



## **The Jaipur Declaration on Access in Museums**

We the delegates of the Commonwealth Association of Museums workshop on “Access in Museums in South Asia”, meeting from 25-28 March, 2016 at the City Palace, Jaipur;

Recalling the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006) which affirms that: “disability is an evolving concept and that disability results from the interaction between persons with impairments and attitudinal and environmental barriers that hinders their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others”;

Recalling the International Council of Museums (ICOM) definition of museums<sup>1</sup>, and the ICOM Cultural Diversity Charter (2010);

### **Hold that:**

- Museums retain knowledge and resources for society and have the power to influence it; and all persons have the right of access to them.
- For the purpose of this declaration, access means the ability of persons with disabilities to engage with museum spaces and collections in ways which provide an enjoyable and educational experience, with dignity, safety, independence, and exercising choice.
- Access includes, but is not restricted to, intellectual, physical and sensory access, with the aim of enabling exploration and social learning. It includes access to knowledge and experience both on site and online (real and virtual).
- Providing access acknowledges the unique needs and expectations of diverse audiences and institutions.
- A high proportion of museums in India and Pakistan occupy heritage buildings, thus presenting heightened challenges for the provision of access.
- There is currently minimal collaboration between museums and relevant stakeholders in the provision of access. There is minimal awareness of the need for participation and continuous engagement in the process.

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<sup>1</sup> A museum is a non-profit, permanent institution in the service of society and its development, open to the public, which acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits the tangible and intangible heritage of humanity and its environment for the purposes of education, study and enjoyment.



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### We recommend that:

1. Museums in India and Pakistan must regard the provision of access as a non-negotiable matter of human rights and entitlements.
2. Museums should embed accessibility into their policy framework, including developing and implementing minimum standards and guidelines, treating it as an ongoing and incremental process.
3. Museum professionals, including but not restricted to policy-makers, curators, administrators, designers, architects, and educators, should collaborate in providing and improving access.
4. To improve access, all museum professionals should consult and collaborate with individuals and organisations comprising or representing the differently-abled; and with appropriate educational institutions and professional bodies.
5. Museums should minimise the disabling effects of existing barriers to access by implementing human-centred design. This encompasses design of systems, products and spaces, for use by all people as independently as possible, and signage in Braille and other forms that are easy to understand.
6. Museum educational programs, along with live interpretation and other forms of assistance and support should seek to engage persons with disabilities.
7. Museums should sensitise all staff to issues of access and facilitate behavioural change through special training.
8. Museums should commit to providing competitive employment opportunities across the spectrum of staff posts to persons with disabilities.
9. With respect to heritage structures and spaces, conservation concerns must not always take priority over access. We recommend consideration of the current use and users of the building, while respecting international guidelines on conservation.
10. Museums should adopt website accessibility standards as per W3C, the World Wide Web Consortium. In keeping with this, museums should support the design, development, production and distribution of relevant technologies and information systems at an early stage, so that they become accessible at minimum cost.
11. Museums should identify the unique challenges that persons with disabilities might encounter during emergency and evacuation situations and develop a risk management strategy accordingly.