

RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED BY THE 40th ICOM ORDINARY GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Dubai, United Arab Emirates
2025

RESOLUTION No. 1

“Empowering Future Generations through Intangible Heritage”

The General Assembly of ICOM, meeting on the occasion of the 27th General Conference in Dubai, in November 2025,

Recognising that the preservation of memory — individual and collective, anchored in survivor testimonies, lived experiences, and shared narratives of the past — is fundamental to the continuity of cultures, the resilience of communities, and the building of inclusive and peaceful societies based on democratic principles,

That museums also play a fundamental role in protecting and transmitting memories of past violence, including the lived experiences and values of survivors of armed conflict, colonialism, nuclear devastation and other forms of collective trauma — memories that are critical to shaping a culture of peace, justice, and solidarity,

The importance of technological innovation in bridging on-site and online engagement, ensuring global access to survivor testimonies and community heritage narratives,

Affirming that Indigenous Peoples and local communities are the custodians of rich and diverse forms of memory expressed through traditions, languages, knowledge systems, rituals, oral histories, and ways of life rooted in ancestral connections to land and community,

Acknowledging that these communities, which retain distinctive institutions and maintain a strong collective awareness of their identity, are often underrepresented in dominant narratives and face the risk of cultural erosion if their heritage is not actively preserved and transmitted,

Highlighting the importance of empowering youth from Indigenous People and local communities to identify, document, research, and share their own cultural heritage, in order to maintain collective memory, dignity, and continuity, while creating new opportunities for intergenerational transmission and sustainable development,

Emphasising that, as survivors age and direct memory fades, museum professionals must find new and innovative ways to share their testimonies with both onsite and online audiences, raising awareness of the devastating impact of war, chemical and nuclear weapons on humanity and the planet,

Recalling ICOM’s longstanding engagement with the safeguarding of cultural heritage in all its forms, particularly in times of conflict and crisis, and its vision of museums as inclusive, ethical spaces for dialogue, human rights, education and peace-building,

The 40th ICOM General Assembly:

1. **Encourages museums to:**
 - a. **actively preserve, support and transmit the intangible cultural heritage of Indigenous Peoples and local communities**, particularly through the documentation of oral traditions, languages, rituals, and traditional knowledge systems, in

close consultation with these communities and respecting their rights and self-identification;

- b. **use digital innovation and technologies**, such as virtual reality, augmented reality, and digital archives, to make intangible heritage and survivor narratives more accessible to broader audiences, both online and onsite;
 - c. **create inclusive and safe spaces in Museums** where dialogue around conflict, resilience, memory, and reconciliation can be fostered, particularly engaging young people and marginalised voices;
 - d. **serve as platforms for empowering Indigenous Peoples and local communities' youth** by supporting community-led efforts to identify, research, and valorise their own cultural heritage, ensuring its sustainability and intergenerational transmission;
- 2. **Urges the integration of memory preservation practices within museums**, including the collection and dissemination of testimonies and histories of survivors of armed conflict, nuclear devastation, colonialism, and displacement, to safeguard these experiences for present and future generations;
 - 3. **Supports collaborative initiatives between ICOM Committees, Indigenous Peoples and local communities, survivor groups, and cultural institutions** to co-develop ethical, participatory, and community-centred approaches to preserving and exhibiting memory-related heritage, grounded in transparent communication and shared protocols that ensure respectful co-creation and dissemination of content;
 - 4. **Encourages ICOM Committees and museum-related institutions to advocate for the allocation of resources and the development of policies** by relevant public authorities, with the aim of safeguarding intangible heritage and memory-based narratives as essential elements of cultural diversity, social cohesion, and peacebuilding;
 - 5. **Calls upon the international museum community to remain vigilant and proactive** in advocating for the protection of all forms of memory — tangible and intangible — particularly in contexts of conflict, marginalisation, or historical trauma.

