The Regional Conference of the CIS countries “Running a Museum – XXI Century” was held within the framework of the implementation of the UNESCO/IFESCCO Pilot Project “A Series of Regional And National Capacity-Building Trainings for CIS Countries in Museum Management Based on UNESCO/ICOM Museum Studies Training Package” (2008-2010) under the Agreement between UNESCO and the Intergovernmental Foundation for Educational, Scientific and Cultural Cooperation (IFESCCO).

The conference was the concluding presentational event within the framework of the long-term pilot project of UNESCO/IFESCCO, which was successfully implemented with the participation of specialists from more than 100 museums of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, the Republic of Moldova, the Russian Federation, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

The major aim of the event was to discuss current concerns and prospects for museum development of CIS countries and elaborate a future plan of action for development of museum-to-museum partnership and further deployment of capacity-building trainings for museum specialists in the CIS countries.

The following issues were discussed at the Conference:

- Museums as centres for education and communication: experience, opportunities, prospects;
- Museums as access points to knowledge on cultural heritage and cultural diversity for intercultural dialogue;
- The role of museums in the implementation of UNESCO’s Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property (1970);
• *Protection and safeguarding of heritage. Tensions between conservation and development;*
• *Development of continuous professional education of museum personnel in the CIS countries: objectives and requirements.*

Participants of the Regional Conference of the CIS countries “Running a Museum – XXI Century” express their gratitude to the UNESCO's Cluster Office in Moscow and the Intergovernmental Foundation for Educational, Scientific and Cultural Cooperation (IFESCCO) as well as to the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Belarus; the National Commission of the Republic of Belarus for UNESCO and ICOM, the Belarusian Committee of the International Council of Museums, for their support, good organization and successful holding of the Conference.

As the result of the completed discussions, the following recommendations have been adopted by participants of the Conference:

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

**Realizing the necessity of the system approach** to providing professional training of museum specialists, who work in the field of research, protection and promotion of national cultural values and thereupon assume special civil responsibility for preservation of cultural heritage;

**Highlighting the great importance and high effectiveness** of the UNESCO/IFESCCO project “A series of regional and national capacity-building trainings for CIS countries in museum management based on UNESCO/ICOM Museum Studies Training Package” (2008-2010) for training of qualified museum personnel, who employ the up-to-date organizational and managerial skills and who carry out their activities in accordance with the requirements of the ICOM Code of Museum Ethics;

**Acknowledging the need for** development and improvement of museum-to-museum partnerships of CIS countries including improved accessibility access to museum collections;

**Emphasizing great importance** of ratification and implementation of the Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property (1970) with the aim to provide the preservation of cultural heritage and cultural diversity in CIS countries;

**Developing the status value of museum profession** for young people, stimulating their self-realization and creating the possibilities of their professional and career growth;

**Understanding the importance** of forming a positive image of the museum in the modern social environment;
THE CONFERENCE RECOMMENDS:

1) To recognize further development of the project of regional and national trainings of UNESCO/ICOM for professional training of museum personnel of the CIS countries is necessary, promoting an extensive exchange of experience and high technologies in museums' activity.

2) Use the series of UNESCO/ICOM's publications on museum management as a basis for elaboration and holding of professional trainings for museum specialists, and also to make efforts in order to provide translations into the national languages and wide distribution among museum employees.

3) Organize on a regular basis authors' seminars and master classes by the most successful museum professionals and the authors of actual projects and programs, including interactive video-conferences. Involve tertiary school experts in professional museum trainings.

4) Consider the possibility of cooperation in the field of professional museum training between the CIS, the European Union and the organizations of Asian-Pacific region.

5) Promote further development of the international contacts of museums within ICOM, professional training for the purpose of the broadening information horizons of museum experts, ensuring the conformity with the international professional standards, and also for the purpose of distribution of information on regional cultural experience and heritage on the European and international scale.

6) Recognize the necessity to create a special museum training program for museum specialists from the CIS countries at the regional level, probably, on the basis of one of leading museums of Russia.

7) Consider the possibility to create a methodological museum centre for the CIS countries, which should carry out the following actual tasks:

   -- to assist in developing the methodological basis for museums' activity;

   -- to provide access to publications and various information sources on museums' activity;

   -- to develop improved training courses for various levels of professional development of museum specialists, including specific training modules;

   -- to develop opportunities for professional communication and networking among museums;

   -- to elaborate the analytical research on different aspects of museums' activity;

   -- to hold systematic monitoring and assessment of the outcomes of various training courses and educational programs;

   -- to develop cooperation and contacts between museums.
8) **Underline the necessity** to develop information technologies for museums and to improve the practice of their application and the legal framework.

9) **Promote** information exchange among the CIS countries through the development of a common international network and creation of a common Internet resource, the Virtual Resource and Project Centre of the CIS Museums, including an integrated database of museums' valuables and museums' educational programs, as well as an electronic directory of museums of the CIS countries.

10) **Develop and implement** the mechanism for professional cooperation among museums within the CIS, including promotion of joint museum projects.

11) **Consider the possibility** to create a *Group of Experts on Museum Statistics* and its functioning within the CIS with the purpose of gathering and analyzing information on museums' development and activity in the CIS and using it as a diagnostic tool for assessing the situation at the national and regional levels.

12) **Foster** the museums' cooperation in the field of research and information exchange on museum objects and museum collections; **prevent** illegal import and export of cultural values, take all measures to ensure their return.

13) **Stimulate** the legal activity in the museum environment; promote the development of legal base for museum work both on the national and regional levels. **Consider the possibility** to develop a common legal mechanism of the governments' guarantees for effective exchange of exhibitions and information resources among museums on the territory of the CIS.

14) **Come up with a proposal to** launch a common museum journal for the CIS and consider the possibility to write and publish a joint handbook for the system of museum education in the CIS under the title "Masterpieces of Arts and Culture of the CIS countries".