



PRESS RELEASE

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REVOLUTION ON INTERNATIONAL MUSEUM DAY 18th MAY 2008

ICOM ensures that May 18th will be the largest-ever international gathering of museums.

The **International Council of Museums (ICOM)**, announces this year's theme for **International Museum Day** :“*Museums as Agents of Social Change and Development*”. For the first time since the celebration was created in 1977, ICOM is inviting museums to take action in museums around the globe both in the real world and in the virtual world.

Alissandra Cummins, President of ICOM states: “*While traditionally museums are known for their collections, more and more museums are taking an active key role in exploring social issues with communities to contribute to their development. The educational and ethical function of the museum is to engage culturally diverse contemporary communities through exhibitions and workshops and their design. International Museum Day shows that it is possible to gather together in a new way to interpret the past in light of the present to shape a better future.*”

In 2007, approximately 20,000 museums in more than 70 countries already participated in the 30th **International Museum Day** with activities, partnerships, and events connected to “*Museums & Universal Heritage*”. This year, to better express changes in society and explore development, ICOM is inviting the world museum community in Africa, Asia and the Pacific, North America, Latin America, and Europe to create activities in their museums based on this theme and to gather in new ways to celebrate *International Museum Day*. See: <http://icom.museum/imd.html>

The highlight of the suggested online activities is hosted by **The Tech Museum of Innovation** on 18 May in the replica of its Silicon Valley museum of technology on **SECOND LIFE**, the virtual 3-D platform created by **Linden Lab**. From real-world museums, museum professionals and the public will be able to communicate with colleagues, artists and “residents” in the virtual world. They will therefore be able to participate on IMD in the collective development of exhibits in The Tech in **SECOND LIFE**.

Alissandra Cummins adds: “*The developing world has been suffering from the digital divide: on International Museum Day, we want to show how museums can help bridge that divide between two worlds through new creative interaction between museum professionals.*”

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