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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 will be “**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.

**Visit the International Museum Day official website**

<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.