



UK Coalition for Cultural Diversity

59 Oakfields Road
London N4 4LD

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Mr John Munro
Campaigns Manager
National Campaign for the Arts
1 Kingly Street
London W1B 5PA

Dear Mr John Munro

In response to your request for contributions to the Arts Manifesto for the next General Election we would like to make the following observations.

Firstly we would like to commend the National Campaign for the Arts on this initiative and the strength of a well-drafted document. The UK Coalition for Cultural Diversity (UKCCD) will be happy to sign up and support this document, as we strongly believe that there is a need to continue championing the value of arts and culture across social and political agendas to ensure that it becomes and remains a top government priority.

As a general point we are also concerned that the Manifesto includes reference to the 2005 UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions. This is a powerful, international instrument for everyone active in culture and the arts, effectively giving agendas of cultural value and creative works equivalent status to economic, environmental and social agendas for development. Article 10 of the Convention stresses that governments must recognise "the fundamental role of civil society in protecting and promoting the diversity of cultural expressions" (ie seek to facilitate a role for civil society organisations). The UK Government signed up to it in March 2008 and in 4 years time must account for what action they have taken to promote the Convention's objectives.

The convention underpins:

1. The right of governments to develop cultural policy in defence of their culture and cultural services
2. The vital role of cultural interaction and creativity, which nurture and renew cultural expressions and enhance the role played by

those involved in the development of culture for the progression of society at large

3. That cultural activities, goods and services have both an economic and a cultural nature, because they convey identities, values and meanings, and must therefore not be treated as solely having commercial value
4. That all signatories should prioritise exchange and cooperation with the countries of the developing world

In particular and with regard to the objectives of the Convention, we would observe the following:

P5 It is important to stress that the strength of the creative economy does not necessarily lead to greater diversity of cultural expression or access to it. In this regard the provisions of the Convention are critical

P6 para 1 & 4 In stressing the importance of the arts in “creating common bonds through shared experiences or shared values”, and later in stressing arts as a “mechanism for combating poverty and ignorance”, the Manifesto could reference the Convention’s overall objectives and in particular provisions to facilitate greater international cooperation as expressed in Articles 14 & 16

P8 para 3 - stresses the importance of government to ‘take a lead in demonstrating to the public that the arts are of value and play an integral part in every aspect of our national life’. This point would again be strengthened by reference to the Convention and in particular to the premium it gives to developing strong cultural policy.

Additionally, whilst documents such as the DCMS Creative Britain 2008 indicate the government’s awareness of the importance of the creative industries (arts/creative works) the government does not show leadership in recognising the role it might play in supporting the arts of other countries whether by example (eg BBC, theatre for education, media literacy charter etc) or by supporting targeted international development projects using the arts. This is especially important given the links of all our diverse, diaspora communities.

The UKCCD believes that the UNESCO Convention compliments the NCA Manifesto and provides strong international support for nurturing home grown talent and investment in the creative potential of nations. For your reference we have attached a copy of the Convention and hope that the NCA will recognise the value in promoting it and using it as support in the Manifesto.

P8 para 5 Further to the Manifesto’s point regarding the media and television talent programmes, we would like to suggest the importance of recommending that all those who are benefiting from access to the UK audience and/or recycling content without engaging in production, such as

subscription channels including BskyB, Virgin Media, ISPs, should be asked to invest in our creative economy.

We thank you for your consideration and will be happy to answer any further questions you may have.

Kind regards,

Carole Tongue, Chair UKCCD
Holly Aylett, Director UKCCD