

AHEAD OF THE CURVE

Introduction

Two circumstances often preventing civil society actors from the Global South to be heard and engaged in meaningful, nuanced dialogue and to make an impact on agenda setting and policy making in international cultural policy can be found in the very format many meetings and conferences adopt: large-scale gatherings of a multitude of actors filled with redundant panel discussions that do not allow for focused debate, and the dominance – often structurally reinforced by resource inequalities – of actors from the Global North. In light of current global challenges, Richard von Weizsäcker Fellow at the Robert Bosch Academy, Mike van Graan, and Head of Division for Culture, Communication and Memory of the World at the German Commission for UNESCO, Christine M. Merkel, recognised the need for a more hands-on and inclusive discussion.

Twelve years after the *2005 UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions* was passed, there is an urgency to reflect on the Convention's achievements, discuss its future and the place and role of the Global South in its implementation. From the 18th to the 20th of May 2017, 24 cultural leaders in their respective fields from five continents met in Berlin to debate and formulate suggestions for signatory parties of the Convention to consider, and to create stronger advocacy activities. While the Convention is the first piece of international law that stipulates the participation of civil society (Article 11), the significance of this meeting was amplified by the upcoming Conference of the Parties (COP) to be held in mid-June deciding on the priorities for the next two years. The presence of Danielle Cliche participating as an observer at the workshop in her capacity as Secretary of the 2005 UNESCO Convention was immensely helpful to directly address issues and learn about approaches that may have a direct impact on future priority setting.

This document shall not only reiterate the policy priorities and call to action adopted by the participants and the organisations they represent, but it shall also highlight some of the debates that have taken place, emphasise certain expressions that are important but did not make the cut into the brief document to be distributed to the signatory parties. This document will describe some of the challenges but also hopes of the arts sector in general and civil society actors from the Global South in particular that were expressed by participants, and how the Convention can be a tool to act upon these. A background document by Mike van Graan will set the scene, before exploring the ensuing debates. At the end of the document, the adopted policy priorities and a call to action can be found.

Background

By Mike van Graan

Introduction

This Background Document aims to provide a context for the seminar which will be held on 19-20 May 2017 in Berlin at the Robert Bosch Academy.

The purpose of the seminar is to gather thinkers, activists and/or representatives of key civil society organisations to consider the changes that are taking place within the global economic, political, cultural and other spaces, and to evaluate and reinvigorate the contemporary meaning and relevance of the 2005 UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions to this changing world both now and in the years to come.

The seminar takes place shortly before the meeting of the Conference of Parties (COP) of the Convention in Paris in June, and it may be that some of the ideas and themes that emerge from the seminar, could feed both into the COP (12-15 June 2017) and the Intergovernmental Committee (IGC) meeting (11-14 December 2017).

Conditions at the time of the Convention's adoption and initial implementation

The conditions that gave rise to the Convention were the aftermath of the collapse of the Berlin Wall in the late eighties, heralding the end of the bipolar "Cold War" era and the rapid rise of market liberalisation as the dominant paradigm for global and regional trade.

The establishment of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) in the 1990s facilitated the dominance of "free market" thinking with rules and regulations limiting government intervention in the market place and reducing, if not eliminating, protectionism of local industries. The adoption of the General Agreement on Trades in Services (GATS) in 1995 was a catalyst to set the Convention negotiations in motion in order to ensure that the cultural and audio-visual sectors would not be included in progressive trade liberalisation.

Against this background, it was argued that while this economic paradigm was acceptable for products such as motor vehicles, clothing and chemical products, cultural expressions, audio-visual goods and services and the creative industries in the broader sense could not be subjected to such unrestricted market liberalisation without grave consequences for democracy globally, for cultural diversity and for expressions of national identity.

The argument emphasised that embedded within creative goods such as films and television programmes, were values, ideas, ideological assumptions and ways of seeing the world, so that if the free market were to prevail in an unrestricted manner, creative products from dominant economies would flood the markets of less resourced countries, and consumers of these products would imbibe – whether consciously or unconsciously – the values, perspectives and ideas embedded within them. This would lead to greater homogenisation – viewed as unacceptable at a time that encouraged and celebrated "diversity". (*Our Creative*

Diversity – the Perez de Cuellar report - had been launched as UNESCO's think piece in response to the end of the Cold War).

Thus, it was necessary to have an international legal instrument that would allow governments to support and promote (e.g. through subsidies) and protect (e.g. through local product quota systems) their creative industries and the public value of culture, without this being regarded as unfair market interventions by the state. In this way, the sovereign right to public policies for arts and culture would be re-affirmed.

By supporting the creation and distribution of a range of creative products, citizens would have choices as they would have access to local, regional and international creative goods.

The movement towards developing a Convention that would promote and sustain global heterogeneity and protect cultural diversity began to build steam in the late 90s with the launch of the International Network for Cultural Policy (INCP), a global network of arts and culture ministers from strategic countries as well as civil society counterparts such as the International Network for Cultural Diversity (INCD) and Coalitions for Cultural Diversity (formalised as the International Federation of Coalitions for Cultural Diversity in 2007).

World leaders met at the turn of the century in New York and agreed on eight goals that would help to lift millions out of poverty. The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) – with 2015 as their deadline – included halving poverty, the reversal of the spread of HIV and basic education for everyone, especially girls – required significant funding from all, particularly wealthy, nations. Global South initiatives such as the World Social Forum launched in Port Alegre in Brazil, took up this agenda and added new perspectives and dynamism to development dialogues.

