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PRESS RELEASE

International Museum Day 2016: Museums and Cultural Landscapes

The worldwide community of museums will celebrate [International Museum Day](#) on and around May 18. For an hour, a night or an entire week, participants are free to mark this unifying, universal occasion, which turns 38 this year, as they see fit. In 2016, the theme of the International Museum Day is “**Museums and Cultural Landscapes**”, also at the heart of debates that will take place during the ICOM General Conference, to be held in Milan from 3 to 9 July 2016. This theme implies that museums have a certain responsibility towards the landscapes where they are located, to which they are able to bring their own specific knowledge and skills. The main mission of museums is to oversee the safekeeping and protection of the heritage that lies both within and beyond their walls.

In the [Siena Charter](#), the cultural landscape is proposed as “the country where we live, which surrounds us with the images and symbols that identify and characterize it.” According to this vision, the landscape is considered as the context – geographic, historical, economic, social and cultural – in which museums exist and operate. The International Council of Museums (ICOM) established International Museum Day in 1977 to increase public awareness of the role of museums in the development of society.

This initiative has proven successful, according to ICOM President Hans-Martin Hinz: “Museum visitors should learn about the past and enjoy the diversity of cultures”. The event benefits from growing popularity, and in 2015, gathered **more than 35,000 museums which organised celebrations in some 145 countries on five continents**.

In the words of Johanna Regalado, Project manager for the Ethnological Museum of Guayaquil, Ecuador, one of the museums involved in IMD: “**Without a doubt, every year, every IMD brings about great expectations. Families, children, adults, everyone enjoys special activities created for them**, and nobody knows how much time the museum workers devote to making sure that every moment, every programme is a success. It is a pleasure for us, of course! It is an extraordinary moment for museums! In 2015 for the theme ‘Museums for a Sustainable Society’, our museum celebrated the whole month with different special activities. These included ‘ReciclArte’ for children (award for the best artwork made with sustainable material), ‘children’s guidance’ in the MAAC Museum, an inclusive programme with a ceramics workshop for disabled people,

conferences, a 'Night at the Museum' and more, all of which were organised and enjoyed during this very special month."

For the second year ICOM has created an [interactive map](#), allowing museums worldwide to update their activities planned for International Museum Day celebrations. This is a highly practical tool for museum visitors around the globe, as a quick and useful way to check which IMD activities are taking place in every part of the world.

More than 1900 IMD activities worldwide are online on the interactive map, from Europe (including 1,422 activities in Germany, 129 in Switzerland and 70 in Spain) to Asia (India, Myanmar, Taiwan, Thailand), the Americas and Australia.

Most museums around the world celebrate International Museum Day from tomorrow, 18 May, until 22 May, with celebrations planned around the globe this coming weekend.

Visit the official International Museum Day website and interactive map: <http://imd.icom.museum>

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ABOUT ICOM:

The International Council of Museums (ICOM), founded in 1946, is a worldwide organisation of museums and museum professionals committed to promoting and protecting the present and future, tangible and intangible natural and cultural heritage. With more than 35 thousand members in 137 countries, ICOM is a unique network of professionals working in a wide range of museums and disciplines related to the preservation of our heritage.

ICOM has formal relations with UNESCO and holds a consultative status in the UN Economic and Social Council. The organisation also partners with entities such as the World Intellectual Property Organization, INTERPOL and the World Customs Organization, in order to carry out its international missions of public services, including the fight against trafficking of cultural assets and the promotion of emergency preparedness and response in the wake of natural and man made disasters.

ICOM's commitment to raising awareness of cultural heritage is reinforced by its 30 International Committees who encompass a great variety of museum fields. These committees carry out research in their respective areas for the benefit of the museum community. ICOM mobilises cultural heritage specialists all over the world to meet the challenges faced by museums worldwide.