Developed from Proposals for Resolution submitted by ICOM Peru and ICOM Japan, and endorsed by ICOM Botswana, ICOM Gabon, ICOM Sweden and ICOM New Zealand.

RESOLUTION No. 2

“Protection of Museum Collections and Support to Museum Professionals in Times of Crisis”

The General Assembly of ICOM, meeting on the occasion of the 27th General Conference in Dubai, in November 2025,

Affirming that museums and the communities they serve are facing increasing threats — including armed conflicts, political instability, natural disasters, economic crises, the effects of climate change, scarcity of resources, and precarious livelihoods — causing enormous damage to communities' cultural heritage by undermining their capacity to conserve, document and transmit it,

Stressing the importance of museum collection documentation, including inventories, as essential tools for the safeguarding of collections, effective management, provenance research, the fight against illicit trafficking, and as enablers of dialogue among stakeholders and of the restitution processes of cultural property,

Recognising that crises considerably increase the risk of looting, loss, theft, illicit exportation or destruction of collections, and may also lead to the acquisition by museums of undocumented cultural property and/or property of dubious origin, while also recognising that such circumstances may lead in the isolation of national professionals from international networks and peer support,

Considering the need to strengthen digital preservation mechanisms, duplicate inventories, and provide remote support to ensure professional continuity and international cooperation,

Recalling the many Resolutions adopted by ICOM since 1947, including those of Munich (1968), Stavanger (1995), Melbourne (1998), Vienna (2007), Rio de Janeiro (2013), Milan (2016), and Prague (2022), which call for the protection of cultural heritage in times of armed conflict and crisis, disaster risk management, and professional solidarity,

The Resolution No. 4 of the 1st Interim General Assembly of 1947 as the foundation of ICOM's commitment to the protection of heritage in times of crisis,

The obligations arising from relevant international instruments, including the 1954 Hague Convention and its Protocols, the 1970 UNESCO Convention and the 1995 UNIDROIT Convention,

Commending the initiatives undertaken by ICOM, including the ICOM Code of Ethics, Red Lists of Cultural Objects at Risk, the International Observatory on Illicit Traffic in Cultural Goods, Object ID, the ongoing work of the Heritage Protection Department and International Committees such as CIDOC (International Committee for Documentation), as well as emergency interventions in crisis areas and the efforts of the Disaster Risk Management Committee (DRMC),

The 40th ICOM General Assembly:

1. **Urges** all museums to carry out complete and up-to-date inventories of their collections, to preserve them in multiple formats (physical and digital), and to archive them in separate locations to reduce the risk of loss, particularly in the event of disasters (natural or human-made), in order to enhance their resilience;
2. **Invites** National Committees to support the systematic documentation of cultural collections and assist institutions in countries affected by conflict in establishing inventories and digital copies, providing technical and expert assistance;
3. **Stresses** the importance of strengthening the documentation of heritage in all its forms, including religious, traditional, tangible and intangible, before they are exposed to the risk of disappearance;
4. **Recommends** that inventories, or selected parts of them, be made accessible in accordance with applicable laws and regulations, to facilitate provenance research, combat illicit trafficking, and support dialogue on the return and restitution of unlawfully and illegally acquired cultural property;
5. **Encourages** the continued professional engagement of museum professionals affected by crises, particularly by facilitating their active participation in online meetings, professional events, virtual exhibitions, and knowledge-sharing platforms, and by supporting resilient virtual networks and clear communication channels among peers, institutions, and the public to sustain collaboration and trust in emergency contexts and to ensure that their expertise remains connected and valued;
6. **Calls upon** all members of ICOM, with the support of its National Committees, International Committees, Regional Alliances, and relevant Affiliated Organisations, to unite and participate in strengthening relevant measures and clear public policies to combat all forms of aggression against cultural heritage, in order to safeguard the identity and memory of Humanity, and to urge policymakers and legislators to:
 - a. ratify relevant international conventions and instruments, notably the 1970 UNESCO Convention and the 1995 UNIDROIT Convention;
 - b. implement their provisions, with the ultimate aim of preserving tangible and intangible heritage at both national and international levels;
7. **Invites** the strengthening of coordination mechanisms between ICOM, its bodies, international organisations, in particular those active in the fight against illicit trafficking, such as UNESCO, Interpol, UNIDROIT, specialised NGOs, and national authorities, in order to deploy timely and effective responses in times of crisis.