While the MDGs did not include culture either as an influencer or means of development, the Convention built on earlier, vast amounts of UNESCO work that recognised the links between culture and development.

In September 2001, the terror attack on the World Trade Centre in New York initiated the “war on terror”, led principally by the USA. Just a week after “9/11”, UNESCO Member States adopted a Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity, built mainly on the thinking and ideas articulated by Amartya Sen and his colleagues.

The Convention was adopted formally in 2005 and gained rapid approval from a critical mass of member states, entering into force in March 2007.

By then, the “war on terror” and the backlash it unleashed with increasing terror attacks had at least two effects on the political context in which the Convention was being brought to life:

- a. massive resources were channeled towards the military and/or “homeland security” so that the pursuit and funding of the MDGs were adversely affected and
- b. the notion of “cultural diversity” began to lose its appeal as the “war on terror” was increasingly framed as “a clash of civilisations”; “multiculturalism” was questioned as a political and social strategy for co-existence, with greater insistence on the need for

all within a country to abide by the dominant values of that society. From one perspective, it appeared that while some countries were demanding and using the language of "diversity" at an international level to promote and protect their share of the global market in the trade of cultural goods and services, they were increasingly reluctant to maintain or apply the principle of diversity within their own societies.

While there were exceptions, the 2008 financial crises and subsequent economic recession further reduced public sector funding for development and for the implementation of the Convention's policy goals in many countries.

On the other hand, the publication of UNCTAD's 2008 and 2010 Creative Economy Reports shifted the emphasis from public sector support to the creative industries as means to generate the resources required for social and human development. The Reports projected positive messages about the resilience of the creative industries in the light of the economic recession, their capacity to create jobs and their ability to earn foreign income.

With the deadline for the MDGs approaching, and on the back of funding and conference initiatives by the European Commission e.g. the 2009 Culture as a Vector of Development conference in Brussels, the creative industries assumed greater importance in policy-making in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean and Latin America. The 2013 UNDP/UNESCO special edition of the Creative Economy Report focused on developments in the Global South and reaffirmed the connection between artistic creation, cultural resources and the cultural, often informal, economies. This was despite conditions in many Global South countries not being conducive to the growth and sustainability of creative industries given the lack of investment in infrastructure and capacity-building, the absence of markets with the critical mass to support such industries and the lack of entrepreneurial skills and access to capital.

This particular period gave new meaning to "the cultural dimension of development" and breathed greater life into the 2005 Convention as an instrument that promoted and facilitated regional trade, investment and capacity-building in the creative industries globally.

Implementation of the Convention

Member states were required to submit quadrennial reports (2012/13 and again in 2016/17) detailing how they had implemented the Convention, and the UNESCO Convention Secretariat oversaw the production of two reports on the impact of the Convention.

What these reports reveal is that the implementation results of the Convention have been – at best – uneven and mixed, with wealthier, mainly European and Latin American countries having generally done a good job in pursuing the Convention's goals, building on already-existing policies and instruments, while poorer countries have done less well in advancing the Convention's objectives.

Furthermore, there is a distinct divide between countries with a democratic political culture and those (the majority) with a more authoritarian or hybrid political regime so that civil society organisations have been more engaged in implementing and evaluating the Convention's impact in democratic societies, while – notwithstanding the requirement of the Convention for civil society actors to be actively engaged - it has mainly been the state or

agencies of the state that have reported (generally positively) on the Convention in less democratic states.

Current conditions and key challenges to the Convention's objectives and principles

Seventeen Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were adopted by the end of 2015 as "Agenda 2030"; as with the earlier MDGs and notwithstanding the advocacy efforts of key regional and global cultural players, culture was not given as significant recognition as an influencer of or strategy in the pursuit of the SDGs as the cultural sector would have hoped.

However, in the current SDG framework, cultural diversity, artistic creation, cultural resources and creativity are strong connectors of seven of these goals: addressing transition and innovation in high quality life-long learning, gender equality, humane work and growth, preferential treatment to reduce inequalities between countries, inclusive, sustainable and resilient development of cities and settlements, the building of strong participatory institutions and global partnerships. The practical implications of this understanding are yet to be seen.

Another moment of "global hope" presented itself in 2010/2011 as the so-called Arab Spring led to the fall of dictators in Tunisia and Egypt, with further democratisation ripples being felt in other countries in the region. However, other than some political shifts in Tunisia, much of the region remains under repressive rule, or with violent conflicts and wars characterising much of their recent history.

The increase in terror activities since September 2001 and especially since 2015, the rise of ISIS in the Arab region and the threat that it is perceived to pose as well as the ongoing wars and political instability in countries like Iraq, Syria, Libya and Yemen, have further impacted adversely on economic resources, on security measures (which have been tightened) and on global mobility (with artists from many Global South countries finding it increasingly difficult to obtain visas to access Global North markets, notwithstanding the Convention's promotion of preferential access to such markets for creative goods and services from less-resourced economies).

The internet and the rapid growth of social media over the last twenty years have had significant and positive impacts on the democratisation of knowledge, in the distribution of ideas and even in effecting political change (as with the role of social media in the "Arab Spring"). But while digitisation and social media have contributed to economic growth, greater inclusiveness of people in social and economic spheres and global connectedness, inequalities in economic, political, military and cultural power are also manifested in the digital world with citizens in wealthier countries connected at greater speeds and at cheaper costs than those in less-resourced countries. As with culture which does not have a wholly positive or wholly negative impact, so social media and the internet are not in themselves good or bad, and, as with the spread of fake news, social media and the internet may be used as tools towards good ends and bad, and to serve particular interests.

