**CALL FOR PAPERS**

**ICOM-ICME/2012/Namibia (ICME Annual Conference 2012)**

**12-14 September, 2012**

**& Post-Conference Tour 15-18 September**

**Introduction**
ICME (the International Committee for Museums of Ethnography) is an international committee of the International Council of Museums (ICOM) devoted to ethnography (ethnology, anthropology, folk) museums focusing on local, national and international cultures. ICME is concerned with the challenges facing ethnographic museums and collections in a changing world.

ICME will hold its 2012 annual conference on 12-14 September, at the Safari Court Hotel and Conference Centre, Windhoek, Namibia, in collaboration with theICOM Namibia. Final details of the ICME conference are forthcoming; the general format of the annual meeting will consist of paper and discussion sessions and excursions to museums and cultural sites in the area. ICME/2012/Namibia will offer a great opportunity to showcase Namibia to an international audience of museum workers

**2012 Conference Theme**

 *“Commodifying Culture? Cultural Villages and Living Museums”*

Museums are increasingly conscious that many artifacts should not simply be displayed as art. Objects need to be contextualised within the framework of the intangible cultural heritage that provides them with meaning. Ethnographic exhibitions and museums strive to present a context that adds depth to the ‘reading’ of an object and to reflect the dynamic nature of culture. In Namibia and other countries there has been much debate about the best way to ‘preserve’ and ‘display’ culture since it is such a fundamental aspect of a community’s identity. How should museums reflect cultural diversity in a way that preserves tradition, but also recognizes the dynamism of living cultures?

On the one hand, museums have sought to develop new exhibitions that have moved beyond the static presentation of objects in glass cabinets using audio-visuals to show the vibrancy of cultural heritage. These new forms of representation also showcase ‘living tradition’ and aspects of continuity and change within traditional rituals, dance, music and oration.

However, another approach presents an alternative format for the preservation and preservation of intangible cultural heritage (in particular). One of the major developments which has transformed the traveller’s experience of communities they encounter have been initiatives to create spaces where communities ‘speak for themselves’ and provide musical performances and craft demonstrations to visitors. The initiatives have often labelled themselves as ‘Cultural Villages’ or ‘Living Museums’. The formula has many variations; critic complain that people at these centres are turned into exhibits, while advocates argue the opposite – that such centres empower communities and provide them with the opportunity to present and preserve their own intangible cultural heritage. The issue also raises questions about the relationship between Museums of Ethnology and the communities that they represent.

**Submitting abstracts**

ICME invites you to submit an abstract for a full paper (20 minutes) addressing the theme of the conference. Abstracts of between 250 and 300 words will be submitted for selection to the ICME Review Committee, chaired by Annette B. Fromm ICME President. Abstracts submitted as attachments should also be *included in the text of the abstract in the text of the e-mail itself*.

Submissions should be sent to annettefromm@hotmail.com by May 15, 2011. Speakers will be notified by July 1.

The following information should be included with the abstract:
 - Title of submitted paper
- Name(s) of Author(s)
- Affiliation(s) & full address(es)
- Abstract in English (between 250 and 300 words)
- Support equipment required

**Collaboration**

ICME/2012/Namibia will be co-hosted by the ICOM National Committee for Namibia. The National Museum of Namibia, National Heritage Council of Namibia, UNESCO and the Museums Association of Namibia have all been invited to be co-hosts of the Conference.

**General conference information**
Registration forms, registration fee information, hotels, and other details will be forthcoming on the ICME web site - http://icme.icom.museum

**Programme**

During ICME/2012/Namibia, we plan to include several afternoon excursions to sites including:

1) The San exhibition at the Owela Display Centre of the National Museum of Namibia and the large new Independence Memorial Museum, due to be completed by the time of the Conference;

2) Heroes Acre, a national monument on the outskirts of Windhoek;

3) A ‘Township or City Tour’ as ‘townshop tours’ are a new form of cultural tourism that presents urban identities that in some ways confound and in other ways confirm conceptions of ethnic identity;

4) Okahanda, a ‘cultural village’ at about 1 hours drive north of Windhoek.

**Venue & Accommodation**

ICME/2012/Namibia will convene at the Safari Court Hotel and Conference Centre.

The Safari Hotel (3 stars) is holding a block of rooms for participants in ICME/2012/Namibia. All wish to stay there will have to make their own reservations. The Conference Committee is making arrangements for reasonable rates.

**Provisional Itinerary for Post-Conference Tour (Program subject to change)**

A four day post-conference tour will introduce visitors to Namibia, a large and diverse country. Emphasis on the ICME post-conference tour will be on culture, with ample opportunities to view some of Namibia’s spectacular scenery and wildlife.

Day One Drive to Omaruru. Visit Damara Living Museum. Evening Braai. Sleep at Twyfelfontein Country Lodge or Camping.

Day Two Visit to Twyfelfontein World Heritage Site. Visit to Burnt Mountain and Petrified Forest. Lunch at Khorixas. Drive through Etosha National Park and arrive at accommodation at Halale

Day Three Drive through Etosha National Park and exit via King Nehale Gate. Nakambale Museum (lunch) followed by drive to Tsumeb. Tour of Helvi Mpingana Kondombolo Cultural Village followed by supper.

Day Four Tour of Tsumeb Museum followed by drive to Okahandja. Lunch at Okahandja Cultural Village and opportunity to visit crafts market before returning to Windhoek.

**Post-Conference Tour Fee**

250 Euros (N$2,500.00)

We recommend that participants also consider staying on for an additional few days so that they can take the opportunity to make a visit to the Namib Desert at the coast or the Fish River Canyon. We could provide the contact details of a number of tour operators who could help organise such trips or participants could hire a car as many tourists to Namibia prefer to drive themselves and, thus, have greater control over their time and movements.