

Opening speech by Toshiyuki Kono, President of ICOMOS, to the II International Scientific Symposium of the National Committee ICOMOS Russia

World Cultural Heritage – Issues and Perspectives

19 September 2018, Veliky Novgorod

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen,

I regret that I am unable to join you in person to celebrate this second important symposium organised by the National Committee ICOMOS Russia and to visit the exceptional heritage of the city of Veliky Novgorod, as I unfortunately have prior commitments elsewhere these days. I still have excellent memories of last year's event which was so well organised in Yaroslavl. Nevertheless, ICOMOS International is strongly represented here in Veliky Novgorod with the presence of several members of the ICOMOS Board.

The subject you have chosen for your conference "World Cultural Heritage – Issues and Perspectives" is of central importance to ICOMOS. In the increasingly complex context of the 1972 World Heritage Convention, it is important that ICOMOS focuses on providing technical advice of the highest quality and integrity, and on ensuring that we speak with one voice as an organisation. For this reason events that allow international scientific exchange and discussion, such as this conference, are crucial.

We are grateful to the National Committee ICOMOS Russia for the attention it gives to the requests sent by the ICOMOS International Secretariat in the context of our role as Advisory Body to the Convention, the effort it puts into monitoring the state of conservation of the World Heritage Sites in Russia, and in meeting the experts ICOMOS sends on mission to your country.

The fact that, only 2 years after the election of the Permanent Council of the new National Committee, you can gather over 200 experts from over 20 regions of Russia, with the support of your authorities and prestigious partner institutions – shows the successful trajectory this Committee is now firmly embarked on and we warmly welcome its growing participation in international ICOMOS activities. In particular we look forward to the outcomes of this conference – so that we can benefit of your insights on such a wide variety of issues in the international discussions surrounding the World Heritage Convention.

I wish you a fruitful three days and very productive debates.

With best regards

Toshiyuki Kono

President of ICOMOS