2016 has seen major ruptures within “western” democratic societies, spilling over into 2017 with increasing calls for more nationalistic and culturally nostalgic and chauvinist approaches demanded by electorates who have made their voices heard in the Brexit vote and in the rise of Trump in the USA.

Some of the premises for the post-Berlin Wall world – increased multilateralism and cooperation, greater globalisation, more rapid market liberalisation – are being questioned as a consequence of job losses at local levels, perceived mass migration and security threats – real and imagined – posed by migrants and refugees. These phenomena are not peculiar to the Global North, and are, for example, also manifested in countries such as South Africa and Chile.

Notwithstanding the scientific evidence affirming climate change and its devastating impacts, major corporates and governments are paying little regard to the science in favour of short-term wealth gains for elites. Changes in the climate are contributing to losses of traditional and contemporary forms of economic sustenance, to cultural changes and to increased migration.

Free trade agreements, the outsourcing of labour to cheaper parts of the world and the relatively easy mobility of labour across national boundaries – features of neo-liberal economic thought – are being called into question, no longer only by civil society activists, but by politicians in response to the concerns of their broader electorate. Whether this is a temporary manifestation of voter concerns in some countries or issues that will have longer-term impact with new trade constellations being formed, remains to be seen. Decades-old military and political alliances are not as certain as before, and – led by the USA president’s drive for even greater expenditure on the military, it is likely that public spending on development and culture – two core tenets of the 2005 Convention – will decline in the foreseeable future (see, for example, Trump’s recent budget that eliminates funding for the National Endowment for the Arts).

Multilateral institutions of global or regional governance and collective action – e.g. the United Nations, the European Union, NATO, the International Criminal Court, UNESCO – are facing unprecedented challenges so that the gains made over the last number of decades to create institutional frameworks for creating and upholding international law, are being threatened.

Conclusion

Since the fall of the Berlin Wall, the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of apartheid in the late eighties and nineties, and the hope that was ushered into the world – at least in the so-called west – we have become more unequal in economic terms with the gap between rich and poor nations, between rich regions and poor regions and within nations, growing larger and larger, fuelling tensions and conflicts and escalating the possibilities of a new arms race.

Politically, the world has new divides, but with powerful nations still exerting power in multilateral forums such as the United Nations’ Security Council, with little prospect of change if such changes threaten the geo-political and security interests of those who now

enjoy veto rights at the Security Council. There are greater moves towards authoritarian forms of government, with adverse consequences for freedom of thought, freedom of expression and freedom to impart ideas so that most people in the world live in “un-free” societies. Democratic governments are being pushed by their electorates towards policies and practices that have less to do with human solidarity, fundamental human rights and freedoms and a better quality of life for all the world’s citizens, and are more informed by anxiety about loss and ignorance and fear of “the other”. Racism and deep religious divides threaten any sense of common humanity or even the possibilities of co-existence of diverse cultural communities.

The world is a very different place to the one ushered in by the collapse of the Berlin wall, but it is still in the process of becoming a different place, a world that is characterised by deep political, economic, military, social and cultural inequalities on the one hand, and on the other hand, by quite different belief systems, values, traditions and forms of social organisation (in short, culture). As opposed to the demand for greater cultural diversity at the time of the formulation of the Convention, there is a greater demand now for cultural homogeneity at national level and for shared/common values that serve particular views of the world and the interests that underpin such views.

It is in this changing world that supporters and advocates of the Convention need to remake the meaning and relevance of the Convention, and to determine how, if at all, the Convention can contribute to shaping this changing world. This rather tough and certainly also controversial assessment spurred the need for this peer-to-peer, multi-continent workshop in Berlin where participants may debate this question from their various perspectives and experiences.

While the contemporary world may present substantial challenges, it may also offer significant opportunities. It is precisely in some of the political ruptures currently taking place that space is being opened for new activism, or for the reawakening of activism as witnessed, for example, in the Women’s March after Trump’s inauguration, for new generations to manifest political engagement, for strategic investment in investigative journalism, for rethinking models of democracy, and, not least for humour, satire and the arts to make sense and provide commentary on this unfolding state of affairs.

Discussion

By Kai T. Brennert

Twelve years in but ahead of the curve – is the 2005 UNESCO Convention still the right tool for the promotion and protection of the diversity of cultural expressions? Has it ever been? What do the marginalised voices need to do in order to influence global debates and policy making and how do we tackle the many crises of our times? One point that the congregation of 24 leaders and activists in their respective cultural and academic fields could agree on is that political discussions on cultural diversity also require a diversity of opinions from various sectors and regions.

Many participants recognised that the 2005 Convention was more a political product of its time with a distinct focus on the exploitability of creative industries rather than a purely ideological piece of international law that quite prominently would have argued for a prime position of diverse arts and culture in national policies. Twelve years on, many civil society actors, particularly in the Global South, are somewhat disillusioned by the meagre impact it had on their work. Strong feelings that bi- and multilateral trade agreements and processes of exclusively economic integration like ASEAN that threaten cultural diversity are much stronger than the intrinsic value of cultural diversity led to questions whether the 2005 Convention really is the right tool to advocate for such diversity, associated national policies and funding? Since the mills of international law grind slowly, the Convention might be the best tool that is available to date, however. The majority of attendees still showed strong support for the original ideas expressed in the Convention but strongly criticises governments' selective implementation, generally in favour of sole economic benefits. Disbelief over governments' sincerity in implementing the ratified Convention met acknowledgements that it is indeed a complex construct. The proactive atmosphere of the seminar allowed to see the opportunities attached to the decreasing momentum around the Convention as it opens space for re-definition, new priorities and new alliances.

