

World Archaeological Congress



14 October 2020

Dear Colleagues and Friends

On 19 March, 2020, the WAC Council took a difficult decision of postponing WAC-9, originally scheduled to take place between 5 and 10 July 2020 for one year to 4~9 July 2021. Retrospectively, we had not yet fully realized how unpredictable and dangerous this novel Coronavirus actually was. Since then, the virus has fully revealed its elusive and deadly character and has inflicted tremendous harm to human lives and confusion, disturbance and destructions to our communities and our societies. Now, many countries and regions of the world are entering into or already in the middle of the second wave of its spread, and various measures that involve the restriction of face-to-face meetings, that some of us experienced in the form of the 'lockdown' of society at the height of the first wave, are considered or have already been re-implemented. Worsening of the situation is feared as the northern hemisphere is heading for the winter, but no one knows exactly how the situation will become nor how long before the pandemic will have been contained to the extent that allows us to resume 'normal' lifeways including international traveling.

With much regret, and in response to the recommendation made by the WAC-9 LOC, as the result of the continued COVID-19 Coronavirus pandemic and the uncertainty and unpredictability of its unfolding, the Council of the Archaeological Congress has unanimously endorsed the further postponement of the Ninth World Archaeological

Congress, which was re-scheduled to be held in Prague, Czech Republic, between 4 and 9 July 2021.

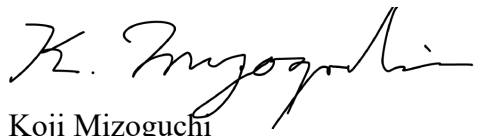
As a result of the further postponement, the WAC-9 will now be held a year later from the originally postponed date, *between 3 and 8 July 2022* in Prague, Czech Republic.¹ This endorsement was not reached lightly. We looked into a range of possibilities, including organizing WAC-9 completely online and holding it in 2021. However, the most important constitutive characteristic of WAC as a democratic archaeological world community obliged us to retain the in-person component of the Congress for the purpose of organizing the Assembly, that comprises of the representatives elected from all participating countries and has power to change the statutes, elect the Executive Officers, and decide the venue of the next International Congress. Disappointing as this may be, but we had to prioritize your safety while still keeping the constitutive characteristics/pillars of WAC as a democratic archaeological world community alive.

We are still discussing with the LOC as to how to respond to various challenges and needs to reduce the inconveniences caused by this further postponement. A package of measures shall be announced as soon as the decision will have been made.

We are also exploring the possibility of organizing an online pre-congress, and possibly, separate online inter-congress(es) sometime next year. We shall keep you informed of the progress of those matters as much as possible.

This virus transcends animal and human boundaries, spreads across all the socio-cultural, -economic, -political and -ethnic boundaries, and that divides and closes down human society. This virus spreads through the infrastructural systems of globalization and destroys global solidarity. This virus is itself a contradiction, and therefore embodies and exposes the contradiction of this world. I, on the capacity of the President, thank you very much indeed for your understanding and patience, and plea for your commitment to make WAC-9 2022 an arena for sharing ideas for and discussing about better archaeologies for the (hopefully post-Covid-19) future.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K. Mizoguchi', written in a cursive style.

Koji Mizoguchi

President of the World Archaeological Congress

1 The International Congress (see Article 6 of the Statutes <https://worldarch.org/statutes/>) is one of the most important pillars defining WAC's existence as a democratic world archaeological community. The Assembly, which is held during the International Congress, is our highest decision-making body. Comprised of the representatives elected from all participating countries, the Assembly has power to change the statutes, elect the Executive Officers, and decide the venue of the next International Congress. To further highlight the significance of the International Congress, the final plenary held at the end of each International Congress discusses and adopts resolutions that mandate the WAC Executive and the WAC Council to work towards their implementation while in office. In other words, the WAC speaks through the International Congress to realise its objectives, of the reduction of inequality, and the realisation of social justice through the practice of responsible archaeologies.