

UNESCO: Cultural Policies for Development

1. *We are commemorating ten years of the Forum of Ministers of Culture and Officials Responsible for Cultural Policy of Latin America and the Caribbean. During this decade, this annual gathering has shown to be crucial in our efforts towards regional integration. Now, we are in a turning point. It is time to evaluate and reformulate the Forum objectives and strategies and devise new ways to implement them. The recent Intergovernmental Conference on Cultural Policies for Development (Stockholm, 30 March - 2 April 1998) organized by UNESCO and hosted by the Swedish government, provides us with the right elements to do so.*
2. *Most countries of the region were represented at Stockholm at the highest level and participated very actively in the negotiation and endorsement of the Conference Action Plan. As you are aware, this major Conference was held as part of the follow-up to the work of the World Commission on Culture and Development. The Commission's report, Our Creative Diversity, was a major step forward in affirming the fundamental role of culture in development: it built innovatively upon the foundations laid by the World Conference on Cultural Policies (MONDIACULT) organized by UNESCO at Mexico City in 1982 and during the World Decade for Cultural Development (1988-97). Among the points most strongly stressed by the World Commission was the need to rethink the objectives and functions of cultural policies in response to new and rapidly evolving challenges. The chapter in its report entitled Rethinking cultural policies' was the direct inspiration for the holding of the Stockholm Conference.*
3. *The Action Plan adopted by the Conference marked the commencement of a key new phase in the work that UNESCO has undertaken since the 1970s. It affirmed that "cultural policy is one of the main components of endogenous*

and sustainable development policy and thus should be implemented in coordination with policy in other social areas, on the basis of an integrated approach". The Action Plan also stressed the necessity of formulating policies which are anticipatory and respond to current problems as well as new needs given the rapid processes of socio-economic, technological and cultural change.

4. The Action Plan highlighted the need for research in the field of cultural policies. It recommended that networks for research be established in order to analyze the complex interface between culture and development. Such research should also be policy oriented so as to enable governments to incorporate cultural development in their policies. Research should focus in particular on the development of fiscal frameworks in order to promote financial support for cultural activities and on the elaboration of a coherent framework to enable the implementation of cultural policies in a cross-sectoral manner.

5. In this regard, Stockholm validated the importance of continuing to publish the World Culture Report and strongly emphasized the need to expand research on culture and development, especially using statistical techniques, and exploring the potential for creating new forms of interactivity in research through the new information technologies. The first issue of the World Culture Report, just published in English and French, and soon in Spanish, has attempted to build up the knowledge landscapes in the field of culture and development, and to provide updates on the rapidly advancing debates that were given momentum by Our Creative Diversity. Work on the report was carried out by internationally recognized and independent scientific and artistic experts from all areas of the world. One hundred and thirty pages of statistical data related to culture explicitly show the gaps in information and in categorization of data which future editions of the report will endeavor to fill, on the basis of questionnaires sent to Member States.

6. Reaffirming the importance of "empowering all people and communities to harness their creativity and to consolidate and forge ways of living together with others" so as to facilitate "genuine human development and the transition to a culture of peace and non-violence", the Action Plan recommended five principal policy objectives to Member States, namely:

- cultural policies should be made one of the key components of development strategy.*
- creativity and participation should be promoted in cultural life.*
- policy and practice should be reinforced so as to safeguard and enhance the tangible and intangible, moveable and immovable cultural heritage and to promote cultural industries.*
- cultural and linguistic diversity in and for the information society should be promoted.*
- more human and financial resources should be made available for cultural development.*

7. Both the Conference and the subsequent launching of significant initiatives in culture and development by governments and international organizations, including the World Bank and the Interamerican Development Bank, have also confirmed that it is essential for UNESCO to reinforce its efforts in the domain of cultural policies for development in order to realise the recommendations of the Stockholm Action Plan.

8. UNESCO's own approach may serve as a source of inspiration for this Forum of Ministers. Because, ladies and gentlemen, the world has woken up to the importance of culture. Culture has become at the end of the 90s a "hot" issue world wide. The process initiated ten years ago by UNESCO of reopening the debate on culture and development has yield its results.

Increasingly, there are many voices calling for the mobilization of a holistic treatment of culture, both instrumental and constitutive. Now the time of advocacy is over: We need to go from the theory to the practice, as many other bodies, networks and institutions are doing.

10. It is within this spirit that Ms Sheila Copps, Minister of Canadian Heritage organized the International Meeting on Cultural Policy - Putting Culture on the World Stage' (Ottawa on 29 and 30 June) This meeting, directly inspired by the outcomes of the Stockholm Conference, brought together ministers of culture and senior officials from 20 other countries in all world regions with a view to exploring ways of working together to address three key issues which had been at the forefront of the debate in Stockholm: cultural diversity and development; the role of culture in global relations; and culture and trade. In parallel, the Canadian authorities also supported the holding of an international NGO forum on culture and international co-operation which brought together delegates from over 30 countries. Having discussed various issues and initiatives, the ministerial round table agreed to constitute an informal network committed to putting culture on the international policy agenda and to meet again in Mexico City (1999) and Greece (2000). UNESCO is currently articulating constructive ways to support such a worthy initiative.

11. Another example of this kind of initiatives is the meeting of Latin American and Caribbean Ministers of Culture hosted by the Brazilian Government (Rio de Janeiro, 3-5 September 98), to discuss front edge issues on culture and development in the region. Sponsored by the Interamerican Development Bank and UNESCO, the meeting explored the role of culture in the consolidation of national identities, the development of civil rights and citizenship, as well as its role in national economic and social development.

