

## PIMA Code of Ethics for Pacific Islands Museums and Cultural Centres

### Preamble

The Pacific Islands Museums Association (PIMA) has existed as an Affiliated Organisation of the International Council of Museums (ICOM) since 1998. PIMA and its members fully endorse and support the ICOM Code of Ethics. In addition, PIMA is proud to produce this specialised code for professional museum work particularly adapted to the values of Pacific Islands Museums and Cultural Centres.

### Guiding principles

Pacific Islands Museums and Cultural Centres:

1. are the custodians of collections of cultural and natural history that they hold in trust, foremost for their creator communities and the peoples of the Pacific, secondly for the benefit of people and communities elsewhere<sup>1</sup>;
2. have a primary responsibility to assist communities to maintain and safeguard their continuing intangible heritage;
3. build and maintain relations of cultural understanding and mutual respect with the communities they serve;
4. support the reconnection of ex-situ cultural resources, located domestically or internationally, with their creator communities;
5. are advocates for the conservation of cultural diversity, biodiversity and sustainable, culturecentred development;
6. will advocate with governments to provide the appropriate financial and other support they require to discharge their responsibilities;
7. will advocate with governments for the effective implementation of national legislation and international conventions relating to the protection and conservation of cultural and natural resources; and
8. encourage museums from outside the Pacific to support the repatriation of cultural resources to the countries and communities of origin.

### In line with these principles Pacific Islands Museums and Cultural Centres will:

1. Relate with communities
  - 1.1 engage communities in all aspects of the management of museums as well as their own cultural and natural heritage;
  - 1.2 assist communities to manage their own heritage by providing training, capacity-building and ongoing support;
  - 1.3 build the professional skills of their staff and the communities they serve;
  - 1.4 ensure appropriate representation of the creator communities' knowledge and beliefs in all museum activities, public programs and interpretative materials;
  - 1.5 maintain an active relationship with communities in the documentation and conservation of historical, cultural and natural places, which can be used in museum exhibitions and educational programs.
2. Provide access
  - 2.1 address their responsibilities to provide appropriate access to their premises, collections, research and public programs for all members of the communities they serve;
  - 2.2 support the use of local vernacular languages, where appropriate, in public programs, publications and interpretive materials (e.g., labels, wall texts, tour guiding, talks) in addition to the official languages of the respective country or territory.
3. Monitor research
  - 3.1 develop and promote guidelines for the undertaking of research on aspects of the cultural and natural heritage, addressing responsibilities of both museums and others facilitating fieldwork and research ('target bodies') and the institutions supporting researchers ('sponsoring bodies');
  - 3.2 develop mechanisms to ensure that researchers collect for facilitating museums ('target museums') as well as for their own institutions ('sponsoring bodies').
4. Assess significance
  - 4.1 ensure that their personnel are knowledgeable in appropriate processes for assessing the significance of cultural and natural resources;
  - 4.2 assess the significance of cultural resources on the basis of the primary importance of the cultural values that they bear for their creator communities, in addition to the secondary values of their authenticity, age or rarity;
  - 4.3 refrain as far as practicable from placing monetary values on cultural and natural resources.

Please Note: This Code of Ethics was developed during a special session of the Pacific Museums in Sustainable Heritage Development Workshop, held at the Australian National University in Canberra during February 2006. The facilitation was expertly co-chaired by PIMA Executive Board Members, Lawrence Foana'ota (Director, Solomon Islands National Museum) and Ralph Regenvanu (Director, Vanuatu Cultural Centre) with the assistance of Bernice Murphy (Chair, ICOM Ethics Committee) and Professor Amareswar Galla (Director of Graduate Studies in Sustainable Heritage Development, The Australian National University and Vice President, ICOM). The Workshop was convened by the Pacific Asia Observatory for Cultural Diversity in Human Development and the Cross Cultural Taskforce of ICOM. For details visit: [www.pacificasiaobservatory.org](http://www.pacificasiaobservatory.org)

1. The dichotomy of natural and cultural is an introduced concept to indigenous peoples of the world who uphold the holistic and integrated world view where cultural includes what is perceived as natural.

## Cultural Diversity – an Ethical Concern

**Professor Amareswar Galla**, *Vice-President of ICOM, Chairperson, ICOM Cross Cultural Task Force*

For museums to approach intellectual property in a way that accounts for cultural diversity means that divergent concepts of production, ownership and use must be incorporated into a framework to protect individual and collective rights and guarantee access to these same expressions. The role of museums and ICOM committees, institutional and individual members, in particular, in the protection and promotion of tangible and intangible heritage, including traditional expressions and knowledge, has naturally become a matter of concern for all of ICOM's committees and most recently, the Cross Cultural Task Force. There are legal and ethical aspects to the issue that these ICOM Committees are considering as part of our respective agendas.

> In the coming months, the Cross Cultural Task Force will be investigating the ethical issues of intellectual property and working with Executive Council member Rick West, Director of the National Museum of the American Indian, attorney and member of both the Ethics Committee and the Cross Cultural Task Force.

> As a rule, the ICOM-CCTF will address its work within the context of all ICOM activities in general and three key UNESCO texts in particular. The latter are: the *Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity* (2001), the *Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage* (2003) and the *Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions* (2005). The preferred outcome is an inclusive ICOM that generates knowledge, facilitates cross cultural communication and builds effective networking for the promotion of cultural diversity in museums and heritage institutions (as per the ICOM Strategic Plan). This requires us to shift the understanding and practice of cultural diversity within the museum context, to explore how cultural diversity should be seen as both an asset and an issue that should suffuse all policy, planning and programmes on the local, regional, national and/or global levels. Such a paradigm shift means that cultural diversity has to become an ethical concern or second nature to all members and stakeholders.

> A major review is under way through an audit of what has been done by the various ICOM Committees with particular reference to the current Action Plan of the ICOM Cultural Diversity Policy. Inputs into a new Action Plan are being solicited, inviting Committees and Organisations of ICOM to propose ideas and strategic activities. Submission of case studies and examples of relevant projects are welcome to assist the sharing of experiences through ICOM networks.

> A series of workshops will be facilitated at the meetings and conferences of ICOM and its partners, both NGOs and INGOs, in the coming years. A new series of think tank activities will be convened under the banner of "The Inclusive Museum Conferences". It is envisaged that a new ICOM Cultural Diversity document will be prepared in the lead up to ICOM 2007 in Vienna and launched at a facilitated concurrent session.

### ICOM- CCTF membership:

Laishun An (China), Corazon S. Alvina (Philippines), HC Jatti Bredekamp (South Africa), Christine Hemmet (France), Lucía Astudillo Looor (Ecuador), Pascal Makambila (Congo), Adi Mere Ratanabuabua (Fiji), Tereza C. Moletta Scheiner (Brazil), Lina G. Tahan (Lebanon), W. Richard West, Jr. (USA) and the Chair of the CCTF, Amareswar Galla (Australia).

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For more views on museums & intellectual property, see: [icom.museum/news.html](http://icom.museum/news.html)