

# RE-CONNECTIONS

## Museums, governance, and sustainability in Latin America and the Caribbean

OUTCOME AND DECLARATION  
ICOM LAC - DUBAI 2025

English



**RE-CONNECTIONS**  
ICOM LAC Regional  
Alliance Meeting  
Museums heading to Dubai 2025

ICOM international  
council  
of museums  
LAC



BANCO DE DESARROLLO  
DE AMÉRICA LATINA  
Y EL CARIBE

ICOM international  
council  
of museums



# English

PORTUGUÊS

FRANÇAIS

ESPAÑOL





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I

# **Outcome of RE-CONNECTIONS ICOM LAC Regional Alliance Meeting: Museums heading to Dubai 2025**

**SANTIAGO, CHILE, OCTOBER 21-24, 2024**



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The Board of Directors of the ICOM Regional Alliance for Latin America and the Caribbean (ICOM LAC) expresses its sincere gratitude to all the representatives of the National Committees and our allies for their trust in this project and for each of their contributions, which have made it possible to “re-connect” museology in the region and open a new chapter for ICOM LAC.



## 1. INTRODUCTION

Re-connections. ICOM LAC Regional Meeting: Museums heading to Dubai 2025, held from October 21 to 24, 2024, in Santiago, Chile, brought together representatives of the National Committees of the International Council of Museums of Latin America and the Caribbean (hereinafter ICOM LAC), and experts, professionals, and key players in the museum sector, who reflected on the progress and challenges facing museums in the region. In this context, the ICOM LAC Board of Directors proposed fundamental topics that were addressed in depth together with the participants of the meeting: collaborative governance, sustainability, the link between museums and Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development (hereinafter, Agenda 2030), museum training, and community participation. The importance of promoting contextualized, participatory, and adaptable cultural policies to strengthen transparency in management and consolidate strategic alliances between the public, private, and community sectors was recognized. Likewise, the role of ICOM as a mediator and promoter of international standards for ethics, autonomy, and professionalization of museums was emphasized.

Museums in Latin America and the Caribbean are essential actors in the preservation of heritage, the promotion of identities and collective memory, as well as spaces for education, inclusion, and social

transformation. In the face of regional scenarios of democratic and political fragility, scarcity of resources, and environmental, social, and economic changes, it is imperative to strengthen governance, sustainability, and regional integration in these institutions.

In this regard, the participants in the meeting reaffirmed their commitment to ethical codes and the construction of a more dynamic, adaptable, creative, inclusive, fair, and sustainable museum sector, aligned with principles designed locally in line with Agenda 2030. Through critical reflection, plural dialogue, and regional cooperation, the aim is to consolidate museums as agents of social and cultural change, capable of responding to the challenges of the 21st century and contributing to the well-being of communities and the planet.

This document is the outcome of discussions and consensus reached during the meeting and lays the foundations for the ICOM LAC 2025 Declaration: Museums, Governance, and Sustainability in Latin America and the Caribbean. In addition, it is expected that this document will serve as a guide for the visions, orientations, and commitments of museums in Latin America and the Caribbean within the framework of the 27th ICOM General Conference in Dubai in 2025, in accordance with the motto of International Museum Day 2025: “The Future of Museums in Changing Communities,” and far beyond.

*Santiago, Chile, October 2024*

## 2. LEGAL AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

The legal and regulatory framework of the ICOM LAC 2025 Declaration: Museums, Governance, and Sustainability in Latin America and the Caribbean is based on a broad network of international conventions, regional agreements, and professional guidelines. These instruments not only recognize the value of museums as custodians of heritage, but also establish essential principles for their governance, sustainability, and regional integration. In addition to supporting the proposed actions, these provisions reinforce the commitment of museums in the region to social, cultural, and environmental development in the 21st century. The main regulations are presented below.

### **International regulations**

1. Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export, and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property (UNESCO, 1970)
  - Establishes the need to adopt measures to prohibit and prevent the illicit trafficking of cultural property between States.
  - Promotes international cooperation for the recovery and restitution of cultural property that has been illegally exported or transferred.

2. Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (UNESCO, 1972)
  - Emphasizes the importance of protecting cultural and natural heritage as the common heritage of humanity.
  - Highlights the role of museums in the conservation and dissemination of this heritage.
3. Convention on the Protection of the Archaeological, Historical, and Artistic Heritage of the American Nations, also known as the Convention of San Salvador (OAS, 1976)
  - Declares the duty of American states to protect, conserve, and respect the archaeological, historical, and artistic heritage in their territories.
  - Urges the adoption of legal and administrative measures to prevent the illicit appropriation, export, and import of cultural property in the region.
4. United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC, 1992)
  - Creates the Conference of the Parties (COP) as its supreme body.
  - It recognizes the existence of climate change and establishes the principle of “common but differentiated responsibilities.”
  - Encourages cooperative action through specific commitments, such as the publication of national emissions inventories, the implementation of mitigation programs, and the development of strategies for adaptation to climate impacts.



5. UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity (UNESCO, 2001)
  - Affirms that respect for the diversity of cultures, tolerance, dialogue, and cooperation, in a climate of mutual trust and understanding, are among the best guarantees of international peace and security.
  - Confirms that cultural rights are an integral part of universal human rights and that the defense of cultural diversity is an ethical imperative.
6. Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (UNESCO, 2003)
  - Encourages the protection of living heritage, including traditions, oral expressions, and cultural practices.
  - Highlights the role of museums in documenting and promoting this heritage.
7. Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (UNESCO, 2005)
  - Reaffirms the right of States to implement cultural policies that promote diversity.
  - Highlights the importance of museums as spaces for intercultural expression and dialogue.
8. Paris Agreement (UN, 2015)
  - Stresses the need to limit global temperature rise.
  - Encourages the adoption of national climate action plans and international cooperation to achieve common goals.

- Emphasizes the importance of adaptation and resilience to the impacts of climate change, as well as access to climate finance for developing countries.
9. Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development (UN, 2015)
    - Establishes a global framework for action to achieve sustainable development that balances social, economic, and environmental aspects.
    - Highlights the role of cultural institutions, such as museums, in education, social inclusion, and the promotion of resilient communities.
    - Underscores that museums are aligned with several Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), such as quality education (SDG 4), sustainable cities and communities (SDG 11), and peace, justice, and strong institutions (SDG 16).
  10. Recommendation concerning the Protection and Promotion of Museums and Collections, their Diversity and their Role in Society (UNESCO, 2015)
    - Establishes principles for the protection and promotion of museums and collections, ensuring their preservation, access, and sustainable management.
    - Highlights the role of museums in education, cultural diversity, and social development, and encourages their integration into communities.
  11. First Global Stocktake (GST) of the Paris Agreement (UNFCCC, 2023)
    - Collectively assesses progress toward the mitigation, adaptation, and financing goals of the Paris Agreement.

