

## **Presentation from Claire Chahine of the French Blue Shield**

### **1 Titre**

We all know about the dangers which threaten our Cultural Heritage, but we don't always well know what actions can be undertaken for its protection, how and when. This is the preoccupation of the Blue Shield. Then I will start with the presentation of Blue Shield, its background and its actions this is necessary before speaking of the French national committee and its own actions which follow the same path.

### **2 The Hague Convention**

Following the disasters caused to the Cultural heritage during the second World War, a convention was adopted in The Hague in 1954 under the care of UNESCO for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of an Armed Conflict

→ It is the first international agreement accepted world-wide and focusing exclusively on the protection of cultural heritage.

→ It covers immovables and movables, including monuments of architecture, art or history, archaeological sites, works of art, manuscripts, books and other objects of artistic, historical or archaeological interest, as well as scientific collections of all kinds.

→ In order to lessen the consequences for cultural heritage of an armed conflict The States which are party to the Convention must :

- take preventive measures not only in time of hostilities (when it is usually too late), but also in time of peace;
- safeguard and respect cultural property during armed conflict (this obligation also applies in conflicts of a non international character);
- mark certain important buildings and monuments with the emblem of the Blue Shield.

### **3 The emblem**

Here is the emblem

It is the symbol specified in the Convention for marking cultural sites to give them protection from attack in the event of an armed conflict.

### **4 The first protocol**

The Convention was adopted together with a protocol

→ This first Protocol prohibits the export of cultural property from occupied territory and requires return of such property to the State from which it was removed.

→ The Protocol also expressly forbids the appropriation of cultural property as war reparation.

### **5 Signature**

At the end of 2007,

118 States are Parties to the Convention,

of which 97 are also Parties to the Protocol.

## **6 International committee of ICBS**

The international committee of Blue Shield which has for model the Red Cross

→ was created in 1996 by 4 international organisations

→ ICA: International Council of Archives

→ ICOM : International Council of Museums

→ ICOMOS : International Council of Monuments and Sites

→ IFLA : International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions

→ And in 2006, the Co-ordinating Council of Audiovisual Archives Associations was invited to join, in order to cover all the facets of the Cultural Heritage

ICBS is now formed by five non-governmental organisations

and, according to the The Hague Convention, it works to protect the world's cultural heritage threatened by wars and natural disasters

and brings together the knowledge, experience and international networks of the five expert organisations dealing with cultural heritage

## **7 Blue Shield + Red Cross**

The Blue shield is the cultural equivalent of the Red Cross

and the vision of the international committee is that in time the Blue Shield becomes for cultural heritage what the Red Cross is for humanitarian protection.

## **8 Main objectives**

The main objectives of ICBS are :

→ to facilitate international response to threats or emergencies through co-operation between ICBS and national organisations

→ to propose its services in terms of expertise

→ to encourage safeguarding and respect for cultural property

→ and particularly to promote standards for risk preparedness

→ to train experts at a national or regional level to prevent, control and recover from disasters

## **9 Second protocol**

Following barbaric acts committed against cultural property in the course of the 1980s and beginning of the 90s, a review of the Convention was initiated in 1991 to draw up a new agreement to improve the Convention.

→ A Second Protocol was adopted at a diplomatic conference in The Hague in March 1999.

→ It was enforced in March 2004, after ratification by 20 states parties, the required number.

It had been now ratified by 47 State parties (France 2007)

The Second Protocol completes the Hague Convention, introducing new measures.

## **10 Second protocol**

It provides greater protection than before, giving more directive measures  
(*establish inventories, preparedness plans, moving the works of art ...*)

→ it creates a new category of enhanced protection for cultural heritage, particularly those which are important for the humanity. It applies in the event of an armed conflict not only on those of international character but also those occurring within the territory of one of the Parties (except situations of internal disturbance and tensions)

→ It also specifies the sanctions to be imposed for serious violations of cultural property

→ and defines the conditions in which individual criminal responsibility shall apply.

→ It creates a twelve-member Intergovernmental Committee responsible mainly for supervising the implementation of the Convention and the Second Protocol, these members are elected among the states parties to the 1954 Convention and the 2<sup>nd</sup> protocol

→ it creates an International Fund for the Protection of Cultural Heritage which is under the responsibility of this intergovernmental committee.

