



The Tracker

CULTURE & PUBLIC POLICY



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This monthly Tracker is produced by UNESCO to monitor culture in public policy with regards to the UN Sustainable Development Agenda. It highlights developments within national and regional contexts, as well as emerging debates on culture's contribution to sustainable development. Drawing on a variety of sources, it provides a broad overview of cultural policy trends worldwide at the national, regional and international level and looks at ways in which countries integrate culture into other policy areas.

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Massimiliano De Giorgi - G20/PCM
Italian Ministry of Culture and G20 Italy

AT A GLANCE

This month's Tracker carries a special report on the **Meeting of G20 Ministers of Culture** and their landmark declaration strongly affirming the vital role of culture across the public policy spectrum. The report explores the five main priorities seized by the Ministers of Culture of the world's largest economies for revitalizing global economic and social policy.

The **Cutting Edge** section delves into how cultural diversity represents the deepest reservoir for creativity and innovation - and, therefore, for sustainable development - as the world faces great societal and environmental challenges. Exploring the history of development policies and the inclusion of culture, it also offers insights as to how to harness this diversity for more resilient societies.

Cultural Policy Highlights contains the latest cultural policy innovations from around the world, whilst the **Regional Perspectives** section includes updates on regional processes. **Find Out More** offers the latest news from UNESCO.



SPECIAL REPORT Culture makes its way onto the G20 Agenda



“Include culture and cultural heritage in national and international post-pandemic recovery strategies**”**

- Extract of the Declaration of the G20 Ministers of Culture

The G20 countries represent...



Population
60%
of the world population



Economy
80%
of global GDP



Trade
75%
of global exports



CULTURAL POLICY HIGHLIGHTS

This section showcases a selection of the latest developments in cultural public policy from UNESCO Member States. Whilst reactive measures to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the cultural sector are expected to largely guide cultural public policies throughout 2021, there are positive signs that countries and cities are transitioning from recovery measures to longer term strategies to build resilience in their cultural sectors.

The Sport, Arts and Culture Ministry of **South Africa** has announced the establishment of the Steering Committee for the development of the National Khoi and San Heritage Route that aims to acknowledge the “neglected and marginalised chapters of South African history”. The route will include heritage sites, and various other projects related to intangible heritage, indigenous knowledge systems, language and culture.



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Sven Hansche/Shutterstock.com*



The Ministry of Culture and Sports of **Qatar** has opened registration for the Challenge and Innovation Forum that will be organized in November under the slogan “With The Mind, We Untie The Knots.” The Forum will bring together young innovators and inventors from around the world in Doha, which is the Arab Region’s 2021 Capital of Islamic Culture, being held under the theme “Our Culture is Light”.

The Ministry of Culture of the **Republic of Tajikistan** is launching archaeological excavations at historical monuments to extend research and prepare an archaeological map of cities and regions, in collaboration with the Academy of Sciences of Tajikistan and the Tajik National Museum.



The Ministry of Culture, Sport and Youth of **Georgia** has announced grants for Georgian-based theatre companies and cultural collectives to bring performances and initiatives to the country’s regions. The grants aim to improve access to culture in remote regions, as well as stimulate new forms of cultural expressions in theatres.



In **Argentina**, the Ministry of Culture and the National Bank of Argentina have launched the First Consultative Council of the country’s cultural industries, which aims to create a platform for the economic growth of small and medium enterprises, generate new instruments to access financing and promote job creation in the sector.

Ryan Ancill/Unsplash.com

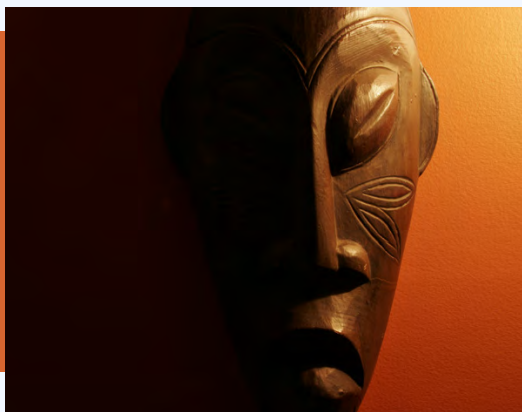


Panoramic view of the historic city of Avila, Spain, with its famous medieval walls surrounding the city. UNESCO World Heritage Site. agsaz/Shutterstock.com*



The government of **Spain** has officially received the draft bill from the Ministry of Culture and Sports to update national laws pertaining to Historical Heritage and Intangible Cultural Heritage. The draft bill aims to update the definition of Spanish historical heritage, specify the conditions for the export of cultural goods, expand the notion of intangible cultural heritage, and strengthen the protection of heritage.