- Identifies gaps and areas for improvement in the implementation of national commitments and international cooperation.
  - Provides a monitoring framework that seeks to strengthen global climate action and the ambition of member states.
12. Global Alliance Against Hunger and Poverty (G20, 2024)
- Evidences that the world is facing a critical paradox, where record levels of global wealth coexist with an increase in hunger and poverty, a situation exacerbated by converging crises that have delayed the achievement of the SDGs, requiring urgent and renewed action.
  - Urges the creation of a cooperative international alliance for the exchange of effective public policies and innovative financing enabling commitments to be translated into concrete resources to combat these problems in a coordinated manner and with greater impact.

### **Regional regulations in Latin America and the Caribbean**

1. Quito Charter (Colloquium on the Conservation and Use of Monuments and Places of Archaeological, Historical, and Artistic Interest, 1967)
  - Recognizes the social and cultural value of monumental heritage as a resource for the development and identity of the American peoples.
  - Encourages the active conservation and social use of heritage assets, as well as the participation of communities in their protection and management.

2. Santiago de Chile Round Table on the Development and Role of Museums in the Contemporary World (ICOM / UNESCO, 1972)
  - Highlights the importance of museums for cultural and social development.
  - Establishes principles and guidelines for museum management, emphasizing regional cooperation in Latin America and the Caribbean.
3. Mexico Declaration on Cultural Policies (UNESCO/Mondiacult, 1982)
  - Recognizes culture as a set of spiritual, material, intellectual, and emotional values that define a society and give meaning to its development.
  - Affirms that all cultural policy must be based on identity, diversity, and participation, integrating culture into development policies and promoting its link with education, science, communication, and artistic creation, as well as international cooperation for the understanding and exchange between peoples.
4. Caracas Declaration (Seminar “The Mission of Museums in Latin America Today: New Challenges,” 1992)
  - Highlights the importance of museums in the construction of national and regional identities in Latin America and the Caribbean.
  - Promotes regional cooperation to strengthen the museum sector.
5. Declaration of Salvador de Bahia (Ibero-American General Secretariat, 2007)
  - Adopts guidelines and strategies to develop and strengthen public policies in the field of museums and museology in Ibero-America.

- Strengthens regional cooperation to implement these policies and improve the management, conservation, and dissemination of cultural heritage.
6. Special Declaration of CELAC on Culture as a Promoter of Human Development (Celac, 2014)
    - Reaffirms the commitment of the member states of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) to the promotion of inclusive and sustainable cultural policies.
    - Highlights the role of museums in regional integration and social development.
  7. The Mexico Declaration on Cultural Policies (Mondiacult, 2022)
    - Recognizes culture as a global public good and calls for its integration as a specific and fundamental objective among the upcoming United Nations SDGs.
    - Encourages international collaboration for the protection of cultural heritage, highlighting initiatives such as the creation of a virtual museum by UNESCO and Interpol, of stolen cultural property.
  8. IberoMuseos Common Conceptual Framework on Sustainability (CCFS, 2023)
    - Integrates sustainability into museum management and promotes environmentally, socially, economically, and culturally responsible practices.
    - Recognizes museums as key players in building sustainable development and highlights their role in education, heritage preservation, and contributing to the fulfillment of the SDGs and Agenda 2030.

9. Fourth letter from the Brazilian presidency: COP30 Action Agenda (COP30, 2025)
  - Highlights the urgency of concrete actions to meet global climate commitments, closing the gap between promises and actual implementation.
  - Encourages the development of a collaborative action agenda for COP30, mobilizing all actors and promotes a new priority financing model for developing countries and vulnerable communities.
10. Brazilian Charter on Cultural Heritage and Climate Change (ICOM Brazil / ICOMOS Brazil, 2025)
  - Establishes conceptual relationships between the field of cultural heritage and the fight against climate change.
  - Offers guidelines for action, proposals for public policies, and monitoring indicators.

### **ICOM Regulations and Guidelines**

1. Resolutions adopted at the various ICOM General Assemblies.
2. ICOM Code of Ethics for Museums (ICOM, Seoul, 2004)
  - Establishes ethical and professional standards for museum management.
3. OECD-ICOM Guide for Museums (ICOM / OECD, 2019)
  - Emphasizes the potential of museums as key economic and social actors for the sustainable development of communities, beyond their traditional cultural role.

- Encourages integration of museums into local development strategies and promotes innovative management practices, public-private partnerships, and the measurement of their economic impact.
4. Brochure “Museums and Local Development” (ICOM / OECD, 2019)
    - Recognizes that museums should be strategic, resilient socioeconomic actors capable of integrating and contributing to the solution of their communities’ challenges.
    - Proposes a proactive management model based on a virtuous cycle: analyzing the local ecosystem to identify opportunities, connecting with diverse actors (businesses, education, civil society) to create collaborative networks, and implementing concrete projects in order to generate a measurable impact on the economy, social cohesion, and local well-being.
  5. ICOM Museum Definition (ICOM, Prague, 2022)
    - “A museum is a non-profit, permanent institution in the service of society that researches, collects, preserves, interprets, and exhibits tangible and intangible heritage. Open to the public, accessible, and inclusive, museums promote diversity and sustainability. With the participation of communities, museums operate and communicate ethically and professionally, offering varied experiences for education, enjoyment, reflection, and knowledge sharing.”





### 3. DIMENSIONS

#### GOVERNANCE AND SUSTAINABILITY IN MUSEUMS IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN: CHALLENGES AND STRATEGIES FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

*During the first two days of the meeting, contemporary challenges related to museum management were addressed in depth, as well as the political and social problems affecting institutions in the region. The deliberations introduced concrete proposals in two directions: first, to strengthen collaborative governance, and second, to promote models of social sustainability and establish stronger links between museums and Agenda 2030 with the aim of generating a positive impact on communities. Below is an overview of each of these two dimensions, along with the final considerations and recommendations that emerged during the meeting.*

#### **Museum governance in Latin America and the Caribbean: Changes in government, collaborative partnerships, and networks**

Museum governance in Latin America and the Caribbean faces complex challenges stemming from democratic fragility, political volatility, resource scarcity, and the need to adapt to rapid environmental, social, and economic changes. On the one hand, changes in government, fluctuations in cultural policies, the invisibility of previous administrations,

and the lack of national museum laws and policies have a direct impact on museum management, which requires solid and transparent governance. It is necessary to provide reliable information about museums, based on solid knowledge, whether scientific, traditional, or otherwise. On the other hand, collaborative governance, i.e., social and community governance, arises as a key strategy for overcoming structural obstacles and fostering partnerships between museums, peoples, communities, governments, and non-governmental organizations. In this context, self-management, self-determination, recognition and training of museum workers, innovative leadership, community participation, and transparency are essential to strengthen institutional autonomy, in line with Agenda 2030. Lastly, the aim is to raise the profile of local and regional museology, boost the impact of museums on the economy, and consolidate ICOM's leadership in promoting cooperation and cultural development.

