



World Archaeological Congress

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World Archaeological Congress Codes Of Ethics

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First Code of Ethics

Adopted by WAC Council in 1990 at WAC-2, Barquisimeto, Venezuela

Principles to Abide By:

Members agree that they have obligations to indigenous peoples and that they shall abide by the following principles:

1. To acknowledge the importance of indigenous cultural heritage, including sites, places, objects, artefacts, human remains, to the survival of indigenous cultures.
2. To acknowledge the importance of protecting indigenous cultural heritage to the well-being of indigenous peoples.
3. To acknowledge the special importance of indigenous ancestral human remains, and sites containing and/or associated with such remains, to indigenous peoples.
4. To acknowledge that the important relationship between indigenous peoples and their cultural heritage exists irrespective of legal ownership.
5. To acknowledge that the indigenous cultural heritage rightfully belongs to the indigenous descendants of that heritage.
6. To acknowledge and recognise indigenous methodologies for interpreting, curating, managing and protecting indigenous cultural heritage.
7. To establish equitable partnerships and relationships between Members and indigenous peoples whose cultural heritage is being investigated.
8. To seek, whenever possible, representation of indigenous peoples in agencies funding or authorising research to be certain their view is considered as critically important in setting research standards, questions, priorities and goals.

Rules to Adhere to:

Members agree that they will adhere to the following rules prior to, during and after their investigations:

1. Prior to conducting any investigation and/or examination, Members shall with rigorous endeavour seek to define the indigenous peoples whose cultural heritage is the subject of investigation.
2. Members shall negotiate with and obtain the informed consent of representatives authorized by the indigenous peoples whose cultural heritage is the subject of investigation.
3. Members shall ensure that the authorised representatives of the indigenous peoples whose culture is being investigated are kept informed during all stages of the investigation.
4. Members shall ensure that the results of their work are presented



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with deference and respect to the identified indigenous peoples.

5. Members shall not interfere with and/or remove human remains of indigenous peoples without the express consent of those concerned.

6. Members shall not interfere with and/or remove artefacts or objects of special cultural significance, as defined by associated indigenous peoples, without their express consent.

7. Members shall recognise their obligation to employ and/or train indigenous peoples in proper techniques as part of their projects, and utilise indigenous peoples to monitor the projects.

The new Code should not be taken in isolation; it was seen by Council as following on from WAC's adoption of the Vermillion Accord passed in 1989 at the South Dakota Inter-Congress.

The Vermillion Accord on Human Remains

Adopted in 1989 at WAC Inter-Congress, South Dakota, USA.

1. Respect for the mortal remains of the dead shall be accorded to all, irrespective of origin, race, religion, nationality, custom and tradition.

2. Respect for the wishes of the dead concerning disposition shall be accorded whenever possible, reasonable and lawful, when they are known or can be reasonably inferred.

3. Respect for the wishes of the local community and of relatives or guardians of the dead shall be accorded whenever possible, reasonable and lawful.

4. Respect for the scientific research value of skeletal, mummified and other human remains (including fossil hominids) shall be accorded when such value is demonstrated to exist.

5. Agreement on the disposition of fossil, skeletal, mummified and other remains shall be reached by negotiation on the basis of mutual respect for the legitimate concerns of communities for the proper disposition of their ancestors, as well as the legitimate concerns of science and education.

6. The express recognition that the concerns of various ethnic groups, as well as those of science are legitimate and to be respected, will permit acceptable agreements to be reached and honoured.

The Tamaki Makau-rau Accord on the Display of Human Remains and Sacred Objects

Proposed in November, 2005 at WAC Inter-Congress, Auckland, New Zealand. Adopted by WAC Council in January, 2006, WAC Inter-Congress, Osaka, Japan

In recognition of the principles adopted by the Vermillion Accord, the display of human remains and sacred objects is recognised as a sensitive issue. Human remains include any organic remains and associated material. Sacred objects are those that are of special significance to a community. Display means the presentation in any media or form of human remains and sacred objects, whether on a single occasion or on an ongoing basis, including conference presentations or publications. Community may include, but is not limited to, ethnic, racial, religious, traditional or Indigenous groups of people.

WAC reiterates its commitment to scientific principles governing the study of the human past. We agree that the display of human remains or sacred objects may serve to illuminate our common humanity. As archaeologists, we believe that good science is guided by ethical principles and that our work must involve consultation and collaboration with communities. The members of the WAC council agree to assist with making contacts within the affected communities.

Any person(s) or organisation considering displaying such material or already doing so should take account of the following principles:

1. Permission should be obtained from the affected community or communities.

2. Should permission be refused that decision is final and should be respected.
3. Should permission be granted, any conditions to which that permission is subject should be complied with in full.
4. All display should be culturally appropriate.
5. Permission can be withdrawn or amended at any stage and such decisions should be respected.
6. Regular consultation with the affected community should ensure that the display remains culturally appropriate.

Code Of Ethics For The Amazon Forest Peoples

NEW DELHI, INDIA, DECEMBER 4, 1994

1. Seeing that Amazon forest peoples are on the brink of extinction.
2. That these peoples have minimal or no contact with the developed or developing world.
3. That such contact even as recently as 1993 has been responsible for massacres of entire villages loss of territories, epidemic diseases and devastation of crops.
4. That measures so far taken by national governments to protect these cultures does not suffice to halt these peoples decline.
5. Admitting that uncontrolled occupation of the territories of these peoples by alien intruders forces them to work under oppressive conditions.
6. Seeing that such exploitation causes loss of culture and destruction of family and community.
7. An urgent action' be undertaken if these forest peoples and cultures are to survive into the 21st century.

ACTION PLAN

Seen the magnitude of the threats weighing on Amazon forest peoples the international community accepts immediate responsibility to protect these remaining populations from recrimination massacres and death threats.

1. Realistic and definite international demarcation of Indian territories and accurate recognition of traditional land rights be enshrined in law.
2. Recognition at the highest level of authority of Amazonian and forest peoples rights on such traditional lands.
3. That funds contributed by World Bank be allocated to ensure the demarcation of such territories.
4. That all intruders regardless of their origin such as colonisers, miners, forestry companies, religious groups be removed from these territories immediately.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. We recommend that both national and international laws for the protection of these peoples be universally respected and implemented.
2. That massacre of forest peoples be denounced and investigated immediately as an act against humanity and a violation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
3. That the guilty parties be judged without impunity.
4. That any imprisoned person of forest ethnic origin be allowed contact with his or her family, chief or advisor, treated humanely according to

his or her ethnic need.

5. That survivors of massacres and atrocities be fully protected by law or security forces, specifically when called upon or wishing to bear witness.

6. That amazon chiefs, shamans, captains and communities be consulted with on all issues concerning their forest environment rivers', lakes, faunas and floras upon which their survival depends.

7. Each nation in the region establish a permanent judicial commission to ensure the implementation of the above recommendations.

NOTE

The WAC "Code of ethics for indigenous peoples" and the "Vermillon Accord" be followed in the case of research and that research should not be conducted without the prior consent of peoples and that they be informed of the results of such research.

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