→ Finally it officially recognises ICBS as one of the organisations authorised to contribute, in a consultative role, to the work of the intergovernmental Committee

## **11 ICBS charter**

The international committee of Blue Shield elaborated its Charter in Strasbourg, in France, April 2000, and decided to respect the following principles:

- joint action
- independence,
- neutrality
- professionalism,
- respect of cultural identity ,
- work on non profit basis.

## **12 ICBS Action plan**

The action of ICBS is threefold and takes place before, during and after a conflict or a disaster. So far, the preventive phase has been the best developed within ICBS action plan and implies to:

→ assess the risks and raise awareness of threats among governments, professionals and the public

→ improve risk preparedness

→ train professional staffs to intervene during and after disasters and to organise workshops

→ promote the elaboration of disaster plans, especially in national institutions

## **13 ICBS response**

Hopefully ICBS will prove to be able in the future to respond to disastrous situations by :

→ providing a pool of experts through its international, cross-sectoral network of professionals

→ raising core funds to provide means of immediate response

→ disseminating information and sharing resources

#### **14 et 15 Blue shield network**

The great strength of Blue Shield is that it is cross-sectoral, bringing together professions and institutions across the cultural spectrum in a same objective.

By pooling their expertise, and drawing in military authorities and emergency services, the Blue Shield is a potentially powerful model for managing disaster risks at a national level. Organisations such as the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM) in Rome, certainly stand as major partners in the implementation of ICBS activities. It is essential that the variety of persons concerned by risk preparedness and response to disasters may also be implied, not only when the disaster strikes but before.

→ Since its creation it has been obvious that ICBS efficiency would be enhanced by the creation of National Blue Shield Committees. It is vital that the international initiative is taken up and supported by local initiatives. Blue Shield Committees have been or are being formed in a number of countries.

→ Belgium was the first to do so, (in 1998)

→ soon followed by the Netherlands, the United Kingdom then France,

→ and Australia, Benin, Brazil, Chile, Cuba, the Czech Republic, Italy, Macedonia, Madagascar, Norway, Poland, and the United States.

#### **16 national Com under construction**

There are steps taken in Austria, Bolivia, Canada, Hungary, Mexico, Namibia, Peru, Portugal, Russia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and Venezuela to create a National Committee.

#### **17 Towards an association**

As more and more National Committees were being created it has become obvious that the links between ICBS and the National Committees had to be clearly defined and responsibilities shared.

→ A meeting in Torino, was organised in 2004, gathering representatives from ICBS and most of the existing National Committees, in order to reflect on the future of the ICBS and its National Committees.

→ A working group was set up to study the possibility of creating an association, more or less on the model of what exists within the Red Cross.

→ A Second meeting was convened in The Hague in 2006 and there was a general agreement that the National Committees ought to improve their contacts and co-operation, that there was a need for establishing a formal association of the

National Committees, an association which would deal with practical and local disaster issues whereas ICBS would be in charge of political issues and relationships with UNESCO.

→ It was then decided that the association would be a Foundation by Dutch law, whose seat would be located in the Netherlands. The City of The Hague offered to host the future association and to support some of the expenses.

→ The working group met several times in The Hague and is currently writing the statutes of the association.

### **18 Respective roles**

There is a need to know who will actually co-ordinate action – so that each National Committee knows who is assisting where and when – in order to prevent competition and overlap.

→ Then, it remains the role of ICBS

→ to order to intervene strategically with decision makers and relevant international organisations,

→ and to respond to natural and man made disasters,

→ whereas ANCBS is responsible

→ for the clerical co-ordination of these national relief responses,

→ receiving and distributing the quests for assistance.

→ The ANCBS must also serve as communication centre, archive and resource base for both ICBS and the National Committees,

→ setting up and maintaining a website that contains access points to other relevant databases.

Recently the President of ANCBS made a statement about the war in Georgia. It was a call to the Georgian and Russian authorities to respect the Cultural Heritage according to the Hague Convention they signed.

### **19 French national committee**

Now the French national committee

→ It was created in June 2001

It gathers at the moment around 120 members, individual or institutional

Up to now we received no subsidies, our funds come only from the adhesions.

All the work is done on a voluntary basis.

It is in France the only representative of ICBS

It can be asked to participate in actions outside France, but in the frame of ICBS

→ Its role in France is similar to that of ICBS worldwide.

Its actions particularly focus on :

→ Awareness raising, concerning the fragility of cultural heritage

among heritage professionals, government and decision makers as well as the public at large.

And also spread the risk awareness, whatever the risk. In fact, there are not only major risks, such as natural or industrial disasters or military risks, but also domestic problems which can cause very important damages.

