

## **Conclusions**

### **Police and law enforcement officials at the Interpol International Conference on Cultural Property Stolen in Iraq, held in Lyons on May 6, 2003,**

RECOGNIZING the importance to the world heritage of the recent losses of cultural property in Iraq,

AWARE OF the immediate need for forceful international action to counter illegal trafficking in Iraqi stolen cultural property,

AWARE that ICOM is developing a red list of Iraqi cultural property at risk for the immediate reference of law enforcement officers and other relevant professionals,

MINDFUL of the fundamental importance of genuine coordination and collaboration between law enforcement agencies as well as public and private sector expert organizations in the field,

RECOGNIZING that this initiative will require commitment to appropriate funding and human and technical resources;

DETERMINED that there should be a swift and concerted response,

RECOMMEND the following action:

#### **1. Expansion of existing Interpol database of stolen works of art to include Iraqi stolen cultural property items, undertaken by Interpol and partner organizations**

Interpol should significantly expand its existing database of stolen works of art to include the many thousands of items now apparently missing in Iraq. One international centralized database holding law enforcement information about Iraqi stolen and illicitly exported cultural property is the most efficient option. The database should be compiled in partnership with UNESCO, which should take the lead in collecting and coordinating information and then send this for quality control and storage on the Interpol database, to be maintained in a secure environment at Interpol for the use of law enforcement officers. When the database is in a sufficiently complete form Interpol and UNESCO will determine when and how the database should be made available for searches to museum professionals, art dealers and the general public, via a special internet web site with powerful search tools. Pending the establishment of this database, the abovementioned red list together with appropriate bilateral sources of information, should be used by law enforcement and other relevant professionals for the purposes of identifying suspect items.

## **2. Creation of an Interpol Experts Group on Stolen Cultural Property**

An Interpol Experts Group should be formed to serve as a strategic advisory board to the IPSP Stolen Works of Art project and Interpol member countries in efforts to track down stolen cultural property and disrupt and dismantle criminal networks involved in trafficking of such items from Iraq and elsewhere. The Interpol Experts Group should consist of recognized public experts in antiquities and cultural property, senior law enforcement officials and lawyers, selected from Interpol member countries which are either major source or destination countries for trafficking in stolen cultural property. The Interpol Experts Group should be in a position to provide early warning on specific genres of cultural property still under threat of being trafficked; advise on proactive countermeasures including development of proper legislation as well as assist in the orderly restitution of trafficked objects once they have been found or seized by law enforcement agencies.

## **3. Establishment of an Interpol Task Force for the Tracking of Iraqi Stolen Cultural Property**

This tracking task force, to be coordinated by the Interpol Stolen Works of Art Project, should be the primary platform for coordination of international exchange of law enforcement information on Iraqi stolen cultural property and criminal networks trafficking in these items. It should disseminate best practice in countering this trafficking to law enforcement agencies as well as relevant public and private sector organizations. Based on intelligence analysis, it should seek to plan and coordinate operations targeting networks trafficking Iraqi stolen cultural property. The tracking task force should consist of law enforcement experts at an operational level, from Iraq and neighboring countries as well as the primary potential destination countries.

## **4. Infrastructure Support**

Interpol should approach member nations and other interested parties for the necessary funding and resource support to facilitate the effective implementation of these initiatives.