



COLLECTIONS 2030 & BEYOND

Activating heritage collections for
sustainable development through
cross-sector partnerships

DAILY DIGEST – DAY 2 - COLLECTIONS AND PLANET

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

Our **keynote speaker** invited us to look at multiple ways in which collections can contribute to identifying solutions to address the current triple planetary crisis, a crisis of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution and waste. Collections are useful to interpret climate trends; to measure changes in biodiversity; to inform climate adaptation techniques; to support research. This is because collections hold identities, memories, ecological knowledge and wisdom from the past; and what we inherit from the past can offer us important insights for the future. In this sense, collections can and should become living assets, as opposed to silent repositories. Collections-based organizations play a key role in fostering resilience, education and raising awareness, and in leading to the protection and restoration of our planet.

The importance of collections-mediated education emerged also in the **lightning talks**. Indeed, museums, libraires, and other cultural institutions play an important role in informing the public about environmental change and climate action. Their training and awareness-raising activities can be even more powerful and far-reaching when they are shaped by multilateral environmental agreements like the Paris agreement, and when they use collections as vital and multifunctional educational resources. It was also great to hear of the many initiatives for climate action that foster partnerships between museums, researchers, scientists and engineers, because partnership is what makes change possible.

Today, we were reminded of the power of youth activism to shape the climate movement in museums, libraries and archives, and we listened to a call to action to young people, to engage in countering the drivers of climate crisis. Positive examples of this already exist, such as the National History Museum of London, where young people can get together in a dedicated space to engage in constructive discussion on what actions they can take to *'fixing our broken planet'*, as a permanent exhibition hosted there is called. And it's not only youth who can engage for the environmental SDGs, but also children, as the Planet Kids Club of the Doha museum of Islamic Art reminds us.

Finally, when we talked about joint efforts to counter climate change through collections, we cannot disregard the human rights principle of equality. Botanical collections and their specimens



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play a key role in fostering sustainability, eco-tourism, healthier agriculture but also health. However, through the case study of Ecuador, we learned there is a deep inequality in the number of these collections between the Global North and Global South countries, and this is a trend that needs to be reversed.

Lastly, in the **panel** session, we learned that heritage collections and collections-based organizations are contributing to the planet's dimension in many ways, such as by engaging children and youth in meaningful environmental education activities, or by reducing their own carbon footprint. The need to truly and effectively engage with children and youth around complex planetary issues is strong, but the fear that it can lead to increased feelings of anxiety among them is an obstacle. To mitigate this, it was suggested that they could participate in activities such as 'landscape exchange day', immersing themselves in a landscape and feeling connected to the planet.