→ Prevention

by elaboration of preventive measures to protect the cultural heritage from the consequences of disasters, (and we take into consideration the minor risk, as well as the major risk). Then reduce the source of risks or reduce the vulnerability if a potential dangerous event occurs  
We promote also the elaboration of disasters plan which gather prevention measures and emergency plans

→ Exchange of savoir-faire

between emergency specialists, such as firemen, and heritage specialists (in charge of the physical protection of cultural heritage) who know the fragility of buildings, items and artefacts

→ Cross-cooperation

between the different cultural specialists whose individual specificity must lag behind the common measures they must take in the event of a disaster or after a disaster

→ Training

for example organisations of sessions devoted to the first interventions or helping to react in front of a disaster such as a flood in a library

## **20 Working groups**

CFBB is organized in working groups :

→ Disaster emergency planning

focusing on prevention :

then promoting the writing of disaster plans and promoting the hierarchical organisation of cultural items, and setting up of a model for training people

We focus also on evacuation of collections

→ Intervention Emergency units

this group has recently merged with the precedent to jointly elaborate a training model for interveners

→ Disaster memory

its aim is the elaboration of a questionnaire allowing to keep track of previous disasters

Collecting information allows the risk analysis and the assessment of damages

In fact, maintaining that memory is essential to improve emergency plans by taking into consideration the lessons from the past in order to avoid or mitigate as much as possible future disasters

This work was carried out in collaboration with a European project

→ Communication

its main activity is the updating of our website,

→ Heritage and conflicts

has for objective dealing with the measures to be taken for the protection of monuments in case of armed conflicts according to The Hague Convention, and especially establish a list of buildings belonging to the Army

but this group has not much activity at the moment, relationship with the army being not easy

## **21 Local sections**

Even at a national level it is important to have local initiatives which improve networks in both prevention and salvage. It makes easier and faster all the operations in particular the sharing of human and financial means, it facilitates the coordination and reduces the time of intervention through local emergency units

- So far we have 3 local sections which already cover a quite large area of France

The first one, the more anciently constituted, is very active. It proceeds in working groups similar to those of the national committee. Among there activities, they organize training sessions, they exchange information, especially on the financial and human means to share them in case of disaster. They have close relationship with firemen.

The Paris section has the objective of listing all the institutions, prestigious or not, public or private, owning works of art in the city, together with the monuments, and there are many. We will also do an inventory of the means that the institutions have, in terms of prevention and salvage in the aim of helping them if they have none.

The Normandy section has just been constituted.

## **23 Realisation**

Among the accomplishments already carried out by CFBB or in progress we can quote:

→ elaboration of the questionnaire that I mentioned to inventory prior disasters. It is ready to be sent to institutions

→ development of supports of communication, under the form of DVD or Power Point intended to raise authorities and public at large awareness

We have also a project, under the form of a pamphlet, of elaboration of a directive scheme concerning all the measures to be undertaken on a national level to reduce the risks threatening the Cultural Heritage. This will be carried out in collaboration with the Ministry of Environment, which is very involved in the risk prevention, the Ministry of Culture and with all the qualified people in terms of risk.

→ organisation of training sessions

→ organisation of seminars, study days. We had already three, hold at different parts of France:

in Caen in Normandy in 2003,  
in Toulouse in the south west in 2004  
in Marseille in 2006.

They are very important in raising awareness and promoting collaboration at a local level. They help in the development of networks  
Reports are accessible on our website and the proceedings of the meetings have been published.

The next meeting is planned this coming december in Paris. It will focus on coordination after a disaster. A call for paper has been launched. The programme will soon appear on our website

→ elaboration and maintenance of our web site which facilitates communication at the national level. It contains a lot of information on our activities, and in particular reports of meetings, it contains also intervention files, an international press review on problems dealing with endangered cultural heritage, a photographic library illustrating different damages.

Of course, part of this information is only open to the members  
An English translation of our activities is under progress.

- *voluntary contributions made by the Parties*
- *contributions, gifts or bequests made by*
  - (i) other States; (ii) UNESCO or other organizations of the United Nations system; (iii) other intergovernmental or non-governmental organizations; and*
  - (iv) public or private bodies or individuals;*
- *any interest accruing on the Fund*
- *funds raised by collections and receipts raised from events organized for the benefit of the Fund*
- *funds and all other resources authorized by the guidelines.*