## **Whereas**

1. Museums are fundamental institutions for the preservation of heritage and the promotion of identities, diversity, and collective memory, as well as spaces for education, inclusion, and social transformation;
2. The social value of museum professions and the improvement of working conditions are essential to ensure sustainability and excellence in cultural heritage management;
3. Democratic and political instability and fragility, lack of resources, and rapid environmental, social, and economic changes pose a major challenge for museum management in the region;

4. The viability and future relevance of museums in Latin America and the Caribbean is compromised by their financial and operational fragility, derived from their dependence on state funds;
5. Ethical and effective museum governance must be based on clear and, therefore, accessible communication in terms of administrative, executive, and comprehensive transparency;
6. There is a need to propose cultural and museum policies and tools promoting good practices and incorporating local and regional principles, in line with Agenda 2030;
7. Innovative leadership and collaborative governance are key to overcoming structural limitations and ensuring the existence and permanence of these institutions;
8. Self-management and community participation are essential elements for strengthening museum management and maintaining the trust of the public and stakeholders;
9. Continuous training and professionalization of museum workers, promoted by governance, are essential to strengthen institutional management, dignify the work of staff, and ensure the social and cultural impact of these institutions;
10. The great diversity of contexts and challenges in heritage management requires ethical and tailored solutions respecting local dynamics, value ancestral and community knowledge, and promote inclusion;
11. Museums in Latin America and the Caribbean face common challenges that have driven the development of creative and innovative strategies, which should be shared for the benefit of the entire region;
12. Museums play a key role in the economy, not only because of their intrinsic value, but also because of their ability to drive creative and social dynamics and experiences;

13. ICOM's crucial role at the global level, as a promoter of international standards in museum management, provides specialized support and promotes ethical principles that guide museum practice.

The following recommendations, arising from the report, seek to promote effective museum management and consolidate museums as custodians of heritage and agents of social transformation in the 21st century, ensuring their sustainability and development in a dynamic and challenging landscape.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. Strengthen the role of museums in society: Promote strategic plans, programs, and projects to raise awareness of the value of museums as spaces for knowledge, education, heritage preservation, and social transformation.
2. Promote recognition of museum professionals. Recognize occupations related to the museum field and promote decent and stable working conditions for workers in the sector.
3. Promote clear and effective cultural policies: Propose contextualized, participatory, and adaptable cultural and museum policies guiding the development of museums, ensuring their stability, permanence, and management balance in the face of political and governmental changes. These policies must support the technical and discursive autonomy of institutions, mitigate the effects of political instability and resource scarcity, as well as environmental, social, and economic changes, and establish the responsibility of states in the preservation of cultural diversity, heritage, and the construction of memories.
4. Strengthen and innovate sustainable museum strategies: Strengthen sustainable strategies within museums through contextualized,

innovative management, diversification of funding sources, and the creation of regional collaboration networks.

5. Promote transparency in management: Implement mechanisms for access to information, accountability, and clear and effective communication to strengthen trust among the various audiences and partners of museum institutions. Ethical, transparent, and accessible management must be ensured to guarantee the social relevance of museums.
6. Promote regional museum management in line with Agenda 2030 through practical tools: Develop guidelines and resources to guide the management and development of museums, as well as their response to critical situations, such as natural disasters, political conflicts, extreme poverty, and social unrest, among others. Likewise, ensure policies and practices that promote, from a local perspective, the SDGs, especially those related to quality education, sustainable cities and communities, inclusion, and the promotion of a culture of peace.
7. Promote strategic alliances and innovative leadership: Establish and strengthen multilateral alliances between museums, peoples, local communities, governments, and non-governmental organizations to improve museum management, overcome financial and structural limitations, and promote the sustainability of these institutions. Likewise, social and innovative leadership should be promoted through the participation of local and regional leaders in international discussions and the exchange of good practices.
8. Encourage socially responsible self-management: Develop innovative and sustainable strategies boosting museum's services to the community, such as shops, cultural events, themed tours, fundraising campaigns, among others, based on social responsibility, operational transparency, and community participation. These strategies

will improve museum management, ensure financial sustainability, strengthen ties with diverse audiences, and maintain institutional integrity, building trust among stakeholders and society.

9. Promote the training, updating, and professionalization of museum workers through governance: It is essential that museums integrate training programs into their management as part of a comprehensive and continuous process aimed at all members of the institution. Investment in training and updating seeks promoting professionalization, understood not only as the acquisition of new technical knowledge and skills, but also as a way for museum teams to perform their duties efficiently. This practice also contributes to the recognition and appreciation of the work of museum staff. By adopting this approach, museums will be able to enhance their management, enrich the visitor experience, and strengthen their teams to generate meaningful and transformative interactions that positively impact their communities.
10. Strengthen the active participation of communities in museum management: Promote collaborative and co-creative governance strategies through binding and representative mechanisms that involve local communities in all stages of museum work, from diagnosis and planning to creative execution and evaluation. This ensures that museums are accessible, dynamic, participatory, representative, and proactive spaces, while also allowing for the appreciation and visibility of ancestral and community knowledge as part of a territory's cultural diversity, strengthening the sense of belonging and consolidating communities as protagonists in the construction and preservation of their cultural heritage.
11. Make visible local and regional museology: Develop strategies to raise awareness, communicate, promote, protect, and disseminate

creative and innovative initiatives that have emerged in response to the region's museological challenges; facilitate the exchange of good practices and collective learning; and ensure the protection of this knowledge and these innovations as cultural values in their own right. This will increase the relevance and visibility of museums at the local, regional, and international levels and strengthen their role within a dynamic and constantly evolving cultural ecosystem.

12. Highlight the essential role of museums in the creative economy: Recognize that museums drive creative industries, diversify cultural offerings, encourage tourism, and promote local economic development. To maximize the potential of this economy and ensure an equitable distribution of its benefits, cooperation between museums, governments, businesses, and civil society is essential.
13. Strengthen ICOM's strategic leadership: Promote ICOM as the touchstone between museums, governments, and civil society, facilitate the development and implementation of international standards adapted to local contexts, and promote their impact on the collaborative development of public policies on culture, heritage, and museums.

### **Sustainability: museums, surrounding environments, and links to Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development**

The sustainability of museums in Latin America and the Caribbean is a fundamental pillar for ensuring their social relevance and viability in the 21st century. In this context, their link to Agenda 2030 is essential to strengthen their relationship with nearby communities and environments, promote citizen participation, inclusion, diversity, cultural justice, and social and environmental co-responsibility at the local level. In this sense, museums can reaffirm themselves as affective spaces, safe meeting places where bonds of identity, memory, and belonging are built.

This perspective allows museums to promote equity, quality education, a culture of peace, digital transformation, well-being, and *buen vivir* [good living]<sup>1</sup> in their actions. All of this would be strengthened through more solid museum collaborations in the region, facilitating the exchange of resources and knowledge, as well as the creation of joint projects that reflect shared diversities and histories.

#### WHEREAS

1. Museums are fundamental institutions for the preservation of heritage, collective memory, and the promotion of diverse identities; they play a key role in education and social transformation, as well as in the celebration and promotion of cultural diversity as a source of wealth;
2. The sustainability of museums depends on their ability to integrate ethical principles, ensure the active and meaningful participation of communities in their heritage management, and promote inclusion, citizen engagement, and social relevance;
3. Agenda 2030 provides provides a global framework for addressing social, economic, and environmental challenges, and that museums, as co-responsible agents of change, can contribute to its fulfillment at the local level;
4. Museums, as spaces for memory and encounter, have the potential to contribute to well-being, *buen vivir*, and the construction of a culture of peace and everlasting dialogue;

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1 *Buen vivir* or *sumak kawsay* in Kichwa, is a philosophical, political, and cultural concept that represents an alternative way of understanding development, centered on harmony with nature, community, and cultural diversity, as opposed to the traditional capitalist economic model.



5. Equity, inclusion, accessibility, and cultural justice are fundamental pillars for museums to fulfill their mission of being open and democratic spaces;
6. The exchange of good sustainability practices and shared learning between museums is essential to strengthening regional museology.
7. Digital transformation offers opportunities to improve accessibility and the museum experience, but also poses ethical, legal, and environmental challenges and requires a balanced approach that takes into account technological and generational gaps;
8. 21st-century education demands innovative approaches that enhance cognitive, social, and creative skills;
9. Empathy and affection foster trust between the museum, its workers, the surrounding environment, and the community linked to it.

The following recommendations, arising from the discussion group reports seek to highlight the role of museums as agents of social transformation, equity, and dialogue, committed to building more just, inclusive, and sustainable societies in a context of constant change.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. Promote cultural diversity and inclusive discursive approaches: As key spaces for the preservation of heritage, collective memory, and education, museums must renew their discursive approaches to highlight and celebrate cultural diversity. This involves integrating broad, critical, inclusive historical and cultural perspectives, and involves giving voice and visibility to traditionally marginalized groups, such as those discriminated against on the basis of gender, sexual orientation, and gender identity (female, male, non-binary, LGBTIQ+ community); by age (children, adolescents, young people, and older

adults); by ethnicity and race (indigenous peoples and traditional communities, Afro-descendants, religious minorities, nomadic peoples, or those excluded by castes); by disability (physical, sensory, intellectual, or psychosocial); by migration and displacement (refugees, economic migrants, stateless persons, and asylum seekers); by socioeconomic status (people living in extreme poverty, informal workers, and homeless people); and other vulnerabilities (people deprived of liberty, victims of armed conflict, chronically ill people, victims of trafficking), and the expanded concept of family, among others. It also requires the development of programs, activities, and co-creation processes that promote new discursive approaches to museology, guided by interculturality, anti-racism, and the overcoming of ethnocentrism. In this way, museums strengthen their role in social transformation and in the recognition of diversity as a source of understanding between peoples.

2. Facilitate community participation, ethical intercultural dialogue, and active listening: Ensure, through an ethical commitment, the active participation of communities in decision-making, planning, and the execution of museum projects—including curatorial processes and the revitalization of languages and knowledge of traditionally marginalized groups. This is in order to strengthen intercultural dialogue, ensure the relevance of museums in their contexts, and consolidate them as spaces for social cohesion, able to adapt to changing needs and dynamics of their environment and guaranteeing their impact on the construction of a critical citizenry committed to its heritage.
3. Encourage social and environmental co-responsibility in museums: Museums, as key actors in social transformation, must promote Agenda 2030 in their management through sustainable policies,

critical education, accessible technologies, and the conscious use of resources. In this way, they will be able to guarantee their effective contribution to social justice, equity, and environmental preservation through a universal and co-responsible approach. To this end, it is essential to promote educational programs, inclusion initiatives, and community projects.

4. Promoting well-being and *buen vivir*, dialogue, and a culture of peace: To make museums safe spaces for reflection, dialogue, and the promotion of mental health, well-being, and good living, it is imperative to address complex issues such as social conflicts, historical processes, and contemporary challenges from an interdisciplinary perspective. In this way, with the support of specialists and cultural mediation, museums can foster critical understanding, collective empathy, and the strengthening of mental health in two main areas: within their teams, by promoting decent working conditions and institutional policies that improve the quality of life of museum workers; and in the communities that participate in the life of the museum.
5. Develop strategies for equity, inclusion, accessibility, and cultural justice: To fulfill their mission as open and democratic spaces, museums must realize their commitment to equity, inclusion, and accessibility through concrete actions. It is recommended to expand their reach through collaborative networks and promote co-creation processes with traditionally marginalized groups to ensure their active participation. At the same time, it is necessary to implement universal accessibility measures encompassing physical, cognitive, and digital dimensions. These actions will turn museums into active agents of cultural justice through the recognition and appreciation of diversity as the collective heritage of peoples and a structural part of society.

6. Stimulate museum collaboration in the region: Establish mechanisms for exchange and cooperation between museum institutions in the region. It is proposed to create a regional collaborative platform allowing for the documentation, analysis, and adaptation of good practices, taking into account the particularities of each local context. This initiative should encourage collective learning, based on concrete experiences, so that museums can optimize resources, overcome common challenges, and generate a significant impact on their communities, thereby strengthening the regional cultural ecosystem as a whole.
7. Integrate digital transformation in an ethical, responsible, inclusive, and sustainable manner: Leverage digital technologies to improve accessibility and museum experiences, combining them with analog technologies and traditional methods to ensure equitable access. This involves considering technological and generational gaps, as well as ethical, legal, and environmental impacts and challenges, and incorporating inclusive tools to expand and democratize participation in museums and access to heritage.
8. Strengthen quality education: It is necessary to design and implement educational programs fostering critical thinking through innovative, participatory, interdisciplinary, and adaptable methodologies. These programs should promote horizontal knowledge and enhance cognitive, social, and creative skills to empower users as protagonists of their learning, paying special attention to inclusion and diversity of knowledge.
9. Understanding the museum as an affective space: Overcoming social, belonging, participation, and heritage access barriers through trust, tolerance, and reciprocity. This involves addressing vulnerability as an opportunity to foster emotional connections that promote the creation of sustainable relationships based on mutual respect,

security, and open dialogue, thereby building “shared meanings.” This strengthens the bonds and sense of belonging between the museum, the territory, and the communities.



