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26 DEC 2011

UNESCO-ICCROM museum storage survey results



UNESCO reports, precious artifacts kept in museum storage facilities worldwide are not as safe as we may like to think.

A recent international survey on museum storage carried out by UNESCO in partnership with the International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM) has revealed that up to 60 per cent of museum collections kept in storage worldwide suffer from poor management, lack of maintenance, or inadequate space and protection.

On average, 90 per cent of museum collections may be kept in storage, where poor conditions can place them at risk of damage, theft or illicit trafficking.

Of the nearly 1,500 responses received from the 136 countries taking part in the UNESCO/ICCROM survey, one in four museums reported storage areas that were so overcrowded that they were difficult or impossible to use. Two in three suffered from a lack of space, while a further two in five reported a lack of logistical support and trained staff. For 10 per cent of museums answering the survey, theft from storage facilities was a major problem. An additional 25 per cent said a lack of proper inventories or accession and movement registers threatened the

safety and integrity of collections. The survey, running from June to September 2011, came as part of the second phase of UNESCO's partnership with ICCROM for the **Preventive Conservation of Endangered Museum Collections in Developing Countries**.

*As part of the Partnership, UNESCO and ICCROM have launched the **RE-ORG online platform**, a tool designed to help museums in developing countries reorganize their storage and documentation systems.*

Alarmed by the results of the survey, UNESCO and ICCROM are mobilizing resources for a worldwide campaign to improve museum storage.

Summary of survey results:
***ICCROM-UNESCO International
Storage Survey 2011 (PDF, 1 page)***

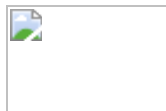
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UNESCO: **Stored but not safe: museum collections are at risk worldwide**

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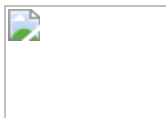
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