

# The Role of Museums in Cultural and Heritage Tourism for Sustainable Economy in Developing Countries

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## Introduction

International Council of Museums (ICOM) (2010) has defined that museum is a non-profit making, permanent institution in the service of society and of its development, and open to the public, which acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits, for the purpose of study, education, and enjoyment, material evidence of people and their environment. "Sri Lanka is recognized as one of the ten most sought after destinations for eco and heritage tourism in the world. Today the 4<sup>th</sup> century AD world heritage site of the "Sigiriya" rock palace alone nets US\$ 10 – US\$ 15,000 per day during the high season. Similarly the 17 century AD world heritage site of Galle Dutch Fort is not only a vibrant multi-cultural hub blending traditions and modernity but also a high-end tourist destination and a portal of convergence for inter natural art and literary activities" (excerpt from Professor Sudharshan Seneviratne – award acceptance speech, Conservation and Heritage Management Award for Excellence 2013, Archaeological Institute of America). Prof. Seneviratne's speech has given clear evidence for the effect of cultural heritage tourism for sustainable economy in developing countries. At this stage, museum has a big role to play to conserve, research, and exhibit cultural heritage in any country. Heritage and tourism are interconnected and reflect the image of the particular country and its inhabitants.

## Heritage Tourism

Heritage is defined as the elements of our inherited past that we value. Heritage tourism is defined as tourism markets and the industry, which have evolved around heritage. There is a vital connection between heritage and tourism (The Travel and Tourism Programme, Ireland). As defined by the Travel and Tourism Programme, Ireland tourists get attracted to the places rich in cultural heritage. Heritage tourism is that form of tourism whose objective is, among other aims, the discovery of monuments and sites. It has become a more popular tourist activity to make visits to historical

and taking significant attention in the globe. There is also another group of tourism. Scholars introduced the concept of creative tourism (Richards and Raymond, 2000) by marrying creative and tourism products and services. UNCTAD (2004; 2008) have formulated and broadly classified creative industries into four areas:

1. Heritage – traditional cultural expressions and cultural sites

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