



UK Coalition for Cultural Diversity

www.ukccd.org

BACKGROUND: THE UNESCO CONVENTION ON THE DIVERSITY OF CULTURAL EXPRESSIONS, 2005

Up until now, culture has been regarded as a marginal domain of policy and development but this Convention signals international recognition that culture should be the 4th pillar of development, alongside economic prosperity, social inclusion and environmental balance. It will have implications at international, regional, national and local levels. It advocates strong cultural policy for the arts and creative industries- including books, film, music, dance, the performing arts, television and the visual arts – to promote and sustain diversity of cultural expressions.

The progress of the Convention has been remarkable. The Convention was passed in October 2005 at UNESCO's 32nd Conference. It came into force March 18th 2007. Only USA and Israel voted against its endorsement. There are now 121 signatory states, and one region, Europe. The aim is to achieve a minimum of 150 state signatories, approximating the strength of other international agreements such as the Kyoto Treaty. Representation in the Arab World and in the Asia/South Pacific regions remains imbalanced, but with the accession of Australia and the latest ratification, Indonesia, most of the larger countries in the Asia/South Pacific region are now represented.

While other UNESCO treaties deal with culture, this one specifically addresses creative works, and particularly those transformed by the digital technologies. It safeguards the right of states to develop a national policy for culture. It recognises that creative works have both a cultural and an economic value and that they are important vectors of identity and meaning. Significantly, it is a Right & Obligation on all signatories to promote greater cultural cooperation and north-south, south-south exchange in support of the developing world, in recognition of the importance of creative industries for development agendas.

The Convention grew out of increasing concern in the 1990s by grassroots organisations, ministers of culture and parliamentarians that the diversity of cultural expressions was threatened by the globalisation of trade and services, and the internationalisation of the policy process in fields as diverse as finance, the environment, human rights, health and culture.

The Convention recognizes that creative works cannot be considered like any other merchandise being important vectors of meaning and identity, and that sovereign states must have the right to devise policy to support the diversity of their own cultural expressions. In the audiovisual sector, for example, this might be through continued support for public service broadcasting, quotas and/or production and distribution

subsidy. Likewise trade agreements with other countries should be considered in terms of their impact on diversity of cultural expressions.

The Convention is a legal instrument and has parity with other international treaties and should therefore be taken into consideration by other directives such as those of the World Trade Organisation governing the economy, or the directives of the Kyoto Treaty governing the environment.

The Convention is administered by an Intergovernmental Committee with 24 representatives, which meets once a year. Membership of the committee is rotated and its secretariat is based at UNESCO's Head Office in Paris. Operational guidelines for some articles are still being prepared by the Intergovernmental Committee, and the strength of the Convention in case of conflict of interest with other treaties has yet to be tested.

Article 11 of the Convention calls for affirmative action to involve civil society in implementing the Convention and civil society organizations have been formally invited to observe and feedback. The Convention has been supported from the beginning by national coalitions, grassroots organizations variously composed of professional creators' organisations, non-governmental organisations and other institutions with a cultural brief. In September 2007 the coalitions set up The International Federation of Coalitions, (IFCCD), to motivate the implementation of the Conventions' aims, to feed back to the Intergovernmental Committee, and to act as a consultative partner with unique expertise in the cultural sectors of civil society. The UKCCD is a founding member and regularly contributes to these representations.

The UK Government's signed up to the Convention in December 2007 and is now due to submit its quadrennial audit on actions taken to advance its objectives. At European level the Convention has had a significant impact on the frameworks for trade negotiations and led to the negotiation of cultural protocols, and the mainstreaming of the Convention into Creative Europe and other European initiatives. It has also served to strengthen awareness of the role of culture in development agendas, as seen in the inclusion of culture as an important consideration in achieving the Millennium Development Goals. In Britain, the UK National Commission for UNESCO included the promotion of the Convention in its priorities for action, and continues to brief the Coalition Government on its agendas. The Commonwealth Foundation is also actively supporting the Convention since the Heads of Government Meetings since 2007 have urged ratification by all Commonwealth States.

