

June 3, 2014

Canadian Commission for UNESCO AGM kicks off at Royal BC Museum

VICTORIA, BC – British Columbia's rich cultural heritage will be front and centre as the Canadian Commission for the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) kicks off its 54th Annual General Meeting with a reception at the Royal BC Museum on Thursday, June 5.

The overall goal of the three-day AGM is to illustrate the mutually rewarding relationship between Canada and UNESCO, and highlight the relevance of UNESCO for all Canadians in a practical way.

The Royal BC Museum is hosting the meeting in partnership with the University of Victoria to draw attention to **British Columbia's rich heritage and culture.**

"The founding intention of UNESCO is that cultures should discover each other and learn to know each other. This aim has not disappeared and is very much at the root of our museum and our new exhibition on BC's indigenous languages," said Professor Jack Lohman, CEO of the Museum. **"The oral traditions of BC are part of the rich cultural diversity of this province and their voices continue to inspire their descendants in many ways."**

The reception event includes a preview of the upcoming *Our Living Languages: First Peoples' Voices in B.C.* exhibition, opening June 21, which provides a look into the rich diversity of First Nations languages in the province.

"The AGM is well aligned with the objective of the International Decade for the Rapprochement of Cultures," said Dr. Axel Meisen, president of the Canadian Commission for UNESCO, **"to promote mutual understanding and respect for diversity, rights and equal dignity between peoples, through intercultural dialogue and concrete initiatives."**

The University of Victoria, a co-partner for the reception, emphasized the importance of the AGM's themes of discussion and reflection about collaboration with First Nations communities, and the connection between post-secondary institutions and community.

"We believe strongly in building global networks and research partnerships with community organizations to create and share knowledge relevant to social and economic issues and that can impact public policy," says Vice President Academic and Provost Reeta Tremblay, who will speak at the event.

Media are invited to attend the June 5 private event, held from 6 to 9 p.m. at the Royal BC Museum, which will include speeches from dignitaries from all partners. Please RSVP to Kyle Wells, Communications Specialist, Royal BC Museum, at kwells@royalbcmuseum.bc.ca or 250-387-3207.

About the Royal BC Museum

The Royal BC Museum explores **the province's human history and natural history, advances new knowledge and understanding of BC, and provides a dynamic forum for discussion and a place for reflection.** The museum and archives celebrate culture and history, telling the stories of BC in ways that enlighten, stimulate and inspire. Looking to the future, by 2017 the Royal BC Museum will be a refreshed, modern museum, extending its reach far beyond its two-hectare campus in Victoria as a world-class cultural venue and repository of digital treasures.

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