## 4. LINES OF ACTION

### PILLARS FOR MUSEUM DEVELOPMENT IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

*Within the framework of discussions focused on the dimensions of governance and sustainability, working groups were established on five lines of action to guide ICOM LAC and its National Committees. These lines are based on governance, sustainability, museum training with an ethical approach, regional integration, and community participation as fundamental axes for generating stability and strengthening the relevance of museums in the region as agents of social transformation.*

#### **Governance in museums in Latin America and the Caribbean**

Governance in Latin American and Caribbean museums is a major priority for ensuring the sustainability, autonomy, and relevance of these institutions in the 21st century. Museums are consolidating their position as spaces for social and cultural transformation that contribute to strengthening the museum sector in the region through contextualized, participatory, and adaptable cultural, heritage, and museum policies. It is essential that museums promote democratic access to culture, equity, and social justice, and that they foster the construction of strategic alliances. During the working groups, four strategies were identified in

this line of action to strengthen museum policies, promote equity and fair order, and enhance collaboration between the public, private, and community sectors.

1. Spaces for dialogue for innovative governance:
  - Establish strategic alliances between the public, private, and community sectors to facilitate decision-making in diverse, pluralistic, and complex environments.
  - Promote cooperation among the different actors in the museum sector, fostering transparency, open dialogue, and active community participation.
  - Strengthening the autonomy and financial sustainability of museums requires innovative management models that foster public, private, and community support and respond to the social, economic, and cultural challenges of the 21st century. This approach ensures their long-term viability, reinforces their social mission, and at the same time preserves their relevance as agents of transformation, without compromising their ethical principles or their connection to communities.
2. Co-creation of cultural, heritage, and museum policies based on intercultural codes:
  - Participate in the design of public policies focused on the museum sector that value and promote diversity of thought, cultures, beliefs, corporalities, worldviews, and intercultural experiences.
  - Ensure that these policies integrate principles and approaches of equity, inclusion, accessibility, and social justice to contribute to the achievement of the SDGs and Agenda 2030.



- Promote the creation of innovative and sustainable policies within museums, as well as the reformulation of current ones, based on the realities, contexts, and practices of Latin America and the Caribbean, in order to strengthen their autonomy.
3. Museums for equity and a just order:
    - Actively promote equity and justice in museums, encouraging discursive independence based on differences and diversity.
    - Ensure that museums are inclusive, accessible, and open spaces to all people, regardless of their origin, abilities, or economic situation. They should promote the creation of a just order, giving visibility, recognition, and respect to both the identities and rights of all communities.
  4. Map committed allies:
    - Conduct a survey of potential local and regional institutions to promote sustainability in museums, considering their role as collection managers, responsible employers, conscious consumers, and producers of reliable information.
    - Establish collaborations with non-governmental organizations, institutional partners, committed allies, traditionally marginalized groups, and government entities to work together on the four defined strategies.

### **Sustainability in museums in Latin America and the Caribbean**

Sustainability in museums in Latin America and the Caribbean is essential to ensure their viability, future relevance, and contribution to sustainable development in the current context. Through critical reflection, professional training, and regional integration based on equity and

inclusion, museums are consolidating their role as agents of social, cultural, and environmental transformation. During the working groups, two strategies were identified in this area aimed at strengthening these aspects from a holistic view of sustainability that formulates common actions to strengthen and develop the museum sector in the region. This approach reaffirms the role of museums as drivers of transformation and preservation of the region's cultural and natural heritage.

1. Museums as spaces for reflection, critical thinking, and ethical focus:
  - Promote the creation of spaces in museums that encourage reflection, debate, and critical thinking on social, environmental, and cultural issues.
  - Encourage the exchange of local and regional experiences and good practices, especially those that have already been consolidated in traditional museums, as well as in community museums, community-based museums, local museums, ecomuseums, among other initiatives in the region.
  - Conceptualize and produce museum programs addressing sustainability issues.
2. Training in sustainable development issues:
  - Conceptualize and implement diploma courses, refresher courses, and workshops on key issues such as equity, inclusion, social development, environmental protection, and sustainability, and promote good practices, building a shared conceptual and referential framework for the region.
  - Develop programs and activities enabling communities to address contemporary challenges such as climate change, inequality,

and cultural transformation, among others. This contributes to well-being, *buen vivir*, a culture of peace, and ongoing dialogue.

- Design and implement virtual courses addressing current challenges at the regional level with a view toward sustainability.

### **Museum training with an ethical approach**

Museum training is an essential and cross-cutting component in ensuring the sustainability and professionalization of museums in Latin America and the Caribbean. Through continuous training, applied research, and the development of innovative programs, museums are consolidating their position as dynamic spaces for the generation of theoretical and practical knowledge. During the working groups, three strategies were identified in this line of action that strengthen the competencies of museum teams and respond to the needs of each institution.

1. Regional diagnosis:

- Conduct a regional diagnosis to identify the training needs of each context and ensure that programs respond to local realities.

2. Continuing education and certification of museum workers:

- Implement and promote accessible continuing museum training programs including theoretical, practical, comprehensive, and virtual aspects focused on core museum areas and management issues such as leadership and administration. These programs would be aimed at museum and heritage institution workers in the region. Such initiatives should include certifications, technical degrees, and diplomas, with the aim of promoting and ensuring the professionalization of the sector, especially in countries where training opportunities are lacking. A teaching staff from

academic, professional, and non-formal backgrounds could be assembled to promote the exchange of experiences and best practices.

- Encourage staff exchanges between museums in the region, as well as internship and volunteer programs, with the aim of strengthening practical training and knowledge sharing.

3. ICOM LAC Training Working Group:

- Create a working group with an ethical focus for museum training within ICOM LAC, made up of National Committee members, whose purpose is to design and develop training and refresher programs for workers in the region, in line with social (equity, social justice, and integration), economic (sustainable economy and responsible consumption), environmental (reduction of ecological impact and protection of biodiversity), and cultural dimensions, among others.

### **Regional integration in museums in Latin America and the Caribbean**

Regional integration is key to strengthening collaboration, development, and sustainability in the museum sector in Latin America and the Caribbean. To this end, it is necessary to create cooperation networks between countries and promote strategic alliances that allow common challenges to be addressed in a coordinated manner. The ethical dissemination of good museum practices can contribute to the consolidation of regional museology, based on the exchange of knowledge and experiences. During the working groups, three strategies were identified in this line of action to consolidate a more cohesive, innovative, and culturally diverse museum ecosystem.

