



# 68th IFLA Council and General Conference

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### **Does IFLA have a role to play?**

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#### **Committee on Copyright and other Legal Matters (CLM) Theme: "The Legal Challenges in Repatriating Library Materials"**

In the short time available this will be brief. One thing is very clear after these most interesting presentations: this is a complicated issue where individual cases vary considerably in detail. It is also an area where there can be great sensitivities. I believe that IFLA's role relating to the repatriation of cultural property is to do what it perhaps does best:

- maintain a watching brief in the area of cultural property issues;
- keep our members informed;
- consider the possibility of developing some principles or guidelines for members to follow. An example of such guidelines, but probably far more detailed than required for the library environment, is Section 32 of the International Council of Museums (ICOM) Code of Ethics for Museums. This particular section relates to the Acquisition of Illicit Material. To give you a sense of what it contains, the section can perhaps be reduced to a fundamental concept - - ensure that a valid title to an item can be obtained by knowing the provenance of the material you are acquiring;
- last, but not least, when dealing with disputes such as these, there will always be many complicated interrelationships where goodwill and perhaps readiness to compromise will be crucial to success.

Thank you