That the Convention is indeed needed more than ever manifested itself in the reiteration of participants' greatest fears and perceived challenges for the world and for culture in particular. Hailing from five continents, seminar participants recount the dangerous rise of populist, nationalist and anti-democratic movements in their respective political and civic environments. Radicalisation is not only manifesting itself in religion anymore but also in civic behaviour, and the cultural diversity debate is increasingly hijacked by cultural essentialists promoting the protection of culturally homogenous societies. While everyone is hoping for more democratic societies, participants formulate the need for regionally tailored and diverse answers to these challenges. Neo-colonial systems and hegemonic dominance that obstruct effective regional and South-South cooperation, both structurally and mentally, must be addressed. For some attendees a more fluid understanding of what determines a region would be a first step to break such structures and create new networks and alliances: an economic region might not necessarily meet the reality of cultural actors. It is key to include young people in these processes as they will be ones shaping the world soon enough. The absence of the United States in these cultural diversity debates was amusingly acknowledged as the "elephant not in the room".

A multitude of other concerns was voiced, too. New realities arising from increased migration, including forced migration, the perversion of neoliberalism, non-inclusive policies, resistance against advances in gender equality and feminism made some attendees wonder what state of the world we currently live in: with many severe power shifts occurring, it certainly feels like Kali Yuga, the destructive era according to Hindu philosophy, to some. Equally disastrous in its consequences is yet another issue very high up on the list of current challenges: climate change. A multitude of seminar participants advocated strongly to include sustainability measures into our daily work and political conscience. The environmental and ecological dimension of culture is too often overlooked despite its strong connections.

Seminar participants acknowledged that just calling for more funding and spaces for arts and culture is not enough to further the cultural diversity agenda. Considering the funding potential of the private sector, more cross-sectoral dialogue was suggested. Potential benefits of cultural diversity and the Convention would need to be communicated as well as already existing tools such as preferential treatment for Global South actors. Yet, perhaps it is also a reframing from rich/poor countries towards rich/poor populations within a country that helps to understand the current perceived rise of global and domestic inequalities. While some seminar attendees called for large-scale donors to commit to long-term agendas rather than haphazardly supporting a thematic 'flavour of the month', others preferred to decrease dependency on foreign donors. Exerting influence through participatory policy making that goes beyond filling out a survey could be one way to increase financial independency. Partnerships as opposed to hostility between civil society and respective governments are seen as a means to constructively achieve win-win situations. Unfortunately, the ideal of a responsive, transparent and accountable government does not always meet the reality as some reminded us. In these cases, a consensus among civil society actors in one country is needed more than ever to strengthen advocacy activities. Perhaps some governments simply need guidance on how to effectively include civil society actors in their decision making processes?

Inclusion of civil society actors into policy processes requires a certain level of adaption to the governments' regulations and language. One credo that surfaced during seminar discussions underscored the need for data: understand your sector before making policies. Despite an 'obsession with impact' that developed in the past couple of years, many seminar participants still voiced a need for more, better-fitted evaluation models that counteract the pure economic reasoning of the creative industries rationale. Cultural indicators could include emotions, the intrinsic power of culture and many more whilst being integrated and mainstreamed into national development plans in order to make culture more visible in daily policy discussions. Obsessing ourselves too much with impact and indicators, as some pointed out, might lead us into the wrong direction, however. Experimentation and process-oriented work with unclear outcomes must still be possible and encouraged as it is the R&D of the culture sector.

Questions of who is holding cultural power these days were answered with strong calls for a plurality of narratives. Seminar participants identified a great need to nurture the creation and distribution of alternative narratives, possibly even counter-narratives to those offered by national authorities. The culture sector can challenge these political narratives and linear understanding of history and culture, reframe discourses, such as those on climate change, and prevent the cultural diversity agenda to be hijacked by cultural essentialists. Since the Convention was originally designed to reaffirm sovereignty of signatories and does not explicitly affirm a plurality of narratives, some seminar attendees proposed to write and submit civil society shadow reports of the Convention. An institutionalisation of such shadow reports would force unwilling governments to engage with civil society actors demanding more transparency and accountability but would also create a need for civil society to join forces and find consensus. While this seems unlikely given afore-mentioned sovereignty issues, UNESCO values comments on the national quadrennial reports and other

contributions that highlight potential discrepancies in these reports. It was emphasised that actors in the Global South should be cooperating more closely on this issue.

UNESCO's very own support instrument, the International Fund for Cultural Diversity (IFCD), was also criticised for being underfunded, partly due to its contributions being optional to signatories. The Convention's language is not strong enough for countries to recognise it as one of its key instrument, but the difficulty of enforcing mandatory contributions was also acknowledged. Seminar participants welcomed the Secretariat's recent action to issue mock invoices to signatory countries to contribute to the IFCD, which yielded significant results in the form of many small contributions from formerly non-paying members. While some seminar participants also advocated for a clearer of focus on certain thematic areas such as cultural entrepreneurship, arts education and culture in sustainable development, other warned of fast-changing political agendas and remarked that the IFCD must stay flexible in order to address very specific problems in very different contexts. To challenge Northern hegemony, South-South cooperation and regional exchange should be further nurtured through the IFCD. Additionally, more independent funding is needed to take risks and explore issues that might be off limits for governmental funding sources, such as homosexuality which is punishable by law in India.