The UKCCD is playing the leading role for civil society in this country. Working with a range of partners, it has run a series of cross-sectoral conferences to promote awareness of the Convention, and to mobilize stakeholders to implement its objectives. The conference held in association with the Global Policy Institute and the Commonwealth Foundation, *International Development and Diversity of Cultural Expression*, has provided a platform for ongoing debate as to how to centralize the agendas of the Convention in UK development policy, and the objectives from the 2008 Conference will be revisited in a major conference planned for autumn 2012.

<http://ukccd.files.wordpress.com/2011/12/international-development-and-the-diversity-of-cultural-expressions-06-111.pdf>

KEY ARTICLES OF CONVENTION:

Article 9 – Information sharing and Transparency Signatories have to report 4 years after ratification on measures taken, laws in place etc, nationally and internationally

Article 11 recognises the role played by civil society and calls for measures to facilitate input.

There are now 46 coalitions in the International Federation of Cultural Coalitions (IFCCD) which has observer status, and plays the leading role in representing civil society and non governmental organisations at sessions of the Intergovernmental Committee. This country is represented through the UK Coalition for Cultural Diversity, (UKCCD), of which I am founding director.

Articles 12-17 provide for increased dialogue with the developing world, and policy frameworks for cooperation and collaboration.

Article 13 provides for integration of culture in sustainable development

Article 18 provides for the International Cultural Fund

This is a voluntary contribution with a recommended contribution of 1% of dues payable to Unesco. (Canada went in at 5% (\$500,000) which would be a better benchmark.) It is now operative and 4 experts will assess projects submitted through the national commissions.

Article 20 & 21 – Govern relationship to other instruments and promotion of Convention objectives in other international treaties

KEY DATES:

Oct 20 2005	UNESCO Convention adopted at UNESCO's 33 rd General Conference
March 18 2007	Convention entered into force
June 18-20 2007	1 st Conference of State Parties to Convention
Sept 18 2007	Founding Congress International Federation of Coalitions, IFCCD
Sept 2007	UNESCO Experts' Group Meeting on Statistical Measures of Diversity of Cultural Expressions, Montreal
Oct 2007	UNESCO General Conference, Paris
Dec 2007	First Intergovernmental Committee Meeting, Ottawa
June 2008	Extraordinary session of Intergovernmental Committee, Paris
Dec 2008	2 nd Intergovernmental Committee Meeting, Paris
June 2009	2 nd Conference of State Parties to Convention
June 2009	U-40 World Forum organized by German Commission for UNESCO, and IFCCD
Dec 2009	3 rd Intergovernmental Committee Meeting, Paris
June 2011	3 rd Conference of State Parties to Convention

RELATED DOCUMENTS:

- **UNESCO - Diversity of Cultural Expressions**

Home Page:

<http://www.unesco.org/new/en/culture/themes/cultural-diversity/2005-convention>

Signatories:

<http://www.unesco.org/eri/la/convention.asp?KO=31038&language=E>

- **Mapping Cultural Diversity**

Publication by the German Commission for UNESCO on the Implementation of UNESCO Convention

<http://culture360.org/wp-content/blogs.dir/1/files/Mapping-Cultural-Diversity-DUK-ASEF-Nov-2010.pdf>

- **UNCTAD's Creative Economy Report, 2010**

- This is a succinct statement of the value of the creative industries to development and the most comprehensive assembly of available statistics, following on from the first report in 2008. Trade is used as the basis for comparisons between countries although it is recognized that figures do not accurately take into account digital transactions.

- http://www.unctad.org/en/docs/ditctab20103_en.pdf

- 2008 Report

- http://www.unctad.org/en/docs/ditc20082cer_en.pdf

- **Proposals For Cultural Diversity 2030 (U-40 World Forum)**

- These proposals were collaboratively developed by 50 young professionals on culture from 34 countries, each active members of civil society during the U40-World Forum (12-14 June 2009). These proposals are addressed to delegates from State Parties and Observers to the 2nd Conference of Parties (June 2009) to the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (2005).

- http://www.unesco.de/fileadmin/medien/Dokumente/Kultur/EN_Proposal_U40_FINAL.pdf