

Documentation Standards Group Report, Nuremberg 1997

The documentation standards group is one of the most active in CIDOC. Following last year's conference in Nairobi, several interim meetings took place. One in London at the V&A, (reported in the August issue of the CIDOC Newsletter) and two other informal meetings in Washington and Crete. As a result we were able to meet all the major objectives set in Nairobi.

Three meetings were held during the Nuremberg conference, each drawing a massive response (nearly 50 people). Due to the size of the group, and the number of new members, it was agreed that in future a distinction would be made between 'voting' and 'non-voting' members, along the same lines as that used by ICOM for committee membership. Voting members will be expected to participate in the group's activities on a regular basis.

It was also agreed that constructive work could best be carried out by assigning specific tasks to small 'project-groups', who would then submit the results of their efforts for discussion and approval by the group as a whole.

The Group's mission, as defined during the Nuremberg conference, is "the identification, creation, maintenance and diffusion of standards relating to museum documentation". Most of the group's recent work has been devoted to developing the Object-Oriented Reference Data Model. However, now that the end of this work is in sight we aim to set up a number of other project groups to undertake work on terminology, revising the current 'Guidelines for Information Categories', and for compiling a resource document identifying existing standards relevant to museum documentation. Work on the reference model will, of course, continue. Several of the group's members have also expressed interest in setting up a testbed project to evaluate the feasibility of using the reference model as a practical basis for information exchange and interoperability.

To help co-ordinate the group's work and provide a convenient means for communication between members, we shall be making extensive use of email and a group web site. A turning point may have been reached since the vast majority of the group's participants now have Internet access.