Probably the strongest and most recurring topic was that of advocacy. Considering that ideas of the Convention often do not trickle down to implementation levels or simply meet a lack of understanding, implementation happens selectively, and many people and organisations are simply not aware of the 2005 Convention and its benefits for society. Seminar participants suggested multiple times that the culture sector needs to take things into their own hands and engage in several parallel advocacy campaigns. On the global stage, cultural diversity should be mainstreamed into development frameworks to make it relevant; national governments should be pressured to holistically implement the Convention; lower-ranking government officials and implementing civil servants need to be made aware of the Convention and its particularities be explained; other sectors need to be engaged and the Convention's benefits explained. Tailored approaches, information campaigns, training of intermediaries on the Convention and its instruments, lobbying and pressure on elected representatives, reading groups, and using the Sustainable Development Goals to help communicate the need for cultural diversity are among the ideas of how to engage in local, national and global advocacy. Very tangible proposed activities included the development of advocacy toolkits, a better branding of the Convention and the re-introduction of the International Network of Ministers of Culture. Production of reports and evaluations by civil society actors to be used as advocacy tools was met with hesitance by some participants, who pointed out the importance of oral cultures prioritising narratives over evidence. Curiously, the role of actors from the Global North in these campaigns was hardly mentioned at all.

The 2005 Convention is still relevant for most seminar participants and holds great potential to mobilise around. Strengthening alternative narratives, South-South and regional cooperation, participation in policy making, and strong multilevel advocacy for cultural diversity and the benefits of the Convention as an instrument appeared to be strongest

topics during the discussions. With many cultural leaders in the room, the atmosphere was energetic and enthusiasm to bring these combined voices to the political stage high.

Actions & Priorities

After two days of intensive discussions, seminar attendees collected all ideas brought forward and subsequently voted on the group's advocacy priorities. Each participant had several votes to ensure a wide variety of priorities that will be communicated to stakeholders.

Challenges/changes for the World

1. Increasing material/income inequality at global, regional and national levels.
2. The contradictions and limitations of the global economic system in delivering a more equitable, just world.
3. Inequality also with regard to who has political, economic, military and cultural power, whose lives and interests are valued, and whose not
4. Increasing religious (Christian, Hindu, Muslim, Jewish) fundamentalism and the divisions they cause.
5. Climate change/ecological challenges and their impact on traditional income sources, economic sustainability and migration.
6. Ageing populations in wealthy countries contrasted with the young, unemployed populations of less-resourced countries, the latter with few job/income prospects.
7. Increasing fear, insecurity and anxiety among citizens facing influxes of migrants and refugees who are "different"
8. Increased access to technology and social media and its use for good and bad ends
9. Contradictions in democracy that allow the people to govern but that deliver fascist/authoritarian regimes.
10. Rise of authoritarianism globally and the threats to human rights, women's rights, freedom of expression, etc
11. Increased militarisation and threat of nuclear war
12. Decreasing support for the humanities – not just the arts – in many parts of the world, with a shift (funding, education, etc) to the "harder" aspects of social, economic and political life.

What is to be done?

- 1. We need a short, sharp analysis of the current state of the world – particularly defined by inequality (and its key causes) – and an articulation of the relevance of culture (ideas, values, belief systems, traditions, etc) to this state of affairs.**

We need to understand and articulate a position that addresses the importance (negatively/positively) of religious practice and fundamentalism (an integral part of culture) in contemporary political, social and human rights discourse and practices.

We need to interrogate democracy and articulate a position that is nuanced in the context of today's world, affirming the rights of citizens while recognising the deficiencies of democratic practice in recent times.

We need to articulate a position with regard to social media and information technology, its role – negative and positive – in promoting/affirming cultural diversity.

We need to articulate a new/fresh understanding or assertion of fundamental human rights and freedoms, and a vision of social justice globally, regionally and nationally starting with Article 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights “All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood” and Article 28 “Everyone is entitled to a social and international order in which the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration can be fully realised”. If we truly subscribe to these Articles, we would address the issues of inequality within our world.

- 2. In the current shift towards the need/demand for more homogenous national identities, we need to present powerful counternarratives affirming the importance and benefits of diversity and the co-existence of difference.**
- 3. We – the arts and culture sector - need to build alliances with other social sectors and social movements, not only in mobilising the arts and culture sector in support of change-making towards a progressive vision for the world, but to devise and employ creative means of protest and resistance, particularly in public spaces and/or that attract media attention. (20)**

Challenges for the 2005 Convention

1. The signatories to the Convention are member states i.e. governments, many of whom, outside of resourced, democratic regions, do little to create the conditions for the pursuit of the goals of the Convention.
2. The representatives of signatories – culture ministers/arts and culture departments – generally have extremely limited political power in their home countries so that their ability to deliver is constrained.
3. Countries in the Global South who are signatories to the Convention generally have yet to see the benefits of supporting the Convention in practical ways (both governments and particularly Civil Society). Benefits of Convention – IFCD, preferential market access, investment in creative industries of GS – are generally not realised with security measures in the Global North, for example, limiting mobility; IFCD attracts minimal funding, and there is a lack of investment in the creative industries markets of the global south as these are not attractive enough in terms of returns.
4. Civil society operators, creative practitioners – both in the Global South and Global North – simply do not know about the Convention, and they are often act in ways that are consistent with the goals of the Convention without being aware of it. The Convention lacks concrete, practical, day-to-day meaning for creative practitioners.