Developed from Proposals for Resolution submitted by ICOM Czech Republic and ICOM Africa, and endorsed by ICOM Spain, ICOM France, ICOM Australia, ICOM Nord, ICOM Sweden, ICOM Burkina Faso, ICOM Guatemala, ICOM New Zealand, CIMAM, ICOM Europe and ICOM Austria.

RESOLUTION No. 3

“Positioning Museums for an Equitable, Ethical, and Sustainable Digital Future through Technologies”

The General Assembly of ICOM, meeting on the occasion of the 27th General Conference in Dubai, in November 2025,

Recognising that digital transformation is reshaping the global museum sector through emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI), virtual and augmented reality (VR/AR), algorithmic systems, mobile platforms, and digital archives, offering new opportunities for access, education, engagement, preservation, and knowledge-sharing,

Acknowledging the potential of these tools to foster inclusive access to knowledge, expand public engagement, and promote cross-cultural dialogue and peace education, particularly in the face of global challenges such as conflict, climate change, and discrimination,

Considering the increasing reliance of museums on digital infrastructure and literacy to develop sustainable practices, professional exchange, community engagement and the creation of more liveable futures,

Emphasising that digital transformation also brings significant ethical, environmental, and social challenges — including misinformation, data insecurity, algorithmic bias, and digital exclusion — which require human-centred and ethically sound implementation to prevent new forms of exclusion, distortion, or exploitation and avoid reinforcing existing inequalities,

Stressing the importance of ensuring informed community consent and respecting cultural self-determination — particularly for Indigenous Peoples and local communities — when using technologies, such as digital storytelling or immersive media to interpret sensitive histories or intangible heritage,

Understanding that museums are increasingly expected to provide digital formats, manage digital collections, and reach out digitally to their audiences. To ensure that digital transformation serves both professionals and the communities they engage, its integration must be grounded in principles of equity, cultural sensitivity, environmental sustainability, and human dignity,

Highlighting the urgent need to train museum professionals in digital skills (e.g., platform management, data governance, low-carbon infrastructure), and to raise awareness of digital ethics, platform dependency, and the social impacts of technology,

Recalling that the ICOM museum definition adopted in 2022 positions museums as inclusive, sustainable, accessible and ethical spaces serving society through the preservation and interpretation of tangible and intangible heritage; and that both ICOM and UNESCO advocate for a rights-based and sustainable approach to digital transformation,

Also recalling ICOM’s long-standing engagement with science, technology, and innovation, including the adoption of Motion No. 1 (1959) calling for the

establishment of science and technology museums and Motion No. 2 (1959) on the creation of international documentation tools in these fields, as well as Resolution No. 5 (1977) establishing International Museum Day, which acknowledged the role of museums in fostering mutual understanding through science, culture, and technology,

Resolution No. 1 (2019) on sustainability and the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, which encourages museums to contribute actively to the SDGs through inclusive, innovative, and digitally enabled practices, and Resolution No. 5 (2019) on communities and sustainability, which emphasises the use of accessible, sustainable technologies to foster participation and inclusion. These principles are reaffirmed in the ICOM Strategic Plan 2022–2028, which envisions a forward-thinking museum sector empowered by digital technologies to better manage collections, engage with communities, and ensure unprecedented access to heritage worldwide,

The 40th ICOM General Assembly,

1. Recommends to ICOM organs and bodies to:

- a. **promote and support equitable access to reliable digital infrastructure**, digital literacy, and fair digital development for museums and their staff, in order to strengthen local, national, and international exchanges, as well as cross-committee and cross-institutional collaboration;
- b. **provide capacity-building programmes** that enhance both technical skills and critical understanding of digital ethics, environmental impact, and inclusion—especially for museums and professionals in under-resourced and marginalised contexts;
- c. **foster open-access collaboration and digital solidarity** by encouraging cross-committee and cross-regional innovation through shared platforms, multilingual resources, and open-source tools that support knowledge exchange and digital equity;

2. Recommends that ICOM Executive Board establish a Working Group on Digital Ethics and Artificial Intelligence:

- a. **to guide the responsible integration of technologies in museums**, aligned with human rights standards and international frameworks such as UNESCO's 2021 Recommendation on the Ethics of AI;
- b. **to develop and implement clear ethical and legal frameworks for the use of digital technologies** in exhibitions, research, and data management — including ownership, copyright, consent, data protection, and provenance — with special attention to Indigenous Peoples and local communities, in order to foster global digital equity by promoting fair access to technological resources and knowledge across regions, ensuring that digital development upholds human rights, cultural rights, inclusion, and justice;
- c. **to monitor and assess the social, cultural, and environmental impact of digital transformation in museums**, and to ensure that digital strategies remain ethical, inclusive, and aligned with the evolving

needs of diverse communities;

- d. **to develop tools and guidance for museums** to assess carbon emissions, digital dependencies, and community outcomes, ensuring sustainable and ethical progress in digital development;
- e. **to develop studies and recommendations to support international advocacy** on the need to update the copyright framework to reflect the realities of the 21st century and reach a fair copyright system that balance interested parties' interest with provisions for limitations and exceptions that empower museums to fulfill their public interest mission as stated by the ICOM definition, in special in relation to the digitalisation of their collections;

3. **Encourages museums to:**

- a. **adopt and ethically integrate digital technologies across all areas of practice** – including collection management, education, interpretation, and community engagement – in ways that foster institutional resilience, inclusive access, and the promotion of cultural rights, particularly for underserved or marginalised communities;
- b. **apply digital tools to promote peace education, climate awareness, and global justice**, ensuring that immersive storytelling and interpretation methods are used responsibly, or avoid distortion of heritage, and are community-informed, culturally sensitive, and uphold human dignity and the accurate representation of diverse cultural narratives;
- c. **create and maintain secure digital and physical backups of collections, documentation, and inventories** to strengthen preparedness for climate-related, political, and technological disruptions; and adopt eco-conscious strategies for digital operations, including the evaluation and reduction of carbon footprints associated with streaming, cloud services, and digital exhibition;
- d. **ensure equitable access to digital content** by proactively bridging the digital divide and avoiding platform dependency or technological gatekeeping, particularly in underserved or marginalised communities;
- e. **invest in staff training and professional development** to build both the practical digital skills and critical awareness needed to ensure ethical, inclusive, and sustainable application of new technologies in museum settings;
- f. **collaborate with Indigenous People and local communities to document, manage, and safeguard intangible cultural heritage** using audiovisual and mobile technologies that respect cultural sovereignty, ethical data practices, and informed consent;
- g. **promote inclusive, multilingual, and community-led digital tools**—such as virtual exhibitions, immersive media, and community-driven archives—for education, interpretation, and storytelling, with particular care for culturally sensitive content;
- h. **engage in international partnerships and shared digital**

infrastructure to promote open-access, multilingual knowledge exchange and collaborative innovation across the museum sector;

4. **Supports the development of digital platforms such as:**

- a. **a global mentorship and training programmes for museum professionals**, utilising hybrid models and a shared digital platform to connect mentors and mentees, provide accessible training resources, and facilitate collaborative digital projects across regions and disciplines;
- b. **a global digital infrastructure that enables Indigenous Peoples and local communities and institutions to document, manage, and share** intangible cultural heritage through open-source tools and community-led standards, advancing inclusive, sustainable, and environmentally responsible digital transformation.

Developed from Proposals for Resolution submitted by AVICOM, SUSTAIN, ICOM UAE, and ICOM Iran, and endorsed by ICOM Australia, ICOM Finland, ICOM Iceland, ICOM Italy, ICOM Guatemala, ICOM Brazil, CIMAM, and ICOM COMMS.

RESOLUTION No. 4

“Empowering Museums in Achieving the SDGs through Youth by Means of Social Inclusion and Climate Action”

The General Assembly of ICOM, meeting on the occasion of the 27th General Conference in Dubai, in November 2025,

Considering that the world we are passing on to our children and young people seems to be a confusing one and we probably cannot fully imagine how the future will be,

Acknowledging that children and young people are global leaders in climate action—as campaigners, innovators, creatives, and entrepreneurs—as evidenced by initiatives such as the #FridaysForFuture movement,

Underlining that the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is essential to the role of museums in society; that Quality Education (**SDG 4**) ensures inclusive and equitable learning practice by equipping children and young people with knowledge, creativity, imagination, critical thinking, and the ability to make decisions and take responsibility, alongside the capacity to master new techniques and technologies, using arts and cultural heritage as an educational tool and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all; that Gender Equality (**SDG 5**) can be advanced through the empowerment of women and girls, ensuring inclusion and equity in museum education; that museum education has the power to reduce inequality within and among countries (**SDG No. 10**); that taking urgent action to combat climate change (**SDG No. 13**) and its impacts is crucial in our times; that promoting peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, (**SDG No. 16**) will provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels; and development of partnerships at local, national and international levels (**SDG No. 17**) will strengthen the means of implementation of social inclusion, climate action and sustainable development,

Recognising that ICOM and UNESCO are agents of change and are employing international charter instruments concerning museums, culture and sustainability in a changing world,

Recalling the 2022 ICOM museums definition as not-for-profit, permanent institutions that serve society through the research, collection, conservation, interpretation, and exhibition of tangible and intangible heritage, and that museums are open, sustainable, accessible and inclusive, serving as platforms that enable marginalised communities to engage in dialogue,

That the social mission of museums is upheld through a range of actions, including the work of International Committees actively engaged in fostering social and digital accessibility; and

That, in an increasingly polarised and individual-oriented world, museums and cultural venues have the power to play a vital role in uniting humanity, fostering understanding, and promoting shared values across diverse communities,

Recalling the 2019 ICOM Resolution No.1 “On sustainability and the implementation of Agenda 2030, Transforming our World”,

The 2019 Resolution No. 5 “*Museums, Community and Sustainability*”,

The dynamism of youth for climate action that was demonstrated in the ICOFOM “*Young People Shaping the Future of Museology Through the Lens of the SDGs*” workshops, funded by ICOM SAREC and held in sixteen countries between 2023 and 2025, which empowered museums to embrace their perspectives,

Welcoming the international reports that continue to advocate the social role of museums in advancing inclusion, accessibility, and diversity. Sector reports highlight evolving practices that reduce barriers and promote equitable participation across diverse communities, and,

Taking note of relevant international and regional frameworks, such as the European Accessibility Act (EAA), approved in 2019, set to come into effect on 28 June, 2025, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), and the EU Work Plan for Culture 2023–2026, among others,

The 40th ICOM General Assembly:

1. **Supports the policy makers** to highlight the crucial role that museums and culture play towards achieving the SDGs through their active involvement and engagement with children and young people;
2. **Recommends all ICOM Bodies** to support children and youth-led initiatives in museums in line with the ICOM Strategic Plan and the ICOM 2030 Sustainable Development Action Plan;
3. **Encourages museums** to become audience-oriented, inclusive cultural venues that foster holistic, informal learning and empower children and young people as active participants in addressing contemporary global challenges, by:
 - **equipping themselves with new technologies and communication tools** that enhance interaction with communities and provide safe spaces, for children and young people to build transversal and soft skills;
 - **creating and operating within inclusive spaces** where children and young people can gather on their own terms, collaborate, exchange ideas, amplify their voices, through youth-led content creation, innovative communication tools, and social media, and elevate their actions;
 - **ensuring that leadership responsibilities** include creating lively and dynamic opportunities for children and young people to learn about the importance of the SDGs, the pursuit of climate justice, and encourage them to share awareness among their peers and communities;
 - **upholding the intergenerational transmission of ancestral cultural and ecological knowledge**, and creating platforms for children and young people to share and preserve that knowledge;
 - **exploring inclusive practices** in education for climate awareness, cultural integration and adaptation, including programmes with all communities, civil society, schools and educators;

- **recognising the role of children and young people** in mitigating and adapting to the climate emergency by articulating equitable, credible and inclusive pathways for climate action, inclusion and resilience, particularly in the conservation and interpretation of cultural heritage;
- **facilitating financial and administrative equity** to meet the resource needs of museum communities experiencing the worst effects of the climate emergency, especially in lower-to-middle income countries, low-lying lands and islands, and those serving Indigenous People and local communities;
- **expanding employment and training opportunities** for young people in the cultural and creative sectors through the reconfiguring of museology/museological and curatorial practices; focusing on youth training to maintain the integrity, importance, sustainability, and accessibility of Cultural Heritage. For example, monitoring the vulnerability of heritage in terms of risk assessment and employing careful and respectful 'preservation' comprising proactive and preventive strategies;
- **developing specialised access policies and programmes** for children and young people with disabilities and special needs; and
- **exporting the museum's reach to community centers and schools**, through fun and accessible mediation projects, traveling exhibitions or presentations of works of art, innovative technological initiatives adapted to children and young people;

4. **Encourages children-oriented museums to:**

- a. strengthen their sustainability through innovative financial business models;
- b. promote the benefits of children oriented museums and create a reliable source of information and quality governance standards;
- c. raise awareness of artists, cultural managers, operators and policymakers of their role in leadership and global positioning;
- d. and strengthen their social role as inclusive spaces where children and families - particularly those from immigrant or underserved backgrounds - can build social ties and share meaningful learning experiences.

Developed from Proposals for Resolution submitted by ICOFOM and Hands On! International Association of Children in Museums, and endorsed by ICOM Greece, ICOM Botswana, ICOM Barbados, ICOM Qatar, ICOM Ireland, ICOM Finland, and ICOM Italy.

RESOLUTION No. 5

“Enhancing Emergency Preparedness in Museums and Promoting Resilient Museums and Communities”

The General Assembly of ICOM, meeting on the occasion of the 27th General Conference in Dubai, in November 2025,

Alarmed by the rising frequency and severity of both natural and human-made disasters, which result in the loss of life, the degradation of landscapes and ecosystems, the displacement of communities, and the destruction of cultural and natural heritage,

Noting that the Global Planetary Emergency — outlined by the Club of Rome and supported by scientific frameworks such as the Planetary Boundaries model (Rockström et al., 2009)— poses profound risks to both human and non-human life, including irreversible harm to cultural heritage,

Recognising the urgent need for museums to develop and implement conceptual and practical strategies to strengthen their resilience and preparedness in the face of these escalating global threat,

Affirming that comprehensive emergency preparedness —through actionable planning within the museum sector and beyond— is essential to protect cultural heritage, ensure the safety of staff and visitors, and maintain continuity of operations,

Recalling the previous ICOM Resolutions that have addressed the disaster and emergency planning, and the protection of cultural heritage during and after armed conflicts, in particular the Resolution No. 2 adopted at the 17th General Assembly of ICOM, Québec, Canada, 1992: *Preventing Threats to Cultural and Natural Heritage*; the Resolution No. 2 adopted at the 18th General Assembly of ICOM, Stavanger, Norway, 1995: *Protection of the Cultural Heritage during Armed Conflict*, the Resolution No. 5 adopted at the 22nd General Assembly of ICOM, Vienna, Austria, 2007: *Disaster and Emergency Planning* and the Resolution No. 1 adopted at the 37th General Assembly of ICOM, Prague, Czech Republic, 2022: *Collections Management during and after Armed Conflicts*,

Further recalling Resolution No. 1 adopted at the 34th General Assembly of ICOM, Kyoto, Japan, 2019, on *Sustainability and the Implementation of Agenda 2030*, address the planetary emergency, through strategies of sustainable development,

Emphasising that museums must prepare for an increasingly uncertain world by becoming more resilient institutions capable of addressing complex and ongoing challenges affecting their physical and digital communities,

Stressing that effective planning and implementation of emergency actions not only safeguard invaluable collections but also protect museum personnel and visitors and strengthen the continuity and relevance of museum operations in times of crisis,

The 40th ICOM General Assembly:

1. **Reaffirms that all museums hold a fundamental responsibility to pursue sustainable development initiatives** in alignment with their respective missions, mandates, and operational capacities;
2. **Urges all museums** to conduct comprehensive risk assessments to identify vulnerabilities affecting their institutions, collections, and communities, and to develop context-specific strategies for disaster preparedness, mitigation, and response;
3. **Emphasises that emergency preparedness plans must be regarded as living documents**, subject to regular review and updating to incorporate new data, emerging risks, evolving experiences, and lessons learned from past events which shall also include clear communication protocols for internal coordination and public engagement during emergencies;
4. **Advocates for sustained investment in training and capacity-building initiatives** to ensure that museum professionals are equipped with the skills and knowledge necessary to implement and support emergency and disaster response efforts effectively;
5. **Encourages museums to strengthen local, national, and international collaborations and partnerships** with cultural institutions, civic organisations, emergency agencies, NGOs, and private-sector actors, in order to foster the exchange of knowledge, resources, and best practices in emergency preparedness and response;
6. **Recognises that museums are a resource for local communities** in preparing for and mitigating against natural and human-made disasters and ongoing climate risks, through research, knowledge sharing, and by acting as a forum for discussion, and that museums are often a focal point for communities in the aftermath of disasters and have a role to play in community resilience;
7. **Promotes sustainable development in the museum field through the advancement of initiatives** such as the *ICOM Award for Sustainable Development Practice in Museums* and encourages the development and creation of similar recognition frameworks that highlight innovative and impactful sustainability efforts;
8. **Advises museums to consult and apply existing guidelines and resources developed by ICOM and its partners** - particularly ICCROM - to inform, strengthen and guide their emergency preparedness and risk management strategies.

Developed from Proposals for Resolution submitted by ICMAH, ICOM-CC, ICTOP, and INTERCOM, and endorsed by ICOM United Kingdom, ICOM Greece, ICOM Spain, ICOM MUSIC, ICOM Europe and ICOM Austria.

RESOLUTION No. 6

“Establishment of a Standing Committee on Decolonisation”

The General Assembly of ICOM, meeting on the occasion of the 27th General Conference in Dubai, in November 2025,

Considering the theme of the 27th General Conference, *The Future of Museums in Rapidly Changing Communities*, and acknowledging the imperative to address human rights and social justice in museum practice,

Recalling that in its Strategic Plan 2022–2028, ICOM recognised the role that museums have played in the processes of colonisation and outlined the objective of leading a global forum to explore key issues and identify best practices on decolonisation and museums,

Noting that the Working Group on Decolonisation was established in July 2023 with a three-year term ending in 2026, and was mandated to advise the ICOM Executive Board on how the Organisation, as the global voice of museum professionals and an international NGO, can address key topics around decolonisation, ensure exemplary institutional practice, and promote equity and social inclusion,

Acknowledging that colonial regimes frequently implemented policies and programmes focused on the collection of human remains and the misappropriation of art and other cultural belongings—through theft, confiscation, coercion, looting, and pillage—and in some cases deliberately sought to destroy tangible and intangible cultural heritage, and that museums have been complicit in some cases by acquiring these collections, neutralising and recontextualising them as merely anthropological or ethnographic objects,

Recalling that ICOM established an *ad hoc* committee on restitution in 1977, and that ICOM National and International Committees, Regional Alliances, and Affiliated Organisations have been engaged in activities around decolonisation for years, some for decades. In this regard, welcoming the work of ICOM’s International Committee for Museums and Collections of Natural History (NATHIST), which developed a Code of Ethics for Natural History Museums, approved in 2013, that includes relevant decolonial considerations,

Further recalling key Resolutions adopted by ICOM that have addressed these concerns:

- Resolution No. 5 on the *Return of Cultural Property to its Countries of Origin*, 14th General Assembly, London, UK, 1–2 August 1983, which acknowledged “the moral rights of people to recover significant elements of their heritage dispersed as a consequence of colonial or foreign occupation”,
- Resolution No. 1, 19th General Assembly, Melbourne, Australia, 16 October 1998, which reaffirmed ICOM’s commitment “to the promotion of cultural rights of all peoples through a reaffirmation of the values embedded in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights” and expressed support for the United Nations Draft Declaration on the Rights of the World’s Indigenous Peoples,

- Resolution No. 15 on *Heritage Restitution*, 25th General Assembly, Shanghai, China, 12 November 2010, which encouraged all concerned parties in restitution disputes to engage in dialogue,
- Resolution No. 2 on *Inclusion, Intersectionality and Gender Mainstreaming in Museums*, 26th General Assembly, Milan, Italy, 9 July 2016, which recognised that decolonisation extends beyond the questions of restitution and repatriation,

Recognising that decolonisation carries diverse forms in different regional and cultural contexts and that there is no single, standardised approach and that decolonisation is a continuous and transformative process—not a one-time action—requiring deep institutional and structural change, a rebalancing of power dynamics, and sustained vigilance and commitment,

Underscoring the relevance of international instruments to museum decolonisation efforts, including the 2007 United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP); the 2005 UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions; the 2003 UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage; and the 2001 UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity,

The 40th ICOM General Assembly:

1. **Recommends** that the ICOM Executive Board reaffirms its acknowledgement of the role museums have played and continue to play in colonisation;
2. **Calls upon the ICOM Executive Board to adopt and widely disseminate an ICOM-wide position statement on decolonisation**, building on the work done by the Working Group on Decolonisation;
3. **Requests** the ICOM Executive Board to publish the final report of the Working Group on Decolonisation in all official ICOM languages, to facilitate wide accessibility and engagement and;

The ICOM Executive Board to review the recommendations contained in the final report of the Working Group on Decolonisation, and approve an Action Plan for implementation, based on this report;

4. **Recommends to establish a Standing Committee on Decolonisation** with a mandate to:
 - a. Advise on the development of ICOM's policies and strategies on decolonisation;
 - b. Provide guidance and support to ICOM's Standing Committees, Working Groups, National and International Committees, Regional Alliances, and Affiliated Organisations;
 - c. Promote cross-regional dialogue and the exchange of knowledge and best practices on decolonisation within the global museum community;

- d. Develop communication materials and training to assist museums in addressing decolonisation sensitively and effectively;
5. **Recommends that the Standing Committee be co-chaired** by individuals from a former colony and a former colonial power, and that its composition be professionally diverse and balanced geographically between individuals from former colonies, including Indigenous peoples, and former colonial powers, and experts and specialists in the field of law in all its forms as law plays a vital role in guaranteeing rights, enforcing order, and protecting property.

Developed from a Proposal for Resolution submitted by ICOM Canada, and endorsed by ICOM United Kingdom, ICOM MUSIC, ICOM Nord, ICOM Burkina Faso, ICOM Brazil, ICOM Barbados, and ICOM COMMS.