



# Building Cultural Diversity Globally

## **Civil Society and the UNESCO Convention**

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## **International Network for Cultural Diversity**

- 460 cultural NGOs and artists, academics and activists from 77 countries working to counter the adverse affects of economic globalization on world cultures
- INCD believes diverse cultures and artistic expressions can and must thrive in a world of global marketplaces, economic integration and changing technologies
- [www.incd.net](http://www.incd.net)

# Defining Culture and Diversity

- Three aspects of a nation's culture:
  - 1) lifestyle, food, clothing, daily social rituals
  - 2) shared historical experiences, values, language
  - 3) intellectual output: arts, television, music, films, writing, publishing, architecture, scholarship
- Promoting cultural diversity is:
  - 1) working for flourishing of local artists, cultural producers and for more balanced exchanges between cultures
  - 2) working against homogenization of 3<sup>rd</sup> aspect



# Defining Civil Society

- “Civil society” groups share interests, purposes and values, and are distinct from the state, family and the market – non-governmental organizations
- “Cultural expressions” refers to work of artists, creators, cultural producers, distributors in every medium from traditional crafts, music, stories and dance, to publishing, film, television and new media
- “Cultural sector” is a continuum of activities covering the creation, production, distribution, exhibition and preservation of cultural expressions



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# Civil Society and the Convention

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- Building support for the idea
- Development of the text
- Elaborating the operational guidelines
- Implementation
- Promoting diversity of cultural expressions



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# Advocacy of the concept

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- Collaboration between key governments and civil society groups resulted in the Convention being negotiated, ratified and implemented in record time
- Convention idea arises in Canada in 1999: INCD adopts principle in 2001 and releases draft in 2002: International Network on Cultural Policy takes idea to UNESCO in 2003
- INCD and Coalitions for Cultural Diversity work around the world to build support – engage other NGOs, activists and governments in every region



# Developing the text

- UNESCO agrees to develop Convention in 2003
- Civil society groups work with Experts' Committee and participate actively in negotiation process
- Article 11 – unique in UNESCO and among all international instruments – Parties “acknowledge the fundamental role of civil society” and “shall encourage active participation” – applies at national and international levels
- Disappointment in lack of balance between rights and obligations – use of words “may” and “shall endeavour to”



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# Elaborating operational guidelines

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- Civil society continues to promote ratifications
- With strength of Art. 11 relationship between civil society and States Parties should set new standards for partnership and exceed UN best practices
- Civil society engaged in Intergovernmental Committee process but often marginalized
- Lost opportunities

# Implementation

The rights of civil society in Convention process **should be:**

- To attend meetings
- To propose agenda items
- To speak before decisions are taken on each topic
- To submit written statements through the secretariat
- To have voice and vote in working committees
- International Fund for Cultural Diversity: If civil society has decision-making role and opportunity to apply directly for grants, it can assist in raising resources for the Fund



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# Promoting Cultural Diversity

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- Civil society includes the artists and cultural producers who create the cultural content
- Governments can help, but aside from public institutions involved in the cultural continuum, they can only facilitate cultural diversity
- Thus, civil society is fundamental to the protection and promotion of cultural diversity



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# Convention is a Political Tool

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- Convention is not a trade agreement
- But it is a powerful political tool to be used by civil society, nationally and globally
- Art. 6 provides model cultural policies – NGOs should work for implementation nationally
- Benchmarks for international cooperation
- Opportunities of Art. 16 – use of mandatory words “shall facilitate”



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# What we want governments to do

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- Substantive programs – e.g. Cultural Passport, Fair Trade cultural products, preferential market access for developing countries' cultural goods/service
- Make connections to ensure threatened languages and cultures, including those of indigenous peoples, receive special attention
- Reinforce provisions in bilateral relationships
- Pressure on other multilateral institutions (WTO)