5. The Convention uses the language of “cultural diversity” which is what is needed today as an affirmation of the diversity of people and communities, and yet, the primary focus of the Convention is as a legal instrument dealing in matters to do with trade in creative goods and services, thereby limiting its relevance to some of the key issues of our times.
6. There is a perception that there is more emphasis is placed on compliance with the Convention (Quadrennial Reports, etc) than with implementing it.
7. Governments need to be pressurised to respect the international Conventions and protocols that they have signed up to, including the 2005 Convention.

What is to be done?

- 1. We need an analysis of the 2005 Convention – its relevance, limitations and possibilities – in the context of a contemporary understanding of global and regional inequalities/state of the world - to each region of the world, synthesised into a holistic document.**

We need to determine the key priorities for action using the Convention as a basic tool of advocacy in each region and globally.

- 2. The Convention needs better branding and communication: e.g. build a three-year campaign towards 2020, marking the 15th anniversary of the Convention.**

We need to inform the arts and culture sector about the Convention and why it is in their interests to use it as a premise for advocacy.

Civil society actors need to be identified in countries that have signed up to the Convention and are to be invited to submit Civil Society reports where it is clear that Civil Society has not been engaged in the formulation of Quadrennial Reports.

We need stories and benchmarks of “good practice” and of how the Convention has helped civil society and/or creative practitioners to convince the arts and culture sector of the relevance of the Convention to their lives.

Campaigning for the Convention to be inclusive of marginalised indigenous and other communities.

- 3. Reinvent INCP (coalition of culture ministers) for advocacy and support purposes.**

Contributions to the International Fund for Cultural Diversity need to be mandatory rather than voluntary.

Broaden/advocate for arts education at all levels of schooling and adult learning.

Greater attention is to be given to south-south cultural cooperation through government-to-government agreements, international funding, civil society networking, etc.

Challenges for the arts and culture sector today

1. There is an absence of coherent, convincing arguments in support of arts and culture. The recent ones employed – the economic impact of the arts, culture and development – have limited the growth of the sector within a market-driven agenda.
2. The agenda for arts and culture is often set by multi-lateral political agencies such as the EU Commission (e.g. culture as a vector of development, culture in foreign relations/cultural diplomacy), seldom with the arts and culture of that region, let alone the arts and culture sector globally – particularly in the Global South – who are directly impacted upon by such agendas, particularly as they shift from time to time.
3. While many international policies are subscribed to by governments theoretically, they are seldom implemented, particularly in the Global South, more characterised by authoritarian or hybrid (with democratic features but essentially authoritarian) regimes that have little regard for Civil Society.
4. There is very limited funding for creative practice and advocacy, particularly in the Global South, thus severely impacting the exercise of freedom of creative expression, the sustainability of advocacy networks and platforms, south-south co-operation and perpetuating dependency on Global North agencies and policy imperatives.
5. There is a negative impact on climate change/ecological destruction by some creative industries.
6. Governments (and multilateral agencies) change, in democracies, every 5 years or so, which often means the arts and culture sector has to start from the beginning to persuade new politicians about the importance of the arts.

What is to be done?

1. **We need a proactive vision/statement regarding culture and the arts in the context of the key challenges facing our world today e.g. the statement that guided the advocacy for culture to be included in the Sustainable Development Goals of the international alliance of cultural organisations. This vision/statement may include the elements of the 2005 Convention and other international policy documents, but go beyond these where necessary. The vision should go beyond the economic dimension of the arts/creative industries and assert/affirm an understanding of the arts that has human, social and economic development dimensions. Advocacy should include the transversal nature of culture across various departments, across the SDGs e.g. its role in confliction prevention and resolution. We should also take into account the changing nature of government and have advocacy networks plan ahead e.g. assume a non-partisan approach and convince all parties of the importance of the sector.**

We need more coherent arguments – backed by evidence where necessary/appropriate – in support of the arts and culture at international, regional, national and local levels.

In a world of challenges, we need to identify current possibilities, shifts in favour of arts and culture and creative practice, and profile and build on these.

Devise cultural impact studies in the same ways as environmental impact studies are done prior to developmental projects being embarked upon.

Cultural policies to include contemporary and traditional arts/cultural practices.

The terms used within the sector are to be better and more consistently defined e.g. cultural economy, creative industries, etc.

The arts and culture sector needs to be more literate in economics to make the case for the arts from an economic perspective, rather than leave the gap for economists and accountants to define the impact, value and public sector support for the arts.

- 2. We need transnational regional and global advocacy/multi-disciplinary networks that are able to engage with each other and policy makers (national, regional, multilateral, international e.g. UNESCO, UN, EU, African Union, Arab League, Mercosur, etc) at source; in particular, we need Global South advocacy networks that are informed, confident and strong enough to engage international policies and strategies from within their conditions and paradigms, and to counter the cultural and policy hegemony of Europe and North America. At the same time, we need to identify progressive allies in the USA and Europe to work with in the pursuit of a global vision/statement for arts and culture in our contemporary world. We need to build a discourse and practice of international solidarity and co-dependency.**

We need to engage not only with national governments, but probably more with local/city governments in asserting the strategic and intrinsic importance of arts and culture practice e.g. Arterial Network's creative cities project

We need to find new ways of building, sustaining and professionalising advocacy networks that are much needed but seldom attract support, particularly within Africa, Asia, the Arab region, Latin America and the Caribbean; such networks need to have regular meetings in their respective regions and feed regional dynamics and perspectives into a global advocacy network.

