Dear colleagues,

As you are aware, on September 2nd last year the Brazilian National Museum palace (in Rio) burned down but not everything housed in it was lost. Currently rescue parties recover specimens which escaped the fire either intact or with some degree of damage, on a daily basis. Evidently the disaster sparked a series of investigations by Brazilian Authorities (mostly still under way).

The Brazilian Federal Audit Court (*Tribunal de Contas da União* - *TCU*), for instance, demands the Museum to produce a full annual inventory of collections.

The Audit Court insists that the Museum disobeyed the law by not implementing complete annual inventories, invoking a law from 2009 (see link below) which was quite evidently designed by someone who cared about art museums. To the best of our knowledge you can count statues and pictures by Picasso etc. on the wall with some precision, but not individual diatoms in every vial, plants on every voucher, pinned insects in every drawer.

We have pretty much ceased our research to cope with this unusual demand for overly meticulous inventory from the Audit Court, to the best of our knowledge unprecedented in natural history museums worldwide.

With the aforementioned pointlessness for annual inventory in natural history museums, could you, as an experient curator/director/researcher (and maybe some of your peers we don´t have e-mails of) kindly send us a letter saying so and how your institution deals with Museum input-output? Could you please inform if you do an annual inventory of your collection? This will be of great help for us.

Link to Law 11.904/2009: <http://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/_Ato2007-2010/2009/Lei/L11904.htm>

With my kind regards!

Ruy José Válka Alves, Curator, R-Herbarium.