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Revision of the ICOM Code of Ethics for Museums
Consultation Three — Review of Outline Introduction

1. A museum's primary responsibility is to its communities, contributing to their development and promoting their active participation. These include the communities whose objects it cares for, the communities in which it is located, and the communities that benefit from its activities. To serve society, museums:

- a. Guarantee physical, cognitive, cultural, and economic accessibility to all, promote social inclusion practices and respect diversity.
- b. Promote and support the right of everyone to participate in and contribute to cultural life.
- c. Collaborate with the global museum community, encouraging mutual exchange and sharing, developing enduring partnerships and promoting cooperation.
- d. Safeguard and value tangible and intangible cultural and natural heritage for the benefit of society.
- e. Recognize the importance of digital heritage and associated data.
- f. Are committed to contribute to the health and well-being of the environment and society.

2. To acquire and sustain the trust of the public and adequately carry out their tasks, museums operate according to professional standards. This entails responsibilities both on the part of the museum and on the part of the individuals and groups that work in and with museums.

- a. Museums:
 - i. Recruit staff and volunteers that reflect the diversity of the museum's communities.
 - ii. Follow equitable, inclusive and gender-sensitive practices in the recruitment, management, and remuneration of staff. They ensure staff have an adequate contract and compensation commensurate with the tasks performed.
 - iii. Ensure that individuals working for or with the museum have the competencies necessary to fulfill the responsibilities of their positions.
 - iv. Provide for training and support for staff, volunteers, and governing bodies that they can responsibly carry out their duties.
 - v. Describe and publish clear objectives, tasks, responsibilities, and specific staff functions for all roles.

- vi. Periodically check staff satisfaction and organizational well-being in the work environment.
- vii. Promote interdisciplinary and intersectoral working styles.

b. The people who work in and with museums:

- i. Act professionally always, respecting the public interest and engaging in a lifelong learning process.
- ii. Treat everyone with fairness, equality, and respect, avoiding any type of discrimination.
- iii. Operate in a collaborative, interdisciplinary and intersectoral manner, and respect collegial decision making.
- iv. Maintain the confidentiality of information.
- v. Disclose any conflict of interest or potential conflict of interest and refrain from engaging in any activity that might compromise the professional responsibilities, identity, or the reputation of the museum.

3. To fulfill their educational role through projects, programs, exhibitions and publications as well as in the display and communication of collections, museums:

- a. Conduct all activities in accordance with their mission.
- b. Promote reflection and knowledge sharing, through non-discriminatory approaches and strategies and the development of forms of active participation.
- c. Guarantee the correctness and integrity of all the information presented by verifying the scientific reliability of the sources used.
- d. Mediate knowledge and understanding of heritage, using adequate, effective and accessible languages and tools, resulting from research and sharing, activating the interpretative potential of each cultural evidence.
- e. Actively engage and work in partnership with existing audiences and reach out new and different audiences.
- f. Implement and encourage participatory and co-planning practices to promote the involvement of beneficiaries and the rooting of the museum in people's daily lives.
- g. Recognize and respect different cultural, social, political, religious and gender expressions.
- h. Respect sensitive materials - including ancestral remains, materials of sacred significance, etc.- and intangible cultural knowledge and treat them appropriately in exhibitions, programs, publications, etc. either virtually or in person.
- i. Adopt digital technologies to ensure accessibility of diverse audiences, encourage participation and enrich the educational experience of the visitors.

4. To responsibly safekeeping and safeguard the collections (tangible and intangible heritage¹, archives and digital collections), museums:

- a. Adopt and pursue a careful collection management policy, considering collections primarily as cultural resources rather than economic resources.
- b. Follow professional accessioning procedures, including requiring valid title, carrying out due diligence, ownership and/or provenance research. They exercise due diligence in ensuring by all means that the asset was not illicitly acquired in (or exported from) the country of origin or a transit country. They carry out research on the origin of the goods, requesting complete documentation on the changes of the ownership. The same criteria are adopted for donations, bequests, deposits and loans.
- c. Record, catalogue and digitize the assets that are part of the collections and carry out research to deepen their knowledge of the assets they preserve.
- d. Ensure the accessibility of collections and documentation for research, study, organization of exhibitions and drafting of programmes.
- e. Maintain, preserve, and conserve² the museum's collections, monitoring the environmental conditions and the state of conservation of the assets, providing for their maintenance and, where necessary, their restoration, ensuring their integrity from any type of risk. They pay equal attention to the preservation of digital and digitized heritage.
- f. Appropriately store sensitive tangible and intangible heritage.
- g. Create and promote exhibitions, both physical and virtual, long-term and temporary.
- h. Promote initiatives to enhance the tangible and intangible assets of the countries of origin. They promote restitution, voluntary repatriation and reparations actions, in compliance with the regulations of the respective countries.
- i. Preserve digital cultural heritage, respecting the Public Domain and proper Digital Rights Management.

5. To protect the museum's resources and ensure that it legitimately carries out its functions effectively and efficiently, serving its communities in perpetuity, a museum's governing body and leadership,
Museums:

- a. Ensure to have a deed of incorporation, statute or other official written document, made public and drawn up in accordance with national legislation, which clearly defines its legal status, mission, permanence and not-for-profit nature.
- b. Ensure the fulfillment of the mission statement and objectives.

¹ See definition in Dictionary of Museology, pp. 245-248; Dictionnaire de Muséologie, pp. 497-501

² See definition in Dictionary of Museology, edited by François Mairesse, Routledge: New York, 2023. pp. 86- 97; Dictionnaire de Muséologie, pp. 142-146.

- c. Maintain professional standards of integrity, quality, and sustainability.
- d. Promote museum independence/autonomy towards political decision makers and interest groups.
- e. Secure adequate human, physical, and financial resources.
- f. Appoint the Director or Head with appropriate professional knowledge and skills.
- g. Demonstrate mutual respect and ensures clear division of roles among leadership, staff, volunteers.
- h. Establish written policies for personnel, including staff and volunteers, collections, fund- raising, emergency response, and other museum-wide matters.
- i. Monitor the composition of the governing body so that reflects the museum’s communities and includes individuals with the range of competencies to allow it to support the museum’s mission.
- j. Commit to transparency in communications, both internally and externally, and take into account the contributions by all key stakeholders, including core audiences and community members as well as supporters.
- k. Ensure an ethical use of digital technologies also in compliance with national and international regulations.
- l. Guarantee the protection of users' personal data acquired both through online platforms and on-site and adopt cyber security measures.