We need to build greater capacity within the arts and culture sector globally – research, advocacy, financial skills, resource mobilisation, sustainability, policy-making, etc (build curricular and toolkits and provide training)

We need to identify, develop and network a younger generation of cultural activists knowledgeable about the world, the relationship with culture and able and willing to act (e.g. resuscitate U40)

We need to engage not only with national governments, but probably more with local/city governments in asserting the strategic and intrinsic importance of arts and culture practice e.g. Arterial Network's creative cities project

Greater self-regulation and transparency is needed within the sector itself, just as we demand these from government.

Mobilise artists and their support for broader advocacy networks by premising this on the Recommendation on the Status of the Artist that has to do with artists' social status (pensions, medical care, etc), wages, safety and security, training, etc.

The arts and culture sector needs to be more literate in economics to make the case for the arts from an economic perspective, rather than leave the gap for economists and accountants to define the impact, value and public sector support for the arts.

3. We need to find ways of supporting artistic practice and the exercise of freedom of creative expression in contexts where governments do not make this possible through a repressive legal/institutional framework and the absence of resources; we need to recognise the need for parallel tracks in most countries i.e. advocacy and lobbying governments (national, regional and local) on the one hand, and on the other, supporting civil society and independent artistic practice.

We need to build greater capacity within the arts and culture sector globally – research, advocacy, financial skills, resource mobilisation, sustainability, policy-making, etc (build curricular and toolkits and provide training)

Create free/safe spaces for creative practitioners to exercise freedom of creative expression where it may be difficult for them to do so in their own communities, cities, countries.

Mobilise artists and their support for broader advocacy networks by premising this on the Recommendation on the Status of the Artist that has to do with artists' social status (pensions, medical care, etc), wages, safety and security, training, etc.

Use the internet/social media for cultural collaboration, exchange and distribution particularly in areas lacking finance.

Start regional funds (with private sector, foundations, arts sector, etc) to support the arts and culture sector.

The arts and culture sector has to have better information about itself: the gaps, the funding, the priorities, etc.

4. Sustainability

Devise alternative sustainability strategies and develop toolkits and provide training globally around these.

Exploit potential funding for arts and culture from SDGs at national, regional and international levels. (Gender equality, preferential treatment, building capacities, skills development, participatory governance and freedom of expression, etc)

Widen the base of potential support to include the private sector, cities, foundations, and the arts sector/entertainment industry itself

Engage with internet companies – major producers of cultural content and seldom paying significant tax – to provide support.

Advocate for private sector incentives to support/invest in the creative sector.

Form partnerships with existing agencies/institutions e.g. festivals (to co-host advocacy events), universities (to undertake research), etc

5. Greater attention is to be given to south-south cultural cooperation through government-to-government agreements, international funding, civil society networking, etc.

Action and Follow-up

By the end of June, several offers by participants had been received regarding follow-up activities on most of the identified priorities. In order to amplify the voices of civil society actors, particularly from the Global South, and the chosen priorities to be advocated for at the world stage, an Ad Hoc Committee was formed in May 2017 which will see through the follow-up until the 31st December 2017, including liaising with other like-minded initiatives and networks. The statutes in Appendix 2 regulate the committee's composition and mandate, its rules of engagement as well as its initial decisions. In addition to widely distributing an advocacy document including the actions and priorities agreed upon, the committee will be encouraging individuals to explore some key issues directly related to the priorities further advocacy needs. To contact the Ad Hoc Committee, please use this e-mail address: art27m@iafrica.com

