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## PRESS RELEASE

### Launch of International Museum Day

Almost 100 countries on the starting blocks for the 2010 edition

The **International Council of Museums (ICOM)** established **International Museum Day** in 1977 to encourage public awareness of the role of museums in the development of society.

Momentum has been rising unabated ever since. In 2009, International Museum Day garnered record-breaking participation with almost 20,000 museums hosting events in more than 90 countries.

The worldwide community of museums will celebrate International Museum Day around **May 18, 2010** and will, as always, be creative in organising discovery tours by day or night, atypical visits, workshops and conferences for all kinds of visitors.

**"Museums for social harmony"** is the theme of this year's International Museum Day. Harmony is a concept significant for both Humanity and for representing Eastern cultures. The basis of social harmony lies in dialogue, tolerance, coexistence and development, based on pluralism, difference, competition and creativity. Fundamentally social harmony is "to agree but to stand out, to look for common ground but to keep the difference."

#### Some notable events in 2009

In Hamburg, Germany, the *Museum for Communication* offered tattoos, salsa lessons and readings.

In Cape Town, South Africa, the *Museum of Education* organised workshops and visits as part of a programme for segregated high-school students. In Botswana, the *National Museum of Botswana* brought visitors and tourists on guided tours of a route which led to the village of Mogobonye where dance performances took place.

In Spain, one of European countries where the number of participating museums is in the hundreds, museums remained open all night.

The *Museum of Macau* held a photography workshop. The winners saw their work presented to the general public.

In Nigeria, a Miss Museum 2009 was elected.

Swiss museums developed the theme "Museums and Tourism" to the maximum by offering "passports" to be stamped with "visa" at the entrance of each museum. The museum staff wore T-shirts stating "I am your travel guide".

**The year 2010 holds many surprises! See you at the museum on 18 May to celebrate International Museum Day.**

**Download the poster:**

**[http://icom.museum/doc/imd2010\\_links.html](http://icom.museum/doc/imd2010_links.html)**

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**ICOM in short**

Created in 1946, ICOM (International Council of Museums) is an international non-governmental organisation maintaining formal relations with UNESCO and having a consultative status with the United Nations' Economic and Social Council. ICOM is the only international organisation representing museums and museum professionals.

ICOM is:

- A diplomatic forum made up of representatives from 137 countries and territories
- Standards of excellence for museums including ethics ( Code of ethics for museums)
- An international network composed of 30,000 museum professionals around the world
- A think-tank composed by 31 International Committees which represent ICOM's specialities
- Missions of international public service notably in the fight against illicit traffic and emergency programmes in case of natural disasters or armed conflicts

**For all questions concerning the world museum community and for interview requests with ICOM's Director General, please contact the press office:**

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