

Riga, January 30, 2020

ICOFOM

Dear Colleagues,

The Latvian National Committee of ICOM (ICOM Latvia) highly appreciates the opportunity to present considerations regarding on-going debate on the proposed definition according to the request of ICOFOM. The statement has been approved by the General meeting of members of ICOM Latvia on 17th of January, 2020.

Members of ICOM Latvia agree to following considerations:

- 1) The museum definition must define specific museum characteristics that allow the policy makers, museums themselves, members of society and other stakeholders to differ museums from other institutions or spaces in cultural sector.
- 2) Other elements (concepts) of the new proposed definition are fundamental values in 21st century and should be included in ICOM Code of Ethics and reflected in museum mission, vision and values statements.

Following concepts have been accepted as crucial to the museum concept by the members of ICOM Latvia:

- institution (meaning legal entity rather than a „space”);
- permanent;
- sustainable;
- non-profit;
- in service of society;
- has socially orientated mission;
- open to the public;
- guarantee equal access to heritage for all people;
- acquire/ collect;
- conserve/ preserve;
- research;
- exhibit/ interpret;
- communicate;
- purpose of education;
- purpose of intellectual and emotional enjoyment/ experience.

Opinion of ICOM Latvia regarding other elements and concepts of the new proposed definition is following:

- 1) *Democratizing, inclusive, polyphonic spaces, for critical dialogue, participatory, transparent, acknowledging and addressing the conflicts and challenges of the present* – are ideals for any socially oriented institution (including museums), and thus concepts are not exclusive for museums (do not differ museums from other institutions). These concepts are values, and thus should be incorporated in museums mission, vision and values statements.

2) *Aiming to contribute to human dignity and social justice, global equality and planetary wellbeing* – seems rather as characteristics of welfare organisations, or values again.

3) Following concepts seems duplicating concepts of the existing definition: *in the service of society (in trust for society); in the service of society and its development (for future generations); tangible and intangible heritage of humanity and its environment/ (artefacts un specimens, diverse memories, heritage).*

Sincerely,

Juris Ciganovs

Chair of ICOM Latvia