Appendix 1: List of participants

Name	Brief bio	Country
Serhan Ada	Associate Professor, Faculty of Art and Cultural Management, University of Bilgi (Istanbul); Board member of the Turkish National Commission for UNESCO	Turkey
Pedro Affonso	Independent consultant and researcher, currently completing a Masters in International Relations and Cultural Diplomacy	Brazil
Abdulla Alkafri	Executive Manager of Ettijahat-Independent Culture, Playwright and cultural activist	Syria, based in Lebanon
Lina Attel	Founder and Director-General of the National Centre for Culture and the Arts of the King Hussein Foundation	Jordan
Ouafa Belgacem	CEO and Co-founder of Culture Funding Watch; evaluation expert for the International Fund for Cultural Diversity	Tunisia
Danielle Cliche (Attending as an observer)	Secretary to the 2005 UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions	Canada, based in France
Aadel Essaadani	Head of Racines, a cultural NGO engaged with cultural policy, capacity-building in the creative sector and cultural events	Morocco
Ben Garner	Senior lecturer, University of Portsmouth (UK) and author of <i>The Politics of Cultural Development: Trade, Cultural Policy and the UNESCO Convention on Cultural Diversity</i>	United Kingdom
Arundhati Ghosh	Executive Director of the India Foundation for the Arts	India
Friederike Kamm	German National Commission for UNESCO	Germany
Ghita Khaldi	Chairperson of Afrikayna which promotes cultural exchange and a Steering Committee member of Arterial Network.	Morocco
Olga Kononykhina	Quantitative sociologist and data scientist, Hertie School of Governance	Russia, based in Germany
Haili Ma	Senior Lecturer in Chinese Studies, Cardiff University and author of <i>Urban Politics and Cultural Capital</i>	China, based in Wales
Ayoko Mensah	FrancoTologese journalist and consultant to the Africa Desk of the Centre for Fine Arts in Brussels and UNESCO's Creative Cities Network	Togo, based in Belgium
Christine M. Merkel	Head of the Division for Culture, Communication, Memory of the World at the German Commission for UNESCO	Germany
Keith Nurse	Senior Fellow at the Sir Arthur Lewis Institute for Social and Economic Studies and the World Trade Organisation Chair at the University of the West Indies	Barbados
Justin O'Connor	Professor of Cultural Economy in the School of Media, Film and Journalism, Monash University	UK, based in Australia
Phloeun Prim	Executive Director of Cambodian Living Arts	Cambodia
Fernando Resende	Senior Lecturer in the Department of Media and Cultural Studies, University of Fluminense, Rio de Janeiro	Brazil
Anupama Sekhar	Director of the Culture Department, Asia-Europe Foundation	India, based in Singapore
Odila Triebel	Head of Dialogue and Research, Culture and Foreign Policy, Institute for International Relations	Germany
Mike van Graan	Richard von Weizsaeker Fellow, Robert Bosch Academy	South Africa
Dea Vidovic	Director of the Kultura Nova Foundation	Croatia
Ayeta Wangusa	Executive Director of Culture and Development East Africa and the Regional Coordinator of the International Federation of Arts Councils and Culture Agencies (IFACCA)	Tanzania
Kai Brennert	Project Manager, Cambodian Living Arts (Rapporteur)	Germany
Laura Stroempel	Project Manager, Robert Bosch Foundation (Logistics)	Germany

Appendix 2: Ad Hoc Committee Statutes

Composition

The ad hoc committee set up at the Seminar comprises Lina Attel, Ouafa Belgacem, Ayoko Mensah, Christine Merkel, Ayeta Wangusa and Mike van Graan. Mike and Christine - representing the co-convenors of the Seminar - will serve as a secretariat for the Ad Hoc Committee.

Danielle Cliche, so as not to compromise her independence and Pedro Affonso (who has offered to be part of it) will play observer roles (i.e. participate fully, but if there is a need to vote, this will be limited to the Ad Hoc Committee members).

Mandate

To clarify its purpose, the Ad Hoc Committee has agreed to the following:

- a. To follow up on the agreed action items, the priorities in particular, to ensure that they are pursued and/or allocated to relevant stakeholders in the arts, culture and heritage sector
- b. Should remunerated work arise in relation to the tasks at hand, to agree on and oversee a transparent process of the allocation of such tasks
- c. Should a need arise for representation in forums dealing with issues related to the Seminar or items that arise from the seminar, to agree on who should represent the Seminar participants
- d. To provide regular (at least monthly) reports on the pursuit and fulfilment of these tasks, and related developments to the Seminar participants

The mandate of this Ad Hoc Committee ceases **on 31 December 2017**, or before, should a broader, more effective mechanism come into place to pursue these items, and by agreement of the majority of the Ad Hoc Committee members.

Rules of Engagement

In order to expedite its work, the Ad Hoc Committee agreed to the following operational terms:

1. Committee members are to agree to/disagree with recommendations/proposals within 48 hours (excluding weekends and public holidays), or it would be assumed that members agree with the recommendations/proposals.
2. When four of the seven members indicate agreement with a proposal/recommendation, that proposal/recommendation is carried.

Decisions agreed to by the Committee

1. That the document, *Ahead of the Curve: Actions and Priorities* including the list of attendees, is an open/public document and may be distributed broadly.
2. That the document, *Ahead of the Curve: Actions and Priorities* be distributed to members of the 2005 UNESCO Convention Expert facility and the NGO forum attendees (12 June in Paris) – the latter, via Anupama Sekhar, and that this document

may be uploaded on the websites of the German National Commission of UNESCO and the Robert Bosch Foundation.

3. That the groupings of the tasks in the document *Ahead of the Curve Actions and Priorities: Calls for Expressions of Interest* – while not perfect, is a useful enough beginning to ensure that as many as possible of the tasks get done
 - 3.1 That attendees at the Seminar be given preference when inviting expressions of interest to work on – either individually or in consortiums with others – the grouped tasks, with preference given on the basis of proven and extended expertise in the relevant matter/s (Note: these tasks are to be worked on pro bono)
 - 3.2 That the Ad Hoc Committee proactively approaches various attendees to consider working on these items (committee members are welcome to express such interests too)
 - 3.3 That UNESCO be approached for funding to assist with some of the tasks
 - 3.4 That 2 June be set as a deadline for the submission of expressions of interest for the tasks i.e. not to do the work by then, but to indicate a willingness to do the work, with the Ad Hoc Committee then agreeing on who should do it and enter into an agreement with the selected applicant regarding a brief and a time framework.
 - 3.5 That where there are no expressions of interest for any tasks, members of the 2005 UNESCO Expert Facility be given second preference, followed by members of the NGO Forum meeting on 12 June
4. That an update/newsletter of any progress made by/on 21 June, one month after the Seminar - and three working days after the CoP week - and that this be distributed to seminar attendees, members of the 2005 UNESCO Convention Expert Facility and attendees at the 12 June NGO forum