscapes at its meeting held at the Jardín Botánico, Buenos Aires, Argentina, 15-16 October 2001.

2.0 The ICOMOS-IFLA Committee is a joint committee of ICOMOS (International Council on Monuments and Sites) and IFLA (International Federation of Landscape Architects). Both are non-governmental organisations with established and world-wide responsibilities. ICOMOS is an official advisory body to UNESCO.

3.0 The ICOMOS-IFLA Committee advises ICOMOS on matters relating to the cultural heritage of landscapes and gardens. It also encourages governments and other authorities to do everything that is within their responsibilities and powers, to promote high standards in the protection, conservation, management and care of this heritage.

The Committee does this in the strong belief that cultural landscapes and historic gardens have a very important part to play in securing the health and well-being of a country, its people and its heritage.

KEY POINTS OF THE MEMORANDUM

4.0 To improve and to strengthen its dialogue with colleagues around the world, the ICOMOS-IFLA Committee is establishing special working groups for the different geographical regions or continents of the world. Groups for Latin America and Asia are in the process of being formed. The Committee held its meeting in Buenos Aires to mark and recognise the setting up of a working group for Latin America.

Latin American members of the Committee have advised it, that:

i) to the indigenous cultures of Latin America, the natural and the cultural dimensions of the landscape are very closely interconnected with each other. This concept provides an ideal that can guide and inspire all present day cultures in Latin America, and elsewhere, in their understanding and treatment of the landscape heritage.

ii) it is extremely desirable that, across Latin America as a whole, a common approach to the conservation and management etc of the landscape and garden heritage should be established. This is because there are many issues of common interest between the different countries that make up this region.

5.0 To make the most of the opportunities and benefits that cultural landscapes and historic gardens can provide, it is necessary that proper policies and strategies for their conservation are in place; that resources are available for their implementation, and that those who are involved, should always be looking for ways of improving the effectiveness and efficiency of these policies and their implementation. All forms of development should respect the need to conserve the historic, social, and other cultural significances of the site in question.

Countries that have signed the World Heritage Convention (1972) have already acknowledged these responsibilities.

6.0 On the occasion of its meeting in Buenos Aires, the ICOMOS-IFLA International Committee wishes to call upon the following organisations:
- ICOMOS, as an international organisation, to continue to strongly promote the development of international dialogue, and progress, in relation to cultural landscapes and historic gardens, and their conservation and management. (For example, by encouraging its International Committees to strengthen and develop ways of working with each other on matters of mutual interest that relate to the landscape and garden heritage)

- all National Committees of ICOMOS in Latin America and other parts of the world, to establish a sub-committee for Cultural Landscapes and Historic Gardens, if one does not already exist;

- all National Governments in Latin America and other parts of the world, to review their policies for the conservation of cultural landscapes and historic gardens with the object of ensuring that sufficient policies are in place, improving the effectiveness of these policies and improving the

availability of recourses that are available for conservation and related work. It is recommended that the benefits and opportunities that can be provided by responsible conservation policies, should be identified.

7.0 The ICOMOS-IFLA International Committee is very pleased to co-operate with National and Local Governments, other official organisations, and National Committees of ICOMOS, in the development of policies for the landscape and garden heritage and their implementation.

IMPORTANT SUPPLEMENTARY POINTS

8.0 Specialist knowledge, understanding and skills (both practical and mental) are required when formulating and implementing policies for the conservation, management and care of cultural landscapes and historic gardens. Important topics that need to be included in these special requirements are such things as:

- i) understanding the landscape and garden heritage and its history;
- ii) understanding the concepts that are signified by the key words and terms that are involved in this subject area;
- iii) understanding the principles and philosophy of conservation. (These include concepts such as the inter-relationships between the natural and cultural heritage; the holistic, integrated and sustainable approaches to development and conservation);
- iv) understanding how the public can engage with and benefit from the landscape and garden heritage, and how public awareness of it can be increased;
- v) methods for the identification, surveying and recording of cultural landscapes and historic gardens;
- vi) techniques for the assessment of this part of the cultural heritage. (Assessment is the process by which overall and balanced judgements are made about situations in which there are several or many different aspects that need to be taken into account. For example, when deciding

on the comparative significance of a place or on the nature of the action, or treatment, that is required);

vii) policy making and implementation. (This includes policies that apply to many sites, as well as those for single sites);

viii) how to improve and manage the availability of information, advice, skills, education and training in relation to the landscape and garden heritage;

ix) how to improve the levels of research on the landscape and garden heritage;

x) how to identify and work with the prevailing circumstances in which any cultural landscape or historic garden exists. This includes topics such as the relevant legislation and cultures.

It is important to understand that the subject of cultural landscapes includes landscapes that are of local, regional and national significance, as well as those that are of international importance or World Heritage Sites.