1. Creation of collaboration networks:
  - Establish collaborative networks between museums, ICOM National Committees, and cultural organizations in the region to share resources, knowledge, and best practices.
  - It is essential to recognize shared biocultural regions and environmental ecosystems—the Amazon, the Andes, the Caribbean islands, Patagonia, floodplains, tropical forests, mangroves, moorlands, and other territories—as units that transcend geopolitical boundaries in order to promote initiatives that respect the environment, heritage, and cultural diversity. This approach allows for the development of integrated, sustainable, collaborative projects adapted to the dynamics of each group or territory, strengthening the connection between communities, their heritage, and their environment.
2. Building shared memories from museums:
  - Work on an approach promoting local knowledge and epistemologies to reduce perspectives derived from colonialism or Eurocentrism. This approach should critically address shared histories of exploitation, resistance, discrimination, diversity, cultural exchange, among others, from local and regional contexts.
  - Promote inclusive discursive approaches and stronger, more interconnected regional identities recognizing the region's intertwined historical and cultural processes, such as colonization, migratory movements, diasporas, social conflicts, and ecological crises, among others.
  - Resist fragmentation that devalues the region's diversity through museum actions that counteract nationalist, racist, or exclusionary discourses. Instead, promote narratives focusing on

commonalities: social struggles and cohesion, hybrid cultural expressions, ecosystems, and the environment, among others.

- Promote collaborative research and education projects that reveal interconnected histories of Latin America and the Caribbean through exhibitions, consolidation of regional digital archives, and training in decolonial, anti-colonial, and postcolonial approaches, among others, with the aim of transforming museums into agents of cultural, local, and regional integration.
3. Visibility of regional best practices:
- Promote the visibility of good practices in the region through publications, lectures, and digital platforms to strengthen the positioning of both Southern Museology and Global Southern Museology worldwide.
  - Encourage the active participation of museum workers and other professionals of the region in international events and conferences, ensuring that their voices and perspectives are heard and valued.

### **Active community participation in museums in Latin America and the Caribbean**

Community participation is essential to ensure the social transformation, relevance, and sustainability of museums in Latin America and the Caribbean. The active integration of traditionally marginalized groups allows museums to consolidate themselves as living spaces for dialogue, resistance, and collective creation. To this end, it is necessary to move towards ethical co-management models in which communities play a leading role in decision-making, action, and program offerings. These scenarios must reflect the voices, memories, and aspirations of

the peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean. During the working groups, four strategies were identified in this line of action to strengthen inclusion, cultural diversity, and the relationship between museums and their audiences.

1. Social participation in museum management:

- Establish mechanisms for listening and ongoing dialogue with communities to adapt museums to social changes and emerging needs.
- Encourage the active participation of communities in museum management, so that they become part of these spaces and contribute to their sustainability.

2. Programs focused on different audiences:

- Develop public programs aimed at specific groups, addressing both their needs and demands and recognizing their contributions to society.
- Offer programs that involve children, adolescents, and young people as active agents of the museum, co-responsible custodians of their heritage, and bridges to connect their families and communities. This also allows museums to develop prevention programs in vulnerable contexts.
- Promote action focused on different generations, their diversity, and the collective construction of memories to strengthen the social fabric and community development.

3. Interculturality:

- Promote interculturality, bearing in mind that museums are key players in the promotion and safeguarding of cultural diversity in

their territories, in line with international declarations and conventions. This action promotes cultural pluralism in museums to recognize and preserve the memories, traditions, and heritage elements that identify communities, especially traditionally marginalized groups. To do so, museums foster stable coexistence and promote authentic dialogue between diverse cultural perspectives.

- To turn museums into safe spaces and bridges between community actors in order to strengthen their role as agents of transformation in their territories and integrate the visions, knowledge, memories, social struggles, and needs of local actors themselves.

#### 4. Inclusion and accessibility:

- Design, implement, and socialize, from and together with communities, inclusive, accessible, and innovative actions, programs, and initiatives in the fields of education, exhibition, and research, among others, that respond to the needs of traditionally marginalized groups. These initiatives should encourage active participation, the co-creation of projects, and the consolidation of good practices strengthening the sense of belonging in order to transform museums into spaces for reparation, symbolic healing, and collective knowledge production.
- Include the different cultural perspectives of indigenous peoples and traditional communities in the decolonial, anti-colonial, and post-colonial interpretations of museums in their collections and narratives, in order to generate dialogue between traditional academic narratives and other narratives and incorporate them into conservation and restoration actions.



## 5. FOCUS ON TRANSVERSAL CHALLENGES

*In addition to the topics addressed above, Re-connections identified additional transversal challenges requiring innovative, collaborative, and contextualized responses. Museums in Latin America and the Caribbean face contemporary challenges, such as climate change, the digital divide, and social conflicts, among others, which affect their operations and sustainability but also open up opportunities for their consolidation as agents of social, cultural, and environmental change. Addressing these core challenges through approaches adapted to the regional reality and in dialogue with communities will strengthen the relevance of museums and consolidate the museum sector as a promoter of more just, inclusive, and resilient societies.*

### **Museums and climate change: risks, mitigation, and adaptation**

Climate change and biodiversity loss are serious threats to the heritage of Latin America and the Caribbean. As custodians, museums promote awareness of these realities and play a fundamental role in mitigation, adaptation, and the creation of protocols to address these effects together with communities. However, museums face increasing environmental risks, such as floods, hurricanes, droughts, and other extreme phenomena, which threaten their collections and equipment due to fragile infrastructure and the misuse of environmental resources. In addition,

the lack of financial and technological resources hinders the implementation of preventive measures, such as updated emergency and heritage risk management plans, which are necessary in the face of new disasters resulting from climate change. There is an urgent need to raise awareness of its impact on heritage in order to strengthen effective and sustainable responses.

### **Museums and the digital divide: transformation and access to digital technologies**

Digital transformation, including artificial intelligence, brings to museums in Latin America and the Caribbean a valuable opportunity to modernize museum practices, expand their reach, and diversify their forms of interaction with the public. On the other side, it also poses significant ethical challenges related to access and conscious use of these technologies, equity, cultural rights, and the preservation of digital heritage. Among these challenges are the persistent digital access gap in the region and the lack of training in the management, use, and maintenance of digital tools. We must also consider the risks arising from technological obsolescence and the possible loss or irresponsible use of information, either by third parties or through data analysis models, without due recognition of cultural rights. All these situations compromise the adequate preservation and dissemination of regional cultural diversity today.

### **Museums and social conflicts: promoting peace, dialogue, and reconciliation**

In contexts marked by violence, inequality, and political conflict, museums in Latin America and the Caribbean have a mission to serve as platforms for dialogue, reflection, and the construction of peace,

reconciliation, and social justice. Nevertheless, assuming this commitment means facing challenging political and social polarization, which makes it difficult to address sensitive issues such as dictatorships, populism, poverty, drug trafficking, armed conflict, violence, and discrimination, among others. In this context, it is particularly noteworthy the persistent exclusion of traditionally marginalized groups from museum processes, social polarization that makes it difficult to address sensitive issues, and the limited availability of financial and human resources to develop plans, programs, and projects aimed at social transformation. Overcoming these obstacles is essential for museums to become true spaces for dialogue, the promotion of peace, memory and symbolic reparation, and the construction of a more equitable future.





