

UNESCO'S RETURN AND RESTITUTION COMMITTEE PROPOSES A GOOD BEHAVIOR CODE FOR DEALERS IN CULTURAL PROPERTY.



FOR SALE: seventh century Assyrian bas-reliefs, chipped from the walls of Sennecherib's

Palace at the Nineveh archaeological site in Iraq sometime during or shortly after the Gulf War. It is unlikely that such an advertisement would be published in your newspaper, or be seen in the window of the local antique dealer. But the Iraqi treasures have been identified as being up for sale on the international art market, despite the fact that they are stolen goods and that their return is actively sought. How to prevent their sale and encourage their restitution? The world's "art police" are on the job of course, but real progress will only be made if art and antique dealers worldwide come on board. This is the aim behind a proposed code of ethics for dealing in cultural property endorsed by UNESCO's Intergovernmental Committee for Promoting the Return of Cultural Property to its countries of origin or its restitution in case of illicit appropriation at its tenth session in Paris from January 25-28 (1999).

Source: UNESCO Sources, No. 110, March, 1999, pg. 22

■ **AGENCY** ■

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

The main objective of UNESCO is to contribute to peace and security in the world by promoting collaboration among nations through education, science, culture and communication in order to further universal respect for justice, for the rule of law and for the human rights and fundamental freedoms that are affirmed for the peoples of the world, without distinction of race, sex, language or religion, by the

ACTIVITY

In 1993, several 3,500-year-old pieces of Greek jewelry were placed on the market for sale by a prominent gallery owner. When the Greek government protested that the jewelry had been stolen, the gallery owner agreed to donate them to the Society for the Preservation of the Greek Heritage, who returned the jewels to the Greek government, which will display them in a museum. If you were to go to almost any museum in the world, you would see statuary, jewels and other artifacts from ancient civilizations. Many of these items were collected and donated to museums by wealthy philanthropists in the 19th and early 20th centuries. Have students conduct a UN inquiry into the right of these museums to retain ownership of these items; assign other students roles such as: Museum Director of the NY Metropolitan Museum of Art; President Hussein of Iraq; the Cultural Minister of Greece; the Director of the Syrian Museum of Antiquities; President Mubarak of Egypt; Mr. Shmoke, Director of the Finite Gallery, a major dealer in ancient artifacts. Reference might be made to the United Nations *Chronicle*, Vol. XXXV, No. 3, 1998, pg. 76-79. If the teacher has access to statuary examples (or pictures of same), these would make the exercise more realistic. In a debriefing of this activity question students about whether they believe this issue is a matter of maintaining peace.

Charter of the United Nations. To fulfill its mandate, UNESCO performs five principal functions: (1) Prospective studies: what forms of education, science, culture and communication will be required for tomorrow's world; (2) The advancement, transfer and sharing of knowledge, relying primarily on research, training and teaching activities; (3) Standard-setting action: the preparation and adoption of international instruments and statutory recommendations; (4) Expertise: provided to Member States for their development policies and projects in the form of "technical co-operation;" (5) Exchange of specialized information. ■

EGYPT SEEKS AID TO REMOVE DECADES-OLD MINES

Egypt is seeking \$250 million in Western aid to remove some 17.5 million landmines that date to World War II, the *Financial Times* reports. Egypt said the landmines are hindering development of its tourism, mining and oil industries. Altogether, about 24 million mines are scattered across the country, the largest number in a single country. The Egyptian Foreign Ministry reported that while some countries have approved assistance, "their help remained nominal." The *Financial Times* notes that the European Union donated \$1.6 million for landmine



clearance, while Britain, Germany and France contributed smaller amounts. The Egyptian government charges that Britain and Germany are responsible for the mines, noting they had a great role in burying the millions of explosives during the world war. Two-thirds of the mines are in the Western Desert, where the decisive El Alamein battle took place. General Kamal Amer, governor of the Mediterranean province of Marsa Matrouh, observed: "The Britons are trying to shake off their responsibility by blaming the