The **Australia** Council for the Arts has released a report uncovering the "deep ramifications" of how digital technology is affecting how we engage with the arts and what this means for the cultural sector, particularly creating sustainable business models and ensuring access to culture for certain populations.



The National Commission for Museums and Monuments of **Nigeria** has announced that the German, Nigerian and British governments have agreed to build a museum in Edo State to house all returned Benin Bronzes. The Benin Bronzes are a group of more than a thousand metal plaques and sculptures that decorated the Royal Palace of the Kingdom of Benin.

pascalgenest/Getty Images Signature from Canva.com*

The Ministry of Culture and Youth of the **United Arab Emirates** has launched the "Monitoring the Pulse of the Cultural and Creative Industries - Resilience and Recovery," report, which assesses the impact of the COVID-19 lockdown and the creative sector's response to the Ministry's support measures. It shows that the sector has already begun to recover but at varying rates depending on the sub-sector.

The Secretariat of Culture of **Mexico** has reported that the reconstruction of the country's cultural heritage following the 2017 earthquakes is over halfway completed. The General Directorate of Cultural Heritage Sites and Monuments and the National Institute of Anthropology and History are tasked with the restoration of the 3,061 properties affected by the disaster, in collaboration with local communities.



CULTURAL POLICY HIGHLIGHTS

The Ministry of Culture and Arts of **Algeria** has announced a fund to support public or private specialized institutions or cultural associations for projects to modernise national museums, to maintain or restore cultural property or for awareness-raising activities that promote civic awareness and the culture of protecting and preserving cultural heritage.



View of Notre Dame d'Afrique, Roman Catholic basilica in Algiers, Algeria
Leonid Andronov/Shutterstock.com*

The Sustainable Tourism Management Plan for **Comoros** is close to completion, following a training workshop for its finalisation. Supported by UNESCO and the Netherlands, the plan aims to develop sustainable tourism for the Comorian cultural sector and implementation strategy, and to implement training activities for local guides in the Historical Sultanate of the Comoros.



The National Museum of the **Solomon Islands** has joined the Pacific Virtual Museum project with other Pacific Islands Museums. Funded by the Department of Foreign Affairs of Australia, the Pacific Virtual Museum is a two years' pilot project that showcases digitised Pacific collections that are held in institutions in the Pacific and around the world.



National Museum of the Solomon Islands
Alex Ruan/Shutterstock.com*

Thirteen bicommunal projects involving the French-speaking and Flemish-speaking parts of **Belgium** have been approved as part of a Cultural Cooperation Agreement 2021-2022. One of the main objectives of the Agreement is to stimulate cooperation between cultural actors from both communities in all disciplines.

The Ministry of Culture and Youth of **Costa Rica** opened a public consultation on the draft regulations for the management of its underwater cultural heritage. A party to the UNESCO 2001 Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage since 2018, this national legislation aims to establish a system of international cooperation and coordination, as well as practical rules for the management and investigation of such heritage.





CULTURAL POLICY HIGHLIGHTS

A draft National Cultural Policy bill has been approved by both Houses of Parliament in **Madagascar**. The updated law includes provisions in relation to national values, the safeguarding of cultural heritage, creativity among youth and the protection of the social security of artists.