**II**

# **ICOM LAC 2025 Declaration.**

**Museums, governance,  
and sustainability  
in Latin America  
and the Caribbean.**

**DUBAI 2025**



## **ICOM LAC 2025 DECLARATION: MUSEUMS, GOVERNANCE, AND SUSTAINABILITY IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN DUBAI, 2025**

The ICOM LAC 2025 Declaration: Museums, Governance, and Sustainability in Latin America and the Caribbean represents a collective commitment to strengthen the regional museum sector, based on principles of collaborative governance, ethical values, sustainability, cultural diplomacy, social inclusion, and interculturality. In the face of major social, cultural, and environmental challenges, we reaffirm that museums in the region have a unique potential to become agents of social and cultural transformation, articulating memories, knowledge, and actions to build more just, resilient, and diverse societies.

This Declaration is presented as an instrument to consolidate an integrated, sustainable Latin American and Caribbean museum space guaranteeing cultural rights. It is based on the “Outcome of Re-connections. ICOM LAC Regional Alliance Meeting: Museums Heading to Dubai 2025” and is the result of collective dialogues and reflections among the presidents and representatives of the National Committees of Latin America and the Caribbean, who met in Santiago, Chile, from October 21 to 24, 2024. This Declaration constitutes a crucial step in Latin American and Caribbean museology, which will seek global recognition at the 27th ICOM General Conference to be held in Dubai in November 2025, under

the theme of International Museum Day 2025: “The Future of Museums in Changing Communities.”

To put these principles into practice, the Declaration will be implemented through five priority lines of action for ICOM LAC: 1) Governance, 2) Sustainability, 3) Museum training with an ethical approach, 4) Regional integration, and 5) Community participation. These lines will guide the development of concrete strategies, such as the creation of cross-border collaboration and training networks; the promotion of decolonial and sustainable approaches; regional diagnosis of needs and ongoing listening processes; and the establishment of binding mechanisms for co-creation with nearby communities and environments. The strategies seek to generate cultural and museum policies that are vindicatory and reparative, projecting a more balanced, fair, and equitable future in the global dialogue.

The main objectives of the Declaration are to guide museum policies towards a contextualized, participatory, and sustainable model, in line with Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development and contemporary challenges, and to reinforce the role of ICOM as a coordinator of international standards adapted to local contexts.

## **Considerations**

1. Museums are institutions whose fundamental mission is to preserve heritage, strengthen collective memory, and promote quality education. They also play a decisive role in the recognition of diverse identities and social transformation. Their impact is closely linked to their commitment to these purposes, through participatory governance, ethical management, the professional work of their teams, and the active presence of their communities. In Latin America and the Caribbean, this responsibility is reinforced by binding international



conventions, regional treaties, and ethical guidelines that oblige states and museum institutions to ensure the protection of heritage, cultural diversity, and sustainability.

2. Latin America and the Caribbean face complex contemporary challenges, such as digital transformation, climate change, democratic and political fragility, unequal distribution of resources, and rapid social, economic, and environmental transformations. These challenges require solid, collaborative, and adaptive museum governance based on transparency, participation, and multilateral partnerships. However, museums in the region, especially those dependent on public budgets, face structural and management vulnerabilities due to their financial and political dependence. This reality exposes museums to risks such as governmental instability, job insecurity, lack of resources, and limited self-management, which compromise their autonomy and contradict the principles of governance promoted by ICOM. These challenges require museums to implement strategies for adaptation, universal accessibility, and participation, in line with local, regional, national, and international goals and commitments, to ensure the protection of diversity and the environment. Given this reality, museums, as agents of change, must take a leading role in promoting innovative and adapted solutions that contribute to addressing global crises.
3. The active and meaningful participation of peoples and communities, especially traditionally marginalized groups, is an ethical imperative and a fundamental pillar for ensuring the relevance, legitimacy, and sustainability of museums as spaces for intercultural dialogue, co-creation, and heritage safeguarding. To this end, it is necessary

to recognize, protect, and transmit their knowledge, memories, innovations, and cultural rights as essential and indispensable elements for ethical, inclusive, and transformative museum practice. Museums must comply with human rights standards that require the equitable participation of communities in management, interpretation, and decision-making. Only in this way will museums become true democratizing platforms, guarantors of the principles of universal accessibility, capable of challenging the hegemonic order of knowledge and promoting culture, heritage, social justice, and a culture of peace.

4. Regional integration is a key strategy for strengthening the resilience of the museum sector in Latin America and the Caribbean and raising the profile of local and regional museology through cross-border collaboration networks promoting local knowledge and epistemologies, decolonial, anti-colonial, and postcolonial approaches, as well as the ethical and systematic exchange of good practices. This integration fosters technical cooperation, professional mobility, and the formulation of innovative museum policies, which promotes the creation of shared heritage protection strategies and expands the capacity of museums to act as agents of social and cultural transformation in the face of common challenges in the region.
5. Specialized, continuous, and accessible museum training is the indispensable foundation for ensuring the social relevance, institutional sustainability, and transformative impact of museums in Latin America and the Caribbean in the context of the 21st century. Therefore, there is an urgent need to promote professionalization processes with an ethical and contextual approach, accompanied by innovative institutional practices that guarantee equity and value the knowledge

and skills of the teams working in and with museums, heritage institutions, and related organizations. Ethical, critical, and adaptable museum training, in permanent dialogue with the social, cultural, and environmental challenges of the region, will enable museums to expand their traditional role and take on a leading role as agents of social change, articulators of resistance, and democratizing spaces for heritage and collective memory.

### **Final statements**

1. Museums in Latin America and the Caribbean, as fundamental institutions for the preservation of heritage, the construction of collective memory, the promotion of quality education, the economy, creative industries, and social transformation, must consolidate themselves as spaces of transparent, participatory, and ethical governance, committed to their communities, with autonomous management, administrative transparency, and sustainable models that consolidate public, private, and community support. To this end, it is necessary to promote cultural policies, both at the state and institutional levels, together with regulatory frameworks based on democratic participation, intercultural codes, and the recognition of diversity of thought, languages, beliefs, territories, and worldviews. The aim is also to promote a fair and equitable order in museums, guarantee discursive independence based on differences and diversity, and establish strategic alliances between the public, private, and community sectors fostering sustainable development in plural contexts. This transparent, collaborative, and independent governance will ensure sustainability, participation, and institutional autonomy, and will comply with international and regional conventions that protect cultural heritage and diversity, reaffirming the transformative role of museums in society.

2. In the face of complex contemporary challenges confronting Latin America and the Caribbean, such as digital transformation, climate change, democratic and political fragility, unequal distribution of resources, and profound social and environmental transformations, museums must reaffirm themselves as inclusive, accessible, and equitable spaces that promote cultural diversity and collective well-being. To do so, it is essential to promote local actions that encourage Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and foster sound, ethical, collaborative, and adaptive museum governance based on transparency, inclusion, and the building of multilateral partnerships. In the face of global emergencies identified as transversal challenges, museums are called upon to act to mitigate both heritage and environmental risks; to address the digital divide ethically to ensure equity of access; and consolidate themselves as spaces for dialogue and redress in the face of social conflicts. It is therefore a priority to integrate decolonial approaches, environmental justice, gender equality, and universal accessibility into all dimensions of museum management, as well as into registration, conservation, communication, education, and participation, in order to overcome the structural vulnerabilities, financial dependence, and job insecurity that compromise their institutional autonomy and sustainability. In this scenario, museums in Latin America and the Caribbean must promote innovative and contextualized solutions and reinforce their commitment to comprehensive sustainability, the strengthening of community and territorial ties, collective well-being, and the creation of spaces for critical reflection on social, cultural, and environmental crises. This stance, in line with the transformative mission of museums, integrates the local and global dimensions in order to contribute to the development of more just, equitable, sustainable, and resilient societies.

3. We recognize that the active, inclusive, and leading participation of communities, especially traditionally marginalized groups, is an ethical imperative and a fundamental pillar for ensuring the legitimacy, relevance, and sustainability of museums. Such participation must be binding and cross-cutting, allowing communities to play an active role in museum decision-making, museological management, and the design of inclusive discursive approaches through permanent mechanisms of listening, co-creation, and free, prior, and informed consent. Museums must consolidate themselves as safe, democratic, and culturally representative spaces through strategies of physical, digital, and cognitive accessibility—understood as the ability to understand, participate in, and appropriate museum content. They must also be spaces of participatory management that recognize the knowledge, memories, and cultural rights of the communities of Latin America and the Caribbean. In addition, it is essential to promote inclusive programs that encourage the active participation of young people as agents of transformation and strengthen intergenerational and community ties. Museums must prioritize curatorial projects that address the memory of violence and exclusion and promote processes of symbolic reparation, as well as a culture of peace. They must also be spaces that value multiculturalism, recognizing and preserving local knowledge and epistemologies, as well as the expressions and heritage elements that define diverse social groups. In conclusion, we reaffirm our commitment to ethical, participatory, and transformative museum practices, in which communities are protagonists in the construction of spaces for collective memory, intercultural dialogue, resistance, social justice, and the strengthening of cultural citizenship.

4. We defend the principle of regional integration as a fundamental strategy for strengthening the resilience, innovation, and transformative capacity of museums in the region in the face of common challenges. This can be articulated through collaborative platforms, decolonial, anti-colonial, and post-colonial curatorial projects that promote local knowledge and epistemologies, as well as the systematic exchange of innovative experiences. This vision is materialized in the creation and consolidation of cross-border networks between museums, ICOM National Committees, and cultural organizations that promote the exchange of resources, knowledge, good practices, technical cooperation, and innovative experiences. At the same time, it will be necessary to promote collective strategies and regional museum policies that encourage sustainable management, heritage safeguarding, the construction of plural memories, professional mobility, and the collaborative generation of knowledge. We also advocate for the active participation of Latin American and Caribbean museums, as well as their workers, in international meetings, publications, and open digital repositories. These ethically document and disseminate good practices and allow diverse voices, perspectives, and contributions to be fully recognized and valued on the global stage. In this way, we reaffirm the fundamental role of museums in the region as catalysts for social and cultural change, facilitators of intercultural dialogue, and critical custodians of living heritage.
5. We agree that specialized, continuous, and accessible museum training is the indispensable basis for ensuring institutional co-responsibility, social relevance, sustainability, and the transformative impact of museums in the 21st century. We consider it a priority to promote professionalization processes that integrate ethical, critical, and

contextualized approaches, supported by institutional practices that guarantee equity, adaptability, and active participation through exchanges, certifications, diploma courses, workshops, internships, and volunteer programs. These programs must respond to the social, cultural, and environmental challenges of the region, incorporate knowledge, and seek standards of excellence for the development of competencies in sustainability, institutional transparency, and resilience, empathy, and democratization of heritage. Likewise, equitable access for workers to these processes is essential to consolidate museum professionalization as a permanent pillar of excellence, innovation, and adaptability of the sector in the face of global transformation scenarios. We declare as a priority objective the completion of a regional needs assessment, the creation of an ICOM LAC working group dedicated to training, and the promotion of certification, exchange, and internship programs that ensure contextualized and ethical professionalization.

## **Conclusion**

*The work begun in Re-connections represents a significant step forward in shaping a critical, participatory museology committed to the future of the region.*

The ICOM LAC 2025 Declaration: Museums, Governance, and Sustainability in Latin America and the Caribbean symbolizes a collective and strategic commitment to significantly strengthen the museum sector in the region. This objective is based on fundamental principles such as collaborative governance, ethical values, sustainability in all its dimensions, active community participation, and the promotion of social inclusion as fundamental pillars. In a context marked by complex social, cultural, political, and environmental challenges, it is recognized that the continent's museums have the unique and valuable capacity to act

as engines of innovation and transformation. Through these spaces, it is possible to articulate and redefine memories, traditional and contemporary knowledge, as well as to promote collective actions to build more just, inclusive, resilient, and culturally diverse societies.

This Declaration is an active and dynamic tool whose purpose is to consolidate a global, inclusive, sustainable, and firmly dedicated museum environment for the protection of heritage in Latin America and the Caribbean, which guarantees and promotes the cultural rights of all communities. This perspective seeks not only to strengthen regional cultural identity, but also to position museums as key players in the creation and development of initiatives that effectively address the present and future challenges of our societies.

This document proposes guidelines and strategies for museum workers to contribute, from their respective areas of action, to the development of a Museology of the South. This approach seeks to question and reform traditional museological practices, mostly shaped by Eurocentric paradigms, and promotes a model that responds comprehensively to the sociocultural particularities of the region.

We invite all members of ICOM LAC and museum and heritage institution workers in the region to spread this Declaration. The objective is to strengthen and consolidate Southern Museology as a museology that is accessible, supportive, collaborative, affective, restorative, and empathetic, positioning it in the global context.

*Let us join forces to continue our shared mission of preserving heritage and renewing museums in Latin America and the Caribbean.*





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- ICOM Dominican Republic



## CREDITS

### I

**Outcome of Re-connections. ICOM LAC Regional Alliance Meeting: Museums heading to Dubai 2025. Santiago, Chile, October 21-24, 2024**

### II

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**RE-CONEXIONES**  
Encuentro regional  
de la Alianza ICOM LAC  
Museos rumbo a Dubái 2025

ICOM

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BANCO DE DESARROLLO  
DE AMÉRICA LATINA  
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