

COVID-19: UNESCO and ICOM concerned about the situation faced by the world's museums



On the occasion of May 18 --International Museum Day-- two studies by UNESCO and the International Council of Museums (ICOM) confirm that museums have been especially affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, with nearly 90% of them, or more than 85,000 such institutions, having closed their doors for varying lengths of time during the crisis.

Furthermore, in Africa and the Small Island Developing States (SIDS), only 5% of museums were able to offer online content to their audiences, while nearly 13% of museums around the world may never reopen.

The two studies, involving Member States and museum professionals, were aimed at assessing the impact of COVID-19 on museums and museum institutions. They also aimed to find out how the sector had adapted to the pandemic and explore ways to support institutions in its aftermath.

On the occasion, UNESCO Director-General Audrey Azoulay said: "This pandemic also reminds us that half of humanity does not have access to digital technologies. We must work to promote access to culture for everyone, especially the most vulnerable and isolated."

Within the framework of its ResiliArt movement, UNESCO launched in mid-May a series of debates devoted to museums. The first three debates, in partnership with Ibermuseums, will focus on the situation in the Ibero-American region and will explore strategies to support museums and professionals. The ResiliArt movement aims to support artists during and after the COVID-19 crisis and to analyze the issues at stake, through high-level exchanges between international professionals from the cultural sphere.

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