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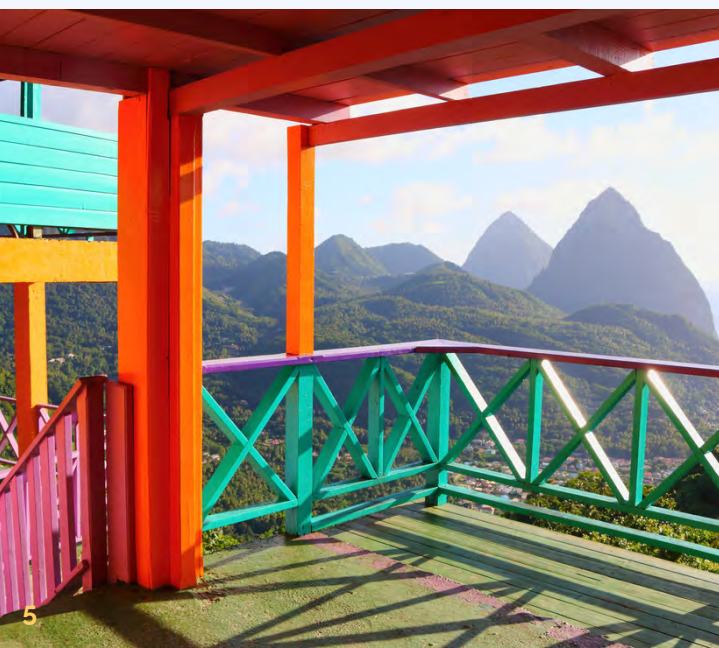


Dương Nhân/Pexels.com

The City of Yen Bai Department of Culture, Sports and Tourism in northern **Viet Nam** has published its "Programme of cultural and artistic activities serving remote, border and island areas" to improve the access to cultural and artistic activities for ethnic minority groups in the province.

The National Committee for Education, Culture and Science of **Palestine** has agreed several projects with both ALECSO and ISESCO intergovernmental organizations, including support for performing arts school and music therapy and support for Bedouin communities, respectively.

The Ministry of Culture of **Luxembourg** has officially launched Kultur |lx, a new platform to support and disseminate Luxembourg culture. Artists and professionals in the cultural sector can now find a range of grants centred around three priority areas: career development, promotion and dissemination.



The **Saint Lucia** National Commission for UNESCO has announced that it is updating the site management plan for the Pitons Management Area World Heritage site. The updates for the volcanic site particularly relate to disaster risk management and climate change.



Judith Lienert/Shutterstock.com*



CULTURAL POLICY HIGHLIGHTS

The Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism of the **Republic of Korea** has unveiled a plan to promote the animation industry. The plan includes provisions to enhance training capabilities, strengthen intellectual property legislation, provide financial support and expand both domestic and international markets.



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Yusuf Yassir/Unsplash.com

The government of **Sudan** has launched a project on cultural policies that was developed over the past year by a preparatory secretariat at the Ministry of Culture and Information, including the reactivation of the cultural economy as an important priority. The valorization of cultural diversity for achieving national harmony and cohesion is a central principle.

The Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises of the **Dominican Republic** have signed an agreement to develop a Creative Directory, to register professionals and companies developing cultural and creative activities, in order to boost the sectors of design, performing arts, visual arts, music and publishing.

During a ceremony at the National Museum of Heritage, **Slovakia** welcomed the return of 44 Roman coins from the 3rd century that were illegally exported to Norway. In August, a new national law will enter into force to strengthen regulations concerning the export and import of cultural property.

Pixabay/Pexels.com



The Directorate of Cultural Heritage of **Senegal** has officially presented an inventory of 59 elements of intangible cultural heritage to be inscribed on the national list. With the support of UNESCO and a pool of experts, the project that began in 2016 aims to safeguard this heritage, which includes elements related to traditional dance, marriage rites, gastronomy and festivals.



The Infinite Reservoir: Cultural diversity for shaping the future we want



World Heritage Site of Cueva de las Manos, Río Pinturas, Argentina
Petr Kratochvila/Shutterstock.com*

Culture, in all its diversity, is an infinite reservoir from which we gain our knowledge of the world and which we tap into to find solutions to contemporary issues. Ever since the emergence of Homo Sapiens, human progress has evolved thanks to cultural diversity, through the exchange between human groups of discoveries and innovations, institutional experience and knowledge. Culture is in constant flux, evolving across time and space, adapting to the circumstances of the day. Each culture is therefore rich with insights provided by this vast accumulation of knowledge. Our cultural diversity is our greatest strength. It is the ultimate renewable resource for humankind and societies. As such, valuing diversity and protecting and promoting cultures as asset for societies is imperative.

The world is still not on track to attain sustainable development. Furthermore, the recent [United Nations Sustainable Development Goal Report](#) noted that “the pandemic has already had a very significant impact in a number of areas, undermining decades of development efforts.” Countries where inequality has grown are home to more than two thirds of the world population, according to the [2020 World Social Report](#). The [UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights](#) frequently sounds the alarm on the rise of racism and xenophobia, with culture itself being instrumentalised to divide societies and communities in many parts of the world, as highlighted by a [2018 Report of the Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural rights](#). Moreover, the future of our planet is at stake: the climate crisis is upon us with 2021 [being described as](#) “a make-or-break year for people and planet” by UN Secretary-General, Antonio Guterres. In addition, new technologies have critical implications as to how we interact with the world and each other, with huge ethical implications for the future of humankind.



Today's societies are resolutely multilingual and multicultural, many of them home to a large number of cultures and ethnic groups. This diversity has been nourished throughout the ages due to trade and migration. Colonialism, slavery and the displacement of populations due to conflict have also altered the social fabric of societies, leading to a loss of critical knowledge. Diversity not only refers to differences due to the presence of different cultural or ethnic communities, but also different life experiences due to gender, sexual orientation, disability or age. Cultures transcend national boundaries and digital technologies have also put people in contact in an unprecedented way, creating new communities across borders. Confronted by the diversity of codes and outlooks, States sometimes find themselves at a loss to know how to respond and harness cultural diversity for the common interest.

Now, in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, States are recalibrating longer term policy choices among many seemingly competing priorities – be it health, infrastructure or employment. Where does culture fit in this panoply of public policies? History has shown us that following trauma, societies and peoples have turned to culture to find responses. UNESCO itself was created due to the conviction that rebuilding societies following the Second World War could not only be done through political and economic means but also a renewal of ideas and new solidarity, through our “fruitful diversity”.

“Development without culture is growth without a soul”

Traditional development policies, tethered to economic growth, were initially guided by the belief that an increase in prosperity would increase human well-being and reduce poverty. By the 1990s, it was clear that a purely growth-oriented approach had deepened economic and social divides within and between countries, thereby jeopardizing social inclusion and the evolution of peaceful and sustainable societies. Burgeoning ecological destruction was leading to worse natural catastrophes and increased global uncertainty. There was a conscious shift towards “human development”, based on the work of Amartya Sen, placing emphasis on widening individuals’ choices and expanding freedoms. Within the United Nations system, the Human Development Index was introduced to take into account dimensions such as health and education.

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Yet, individuals are not isolated atoms; they work together, cooperate and interact in many ways. It is culture that connects them with one another and makes the development of the individual possible. It is also culture that defines how people relate to the natural environment. It is in this sense that all forms of development, including human development, ultimately are determined by cultural factors. When culture is thus understood as the basis of development, the very notion of cultural policy has to be considerably broadened.

Any policy for development must be profoundly sensitive to and inspired by culture itself. Far from being confined to arts and heritage, participants at the 1982 World Conference on Cultural Policies, Mondiacult, defined culture as: "the whole complex of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features that characterize a society or social group, not limited to the arts and letters, and including modes of life, the fundamental rights of the human being, value systems, traditions and beliefs." Our Creative Diversity, a report produced by the World Commission on Culture and Development in 1995, stated that "if the communities of the world are to improve their human development options they must first be empowered to define their futures in terms of who they have been, what they are today and what they ultimately want to be." Twenty years later, the 2030 Agenda, whose motto is "the future we want" would echo this spirit.

Culture is "the whole complex of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features that characterize a society or social group, not limited to the arts and letters, and including modes of life, the fundamental rights of the human being, value systems, traditions and beliefs."

World Conference on Cultural Policies, Mondiacult, 1982

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Whilst reaffirming a broad definition of culture, the 2001 UNESCO Declaration on Cultural Diversity gave policy direction to such cultural pluralism for the flourishing of creative capacities that sustain public life. It stated that "policies for the inclusion and participation of all citizens are guarantees of social cohesion, the vitality of civil society and peace" and that this was best achieved within a democratic framework. Indeed, "cultural diversity should be defined as the capacity to maintain the dynamic of change in all of us, whether individuals or group" posited the UNESCO 2009 World Report: Investing in Cultural Diversity and Intercultural Dialogue, adding a key dimension to the value of pluralism for resilience. Differences between cultures should therefore not be regarded as something to be feared, but as a fundamental trait which enriches us and which should prompt us to engage with the breadth of "spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features" of the world.



The UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, an inspirational agenda "for the people by the people" adopted in 2015, reflects the evolution of development models that aim to place social considerations on a par with economic ones, and explicitly recognises the power of culture - the first time this role was so clearly defined in an international development agenda. Member States affirmed that "we acknowledge the natural and cultural diversity of the world and recognize that all cultures and civilizations can contribute to, and are crucial enablers of, sustainable development." Furthermore, countries pledged to "foster intercultural understanding, tolerance, mutual respect and an ethic of global citizenship and shared responsibility".

Culture, being a fundamental trait, does not have a stand-alone goal, but a transversal role contributing to all 17 of the Sustainable Development Goals. Culture is explicitly referenced in relation to education, notably its role in creating the conditions that are conducive to an appreciation of cultural diversity, valorizing all cultures equally in the respect of human rights and fundamental freedoms. Culture also contributes to sustainable tourism that is respectful of local culture, and to the protection of cultural and natural heritage to render human settlements more inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.

Unity in Diversity

The use of culture as the main driver of national visions for development is nothing new. National cultural policies emerged in the late 18th century with the large public museums in Europe. By the 1960s, culture was a rallying call for newly independent countries and the engine of nation-building projects. For example, policies in the Arab States focused on the role of culture for creating identity and building unity. Similarly, in the Caribbean, culture became an important tool of emancipation for the majority of the population that had formerly been enslaved, as coming to terms with one's past is the only way to build the future. In Latin America, cultural priorities were shaped by the political needs of the 1980s and 1990s, when the socio-cultural effects of the transition to democracy were starting to be felt. As a result, cultural policies tended to put greater emphasis on the fight against poverty and exclusion, by reinforcing cultural rights.

For many states, the protection of cultural diversity itself has long been at the heart of many states' visions for their long-term prosperity. For example, since its independence in 1949, Indonesia has adopted the national motto "Unity in Diversity" based on a 15th century Javanese mantra capturing a shared identity despite the diverse cultures and ethnicities of the 17,000 islands of the archipelago. Similarly, in the Pacific emerging from colonial rule, Samoa's 1960 constitution is grounded on both "Christian principles and Samoan custom and tradition", in recognition of its past. Over time, other countries have expanded their public policies to embrace the multiple identities of their population. Bolivia was perhaps the first country in 1967 to pass a law providing legal protection of its national folklore, expanding the definition of cultural law (to what we now consider to be intangible cultural heritage), while the 1987 Constitution of Haiti upgraded Haitian Creole to the status of official language alongside French in recognition of its population's heritage.





Indeed, old models of assimilation for nation-building, in which all groups were made homogenous, proved to be neither desirable nor feasible in the pursuit of more inclusive societies. Furthermore, a country's culture is not static. On the contrary, it is dynamic and continually evolving reflecting its history, mores, institutions and attitudes, its social movements, conflicts, migrations and struggles, and the configurations of political power, internally and in the world at large. The world's first national multicultural legislation appeared in Canada only in 1988 when the new Multiculturalism Act recognised cultural diversity as a fundamental feature of Canadian society. The act also recognizes Canada's multicultural heritage, enshrines Aboriginal rights, allows languages other than the official languages, English and French, to be used, and protects minorities' rights to enjoy their cultures.



More recent national cultural policies also value the diversity of culture. For example, Jamaica's 2003 National Cultural Policy laments that "formal processes have emphasized our European past far more than our African, Indian, Chinese and other heritage," and states that "there is the need, especially in the intangible cultural heritage, to focus on the significance of traditional knowledge in the consolidation of communities and the wellness of the general society." In Chile, following an unprecedented process of Indigenous Consultation carried out with the participation of the nine native peoples and Afro-descendant tribes, the Ministry of Cultures, Arts and Heritage was established in 2017. Referring to "cultures", in the plural form, marks an important shift not only in recognizing the country's cultural diversity but also creating policy mechanisms to ensure their flourishing. Furthermore, the country began working on a new constitution in July 2021 with a 155-member body representative of the whole country. Whilst a challenge, the diversity of the body - half of whom are women, a minimum of 17 who are indigenous and the youngest being 21 - is seen as a great strength to ensure a more just future in a country of deep inequalities.



Furthermore, at the international level, there have been groundbreaking policy developments, such as the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, established in 2002 as a consultative body of the UN, which was a milestone in the recognition, protection and promotion of cultural diversity, and a great achievement in cultural rights. The adoption of the UNESCO 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage by UNESCO Member States was equally visionary in achieving in more inclusive definition of cultural heritage. It valorised local traditions and know-how, and not just physical manifestations of heritage. Furthermore, it acknowledged that intangible cultural heritage is shared heritage, not bound to a particular territory, and that it is transformed over time.



The Ministry is governed by the principles of cultural diversity, democracy and participation, cultural recognition of indigenous peoples, respect for the freedom of creation and social valuation of creators and cultural practitioners, as well as recognition of territorial cultures, respect for the rights of cultural practitioners and creators, and historical memory.

Ministry of Cultures, Arts and Heritage of Chile



Culture: the dynamic for change



Cultural diversity - harnessed appropriately - nurtures dialogue and mutual understanding and develops new models of citizenship, by providing access to meaningful knowledge. Local cultural codes can be a source of social cohesion and peace, including in countries that have experienced social strife. Chad's national development plan aims to reinforce "national cohesion through cultural rehabilitation and the restoration of ancestral values". Pakistan's 2018 cultural policy, for example, recognises cultural diversity as a "unifying bond" to overcome inter-communal tensions. Mauritius - a kaleidoscope of ethnic and religious groups - attributes its high ranking in the Global Peace Index to respect for cultural diversity. In its 2019 Voluntary National Review (VNR), submitted to the United Nations as part of monitoring towards the Sustainable Development Goals, it states that the country "is a sovereign democratic state island of approximately 1.3 million people of different race, culture and faith, living in a spirit of unity, mutual respect and tolerance. These values have upheld the process of nation building."

As well as a vehicle for social cohesion, cultural diversity is a source for sustainable livelihoods and economic growth, drawing on unique intangible cultural heritage and a diversity of cultural expressions. Morocco's Vision 2020, for instance, aims to consolidate cultural tourism by organizing festivals dedicated to the arts and artistic heritage expressions. Meanwhile, Panama's initiative called "Ruta Afro", a touristic route linking the Afro-Panamanians communities, not only gives their culture more visibility but also provides employment opportunities. Brunei Darussalam's One Village One Product policy focuses on community-based cultural tourism through the promotion of handicrafts and intangible cultural heritage. Peru is also capitalising on cultural diversity through the recently launched Pact for Culture to boost its culture sector, aimed at protecting the country's heritage, as well as promoting its cultural industries.

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Culture also defines how people relate to nature and their physical environment, to the earth and to the cosmos. The indigenous Quechua cosmovision centred on humanity as an integral part of the natural and social environment – ‘sumak kawsay’ or ‘well-being’ - was integrated into the Constitution of Ecuador in 2008, making it the first country to recognize rights to nature in its constitution. In the Pacific Small Island Developing States, cultural heritage is characterised by strong interlinkages between people and nature, which is mainly expressed through intangible cultural heritage. The Federated States of Micronesia, for example, highlights in its 2020 VNR how this sense of guardianship of some of the richest biodiversity in the world, coupled with strong and diverse traditions, positions the country to conserve both natural heritage and social heritage simultaneously. Hungary too, in its 2012 Constitution, couples culture and the environment, aiming for the “preservation and protection of material, intellectual and natural resources” for future generations: one of only a few documents around the world that articulates the principles of the rights of future generations to this legacy.



Local and indigenous knowledge is, in fact, increasingly vital to tackle climate change and biodiversity loss, as the cultures of the world's 350 million indigenous peoples worldwide are inextricably linked to the natural world. Indigenous knowledge, although relatively new to climate science, has been long recognized as a key source of information and insight in domains such as agroforestry, traditional medicine, biodiversity conservation, impact assessment, and natural disaster preparedness and response. Both the [1992 Convention on Biodiversity](#) and the [2015 Paris Climate Change Agreement](#) call upon states to respect, preserve, maintain and draw upon traditional and indigenous knowledge for relevant socio-economic and environmental policies.



Furthermore, a large percentage of the world's 7,000 languages are indigenous, each of which reflects a unique world view and knowledge system. The objective of the [Decade of Indigenous Languages 2022-2032](#) is to protect and promote these languages. In recognition that indigenous peoples hold a rich diversity of living heritage, including practices, representations, expressions, knowledge and skills, the [UNESCO 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage](#) provides an in-road for indigenous peoples to shape the international heritage discourse and ensure that their experiences are taken into account.

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Cities, museums and media: hubs for cultural diversity and global citizenship

Cities, museums and media help shape and expand new knowledge but also enhance ways of living together. They are privileged spaces for the appreciation of cultural diversity. By 2050, 70% of the global population will live in cities, where the greatest diversity can be found. The mixing of lifestyles and forms of expression can be both a source of creation and innovation. Consolidating social integration with respect for ethnic and cultural diversity, and yet encouraging them to blossom, is a major public policy challenge. Mirroring global development trends, throughout the 1980s, in Western Europe and North America, urban cultural policies were designed to serve mainly economic objectives.

The UN-endorsed 2016 New Urban Agenda fully acknowledges that “culture and cultural diversity are sources of enrichment for humankind and provide an important contribution to the sustainable development of cities, human settlements and citizens, empowering them to play an active and unique role in development initiatives.” In fact, culture, creativity, heritage and pluralism are referred to some 35 times in the Agenda. The diversity of the urban context has led to the burgeoning of new actors, particularly in civil society. It has opened up new cultural spaces and opportunities to celebrate cultural diversity, for example, through festivals. Furthermore, new ideas, concepts and tools - such as Creative Cities and the Historic Urban Landscape - have emerged, enriching approaches for more liveable places.

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It is also culture that defines a city as what the ancient Romans called the **"civitas"** - a **coherent social complex**, the collective body of citizens, as suggested in UNESCO's 2016 publication Culture: Urban Future. Physical cultural heritage provides multiple layers of meaning whilst cultural expressions provide vehicles for collective identity. The 2011 UNESCO Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape encourages local decision-makers to adopt participatory planning and stakeholder consultations on what values to protect for transmission to future generations and to determine the attributes that carry these values. The UNESCO Creative Cities Network – through its seven creative fields – reinforces the dialogue that is indispensable for development. The Creative Cities are searching for innovative solutions to meet the needs of the most vulnerable populations, including housing, mobility, access to public space and cultural life. For example, in the Medina of Tunis - a World Heritage site, and a Creative City of Crafts and Folk Art – the Association for the Protection of the Tunis Medina has co-designed with the local authorities an ambitious programme to reclaim slum housing and restore historical buildings. The annual Crafts Fair and the Medina Festival also attract tens of thousands of visitors per year in celebration of the medina's cultural diversity.



Furthermore, **"public spaces can create the environment to dispel the myths and destructive stereotypes associated with migration"** by fostering public debate about the varied and overwhelmingly positive contributions of migrants to the local communities," as noted in the 2016 Barcelona Declaration on Public Spaces. A cultural approach to urban planning renews notions of the 'right to the city' for the common good. To tackle racism, racial discrimination and xenophobia and other societal ills resulting from social transformations including rapid urbanization, human mobility, and rising inequalities, UNESCO launched the International Coalition of Inclusive and Sustainable Cities in 2004. The seven regional and national coalitions collaborate to advance inclusive urban development free from all forms of discrimination through policymaking, capacity-building to awareness-raising activities. An example of an event that brings people together in the public space is UN Jazz Day, initiated by UNESCO, which celebrates jazz and its origins in the battle for human rights and civil rights, as well as its roots in Africa and the Caribbean.

San Fermin Pamplona/Pexