



UNIDROIT Celebrates 25th Anniversary of 1995 Convention on Cultural Property



On 8-9 October 2020, UNIDROIT hosted a celebratory international conference to mark the 25th anniversary of the adoption of the UNIDROIT Convention on Stolen or Illegally Exported Cultural Objects.

The Conference was an event to take stock of the achievements of the Convention's implementation thus far, raise awareness on the importance of uniform laws for the restitution and return of cultural property, reinforce synergies between the Convention and other international instruments, as well as to explore future steps in the projects aimed at promoting a favourable legal framework for the successful implementation of the Convention's vocation, such as the 1995 UNIDROIT Convention Academic Project (UCAP).



Following the words of welcome of President Maria Chiara Malaguti and General Riccardi of the Command of the Carabinieri Unit for the Protection of Cultural Heritage representing Minister Dario Franceschini (Italian Ministry of Culture), the opening session featured speeches from UNIDROIT's many partners in the fight against the illicit trafficking of cultural property such as Webber Ndoro (Director General, ICCROM), H.E. Salim AlMalik (Director General, ICESCO), Ernesto Ottone Ramírez (Assistant Director-General for Culture, UNESCO), Corrado Catesi (Works of Art Unit Coordinator, INTERPOL), Alberto Garlandini (President ICOM). The rich programme of the conference featured a Keynote Speech on the Impact of Uniform Laws on the Protection of Cultural Property by Professor Toshiyuki Kono (Executive Vice President and Distinguished Professor, Kyushu University - President ICOMOS), and three sessions.

Session I focussed on Cultural Objects - Protection and Circulation and was coordinated by Manlio Frigo (Full Professor of International Law, Milan Università degli Studi - Of Counsel BonelliErede), Session II on the Interplay and Interdependence of Rules and Cultural Instruments and moderated by Marina Schneider (Principal Legal Officer and Treaty Depositary, UNIDROIT), whereas Session III focussed on Challenges and Future Steps and was moderated by Ignacio Tirado (Secretary-General, UNIDROIT).



This session gave an opportunity to discuss the proactive role of the civil society can and should play as well as the benefits for all of a enhanced and constructive collaboration with the art market. Joanna van der Lande (Antiquities Dealer's Association) and Martin Wilson (Chief General Counsel at Phillips London) explained how the market evolved in the last 25 years and how important the means to enforce the law are.



Despite the pandemic, the hybrid format of the conference allowed the participation of about 300 participants from all over the World, and an array of prominent speakers and statements delivered by many States party and non-party to the Convention.



From left to right: Professor Ignacio Tirado, Secretary General of UNIDROIT, Professor Maria Chiara Malaguti, President of UNIDROIT; Mr Bennahi Lemrabott, Minister of Culture, Handicrafts and Relations with the Parliament of Mauritania; Mr Nami Salihi, Director of Heritage of Mauritania.

[Programme](#)