

ICOM works to promote scientific culture

ICOM participated in a brainstorming workshop on promoting scientific, technical and industrial culture and enhancing the role of science centres in educating the public, and in particular women and young people. The workshop was organised by Universcience, ICOM and the Association of Science-Technology Centers (ASTC), with support from UNESCO.



France Desmarais, Director of Programmes and Development at ICOM, represented the organisation at the [2nd International Conference on Geoparks](#) in Africa & Middle East in Dakar, Senegal on 9-10 October.

Organised in advance of the 15th Francophonie Summit, which will be held on 29-30 November in Dakar on the topic of women and young people, the conference served as preparation for the launch of an initiative to open geoparks in Senegal. The Global Network of National Geoparks promotes the development of scientific interpretation and mediation facilities around notable geological sites managed by local communities with an educational, economic and tourism objective.

The political objective of the workshop was to produce a declaration in preparation for the upcoming Francophonie Summit. Workshop participants recommended that governments give “a prominent place to scientific and technical culture as a way to provide access to culture for all, strengthen science education and promote equal opportunities” and support “projects developed by science centres and museums and interpretation centres and propose and support their creation where they do not yet exist, as stakeholders in cultural and educational public policy and economic development.”

By participating in this event, ICOM once again affirmed its commitment to working with science centres by integrating them into the international museum community.

International committees such as the International Committee for Museums and Collections of Science and Technology ([CIMUSET](#)), the International Committee for Museums and Collections of Natural History ([NATHIST](#)) and the Committee for Education and Cultural Action ([CECA](#)) are directly engaged with issues related to scientific culture and informal education. With a large number of members, they provide new ideas and diverse viewpoints within ICOM, which believes that scientific and technical culture plays an essential role in public policy by creating a society of knowledge, innovation and culture.

In March 2014, ICOM signed the Mechelen Declaration at the [Science Centre World Summit](#) in Belgium. All of the participants pledged to strive for a series of goals, including better public education and awareness raising on science and technology's positive impact on sustainable development. With objectives similar to the challenges and commitments of the international museum community, it was only natural that ICOM should be interested in and support the declaration.