



COLLECTIONS 2030 & BEYOND

Activating heritage collections for
sustainable development through
cross-sector partnerships

DAILY DIGEST – DAY 4 - COLLECTIONS AND PEACE

Today, we examined the importance of heritage collections and collections-based organizations in contributing to the Peace dimension of sustainable development.

Our **keynote speaker** helped us to frame the conversation in international human rights law, by reminding us that the right to participate fully in cultural rights, which include the right to access cultural heritage, is affirmed by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. While cultural rights are indispensable to peace and social cohesion, and also inseparable from them, more efforts are necessary to integrate them in global peace frameworks. By reflecting community identities, heritage collections play a key role in post-conflict situations as tools for dialogue, truth seeking, trust rebuilding, and healing. Yet, they are often instrumentalized. Instrumentalization should be countered by adopting inclusive and participatory processes, hearing the voices of the most marginalized, and acknowledging their role in saving collective memories and safeguarding heritage.

In the **lighting talks**, we heard case studies of the role of collections in peacebuilding in Cambodia, Latvia, Ukraine, Georgia, Pakistan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and in Barbados. Despite the differences in local contexts, similarities emerged. Among all, the critical role of heritage collections as civic assets and civic engagement tools. As custodians of knowledge and information, collections can help address a difficult past, build peace, and transform conflict.

But how can collection-based organizations achieve this? By becoming spaces of community-engagement, listening and reflection, remembrance and memorialization, mourning and healing; by facilitating inter-generational and inter-society dialogue; by using methods like storytelling and art to process past trauma. Youth should participate in these spaces and be empowered to envisage and shape a better future. Collections can help people find common ground by fostering empathy. This will contribute to more progress towards the achievement of SDG 16, which is about peaceful, just and inclusive societies. However, to unlock the potential of heritage for peace, innovative partnership between museums, artists, educators, communities and policymakers are essential.

In the **panel session**, we continued exploring how collections and collections-based organizations can contribute to peace. This can be achieved by ensuring accountability; seeking truth in the face of human rights violations; being spaces for listening to diverse voices. Our panelists also



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highlighted the potential of cross-sectorial collaboration to strengthen the role of collections for peace and resilience. These partnerships should encompass community leaders, women or youth-led organizations, international organizations, governments, UN agencies, IT service providers. The session also served as an invitation to deepen partnerships and harness the power of collections for peacebuilding.