12. In organizing a major international meeting entitled "Culture and Development at the Millenium: The Challenges and the Response", (Washington 28-29 September 1998) an economic driven institution such as the World Bank is also showing that they share the view that culture needs to be included into development. As its President James Wolfenson said in his opening speech, "The World Bank believes that respect for the culture and identity of peoples is an important element in any viable approach to people-centered development... you cannot have development without a recognition of culture and of history. In a world that is becoming increasingly globalized, in a world where there are pressures for a culture homogeneity across all our countries, what is abundantly clear is that it is essential for us to nurture, to prize, to revere and to support the culture and the history of the countries in which we operate. Very simply, we do not believe that you can move forward unless you have a recognition of the base and the past from which we have come". It is in this framework that a renewed Bank "Culture and Development" strategy is being prepared, including eventually a new line of Bank loans.

13. It is also in this framework that the Interamerican Bank of Development is also opening new horizons and providing new responses to the growing demand of taking culture closer to the heart of the development agenda and unlock its economic, social and political potential. By organizing jointly with UNESCO a Forum on Culture and Development (Paris, 11-12 March 99) as one of the main side events of the next Bank's Governors Assembly, the Bank is demonstrating its commitment to culture as an investment.

14. To get back to UNESCO's own process, expectations are high, as many Member States wish to think through new cultural policy frameworks. The Organization itself will need to devise a dynamic strategy of influence'

so as to persuade governments that culture must be put at the centre of their policy agendas by marshalling the evidence that this requires and demonstrating the shifts of mindset that will be needed.

15. As iterated by the Action Plan, the design and implementation of such a strategy must be based on a coherent and multi-disciplinary approach so that the Organisation may be an ever more effective strategic advocate of the importance of culture and its linkages to key areas of decision-making for development. To this end, UNESCO must vigorously mobilize the energies and commitment of many different actors, principally governments and be the key multilateral forum in which the international agenda in this area is debated and co-ordination of regional and international co-operation carried out. This is a very complex process and will naturally be a long-term process through which understanding of the crucial importance of culture is imparted not only to legislators, political leaders and senior officials, but also to the partners of governments in all sectors of society, as well as to young people throughout the world. UNESCO must aim to bring about an important change in attitudes and methods, at a time of deep and rapid change in all societies as well as in the domain of culture itself.

16. As the Director-General pointed out in the document he submitted to the 155th session of UNESCO's Executive Board (document 155 EX/14), "as interest in cultural policies grows worldwide, and not just in governmental circles, UNESCO needs to become once again the key multilateral forum in which the international agenda in this area is debated and co-ordination of regional and international co-operation carried out". This Forum of Ministers of Culture and Officials Responsible for Cultural Policy of Latin America and the Caribbean, can certainly contribute and be an important part of this process.

17. In decisions it adopted at its recent 155th session the Executive Board underlined that "while UNESCO's efforts over several decades have led to a widely shared awareness of the central place of culture in policy-making, the Organization must consolidate its international leadership role in this area." The Board decided that "the Draft Programme and Budget for 2000-2001 (30 C/5) should include a strategy to implement the Action Plan adopted at the Intergovernmental Conference on Cultural Policies for Development."

16. Under the light of the Executive Board recommendations, and inspired by the Stockholm Action Plan, this follow-up strategy is in the process of being designed. It aims at forging new tools, innovative approaches and alternative alliances simultaneously at the local, national, regional and international levels, so that UNESCO can serve as the worldwide reference point and agenda setter in terms of cultural policy. It should foster the conditions and capacities needed within countries for the formulation and implementation of policies that respond to the challenges of globalisation. Thus, in keeping with the recommendations of the Action Plan, the activities which are envisaged are:

- generation of policy-relevant information for different levels of the government, research bodies, cultural activists, NGOs ;*
- the analysis and sharing of that information, through a clearing house/observatory function, in particular with regard to best practice' in this domain;*
- the provision, of policy advisory services to Member States;*
- the reinforcement of efforts begun during the World Decade for Cultural Development with a view to integrating a cultural approach to the planning and monitoring of development programmes and projects in various sectors;*

- the promotion of training in cultural administration and management, including the creation of a South-South Network to this end.

As the above-mentioned activities will be elaborated in the light of needs and priorities expressed by Member States, governments will naturally be consulted by the Director-General.

18. The Stockholm Conference also reinforced the Director-General's conviction that UNESCO must step up its efforts to take the culture and development' message to other agencies in the UN system and, to the United Nations itself, to ensure that culture is given its rightful place in the next International Development Strategy. Hence the Stockholm Action Plan was presented recently to the fifty-third session of the General Assembly as the first step in a system-wide campaign of persuasion.

19. While culture is clearly on the ascendant in public awareness, it remains low priority politics in most countries, as is often reflected both in the level of resources it is accorded and in the status of the ministries and civil servants who deal with it. When culture has gained visibility, all too often this is because it is perceived merely as an instrument of economic growth, rather than as constitutive of human development, that is, as a key factor of empowerment and confidence building. When both the instrumental and the constitutive roles of culture are properly understood, then it no longer can appear merely as a soft' option with regard to development but as a hard' set of variables closely linked to overall social and economic well-being. However, this requires that the roles of the state, private sector and civil society are recast with regard to cultural matters in a globalized world. There are new risks, new uncertainties and new struggles: in face of these, cultural policies do not need to be dismantled, they need to be reconceived. This is, indeed, the very challenge of this tenth Forum and all those responsables of promoting culture up to the status of the best tool and mean for human development.