

8th World Conference of Historical Cities

Montréal Declaration

October 2003

We the undersigned, mayors and representatives of cities gathered in Montréal for the 8th World Conference of Historical Cities, declare:

That we recognise the formative aspect of the cultural diversity of our cities and the priority nature of multicultural exchanges and interactions that encourage the mutual enhancement of our communities and contribute to shaping the collective heritage;

That we will use every available means to assume our responsibilities for recognising, conserving, enhancing and propagating the natural and built heritage of our neighbourhoods and our cities, with the purpose of maintaining and improving the quality of life of our fellow citizens;

That, in order to achieve this objective, we will, on the one hand, invite the civil society to join together, in ways that respect our traditions and cultural diversities, to conserve and enhance this heritage by, among other things:

- providing it with access to all relevant information, with the cooperation of various partners, including Knowledge Institutions;
- promoting exchanges that will increase genuine understanding and recognition of the distinctive symbolic value of certain heritage elements for each community concerned;
- encouraging promoters and developers to participate in the screening activities concerning the foreseeable heritage impact of the proposed projects;
- facilitating the participation of citizen in screening activities of these proposed development projects;
- and this without limiting the accountability of decision-makers;

And that we will, on the other hand, promptly proclaim our intentions regarding the conservation and enhancement of this heritage, along with medium- and long-term projections:

- by publicly announcing the principles that will guide decisions regarding heritage conservation and enhancement;
- by identifying our priority areas of action, in collaboration with those of other public authorities and the United Nations Programme for Human Settlements (UN-HABITAT);
- by establishing a precise timetable for the attainment of objectives.

Montréal, October 8, 2003