Canadian Museums Association

EDUCATIONAL SESSIONS

The Global Role of Museums in the Development of Civil Society
Moderator:
• **Martin Segger**, President, Commonwealth Association of Museums (CAM), University of Victoria

Panelists:
• **Catherine Cole**, Museums Consultant, Canada, CAM member,
• **Lloyd Kandasammy**, formerly National Trust, Guyana, CAM member,
• **Barbara Winters**, Assistant Secretary General, CAM
A Brief History of CAM

The Commonwealth Association of Museums was established in 1974 and elected Dr. W.L. Ride of Australia as its first President.

In 1985, a working group met to set up a Distance Learning Program in basic museum studies to provide a learning opportunity for all museum workers around the Commonwealth.

In 1989 a newsletter was begun and in 1992, CAM began to hold theme programs to which Triennial General Assemblies. The first of these was "The Role of Museums in Society" held in Ottawa before the ICOM General Assembly in Quebec City.
• University of Victoria in 1994 "Curatorship: Indigenous Perspectives from Post-Colonial Societies"
• a study tour and seminar in South Africa and Botswana "Museums and the National Identity"
• The GCAM (Group for Children in African Museums) series in Nairobi in 1997 and 2001 and in Malawi in 2005
• "Museums, Peace, Democracy and Governance in the 21st Century" in Barbados in 1999
• "What Peace Means to Me" art contest leading to exhibit (out of 1999 meeting)
• "Global Vision, Local Mission", Liverpool, 2003
• "Children in Caribbean Museums", first workshop, Barbados, 2005
• "Pacific Museums and Sustainable Heritage Development", Canberra, Australia, 2006.
**Major Objectives**

- **Global Community**
  fostering and strengthening links between museums and members of the museum profession in the Commonwealth and between museums and their communities

- **Professional Excellence**
  promoting a high standard of museum activity in the Commonwealth

- **Professional Learning**
  encouraging life-long learning and assist professional development and training through distance learning course, workshops, seminars

- **Communication**
  facilitating the dissemination of knowledge and information on all professional matters

- **Collaboration**
  working in collaboration with other international and national museum organizations and other agencies in the achievement of these goals
Commonwealth Foundation Discussion Papers & Reports:


• *Engaging with Faith.* Commonwealth Foundation project on Improving Understanding and Co-operation between Different Faith Communities (London. Commonwealth Foundation, 2008)

• *Putting Culture First:* Commonwealth Perspectives on Cultural Development. (London. Commonwealth Foundation, 2008)
“PUTTING CULTURE FIRST: COMMONWEALTH PERSPECTIVES ON CULTURE AND DEVELOPMENT” (2008)

A Precise:

• outcome of the Commonwealth People’s Forum 2007

• proposition: culture is a fundamental component of sustainable development

• references the 2005 UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions
Report components

Conceptual framework (identity/creativity and tool/process)

- **Culture as identity**: beliefs, values, social structures and social markers such as dress, language or cuisine
- **Culture as creativity**: cultural expression such as arts, crafts, literature, performing arts, film, music, oral storytelling
- **Cultural expression**: manifestation of self-identities, space for reflection, self-examination, conversation and affirmation of marginalized identities.
- **Culture as a tool**: delivering development strategies such as HIV/Aid prevention
• **Culture as a process for development**
  Enables community to address change as well as sustaining traditions, while transferring power into the hand of people through participatory development

• **Culture as expression and negotiating identities**
  Supporting the creative environment, hearing the voices of component cultures, while building cohesive societies
  While fostering respect and understanding between individuals and groups with different identities, and helping resolve conflict
• **Culture, crisis and repression**
  Avoiding manipulation of cultural expression by dominant leaders and groups during periods of political crisis. In periods of repression creators can be agents for social change and justice, particular when political movements or opposition are denied space.

• **Rights and culture**
  The place of culture in human rights frameworks: the right to live with one’s own culture; the right to hear different cultural voices; the right to an environment that supports creativity.
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