

Dear Chairs of the ICOM International Committees and Standing Committees,

I am writing this email with feelings of sorrow and outcry after the devastating fire at the National Museum of Brazil but also with high hopes and firm belief that we, museum professionals, together can and will overcome all woes.

The work ahead has many aspects that range from security to documentation, to conservation, to funding and beyond. ICOM committees do have the expertise to tackle any of these matters. Many of you, dear colleagues, have already contacted us and offered their help. I thank each and all of you immensely for this.

ICOM wants to support Brazilian colleagues to use the competencies and capacities they have to overcome this disaster in every way we can. To do this ICOM needs your expertise, experience and ideas whichever are pertinent. I would like to suggest we establish a Task Force at this point with those of you, or with representative(s) from your respective committees, who think they could be of immediate help in the process.

DRMC, our Disaster Risk Management Committee, with Chair Corinne Wegener, is a natural leader in this action. I must add though UMAC and Chair Marta Lourenço, ICOM-CC and Chair Kristiane Straetkvern and still others were actively and immediately on the scene when the news broke.

We will need contributions in other areas as well. Besides the committees I already mentioned, those that instantly come to my mind are ICMS for security (hopefully looting will not be a threat), CIDOC for documentation, NATHIST, ICME, ICTOP, Sustainability Working Group, Strategic Plan Committee, SAREC and FIREC. It goes without saying the call is to all of you as the situation calls for a comprehensive mobilisation.

We can make this occasion not only a sample case of collaboration and solidarity among museum professionals but also the context for a statement that alerts the governments to better care for and protect their collections and museums. We are also working on a statement to announce ICOM's stance on this crucial matter.

Please confirm your availability and willingness to join the Task Force.

With best wishes,

Suay

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