



PROPOSED DEFINITION OF MUSEUM, SUBMITTED BY ICOM – CANADA
May 9, 2019

1. PROPOSAL:

WHEREAS, The ICOM Kyoto 2019 General Conference September 2019 plans to consider revisions to the 2007 Museum definition; and
WHEREAS, Museum practice has evolved significantly in the last twelve years; and
WHEREAS, ICOM - Canada represents a dedicated group of Canadian museologists, professionals who are passionate about museums and international networking; ICOM - Canada Members at their annual meeting on April 16, 2019, therefore, propose to REAFFIRM the importance of retaining the following elements of the existing definition:

- the museum as a non-profit, permanent institution;
- the tangible and intangible nature of heritage; and
- reference to the core functions of collecting, preserving, documenting, researching, educating and exhibiting;

but also HIGHLIGHT the following emergent concerns, priorities and directions:

- the interrelation of natural and cultural heritage, both in their preservation and presentation;
- the need for renewed relationships with Indigenous peoples, based on mutual respect and reciprocity;
- the need to increase diversity in the museum workforce;
- an emphasis on the museum's capacity to practise cultural diplomacy; and
- the reconsideration of museum core functions and new digital technologies for their ability to promote social good and climate justice.

2. TOWARDS A REVISED DEFINITION:

Building on the above commentary, ICOM - Canada proposes the following modifications to the current definition:

“A museum is a non-profit, permanent, **dynamic and responsive** institution in the service of a living planet. It is a public place that **welcomes all people, fosters cooperation, cross-cultural exchange and public understanding of human and environmental interdependence**. The museum acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits arts and cultures, the tangible and intangible heritage of humanity and its environment for the purposes of education, study, enjoyment and **the promotion of social and climate justice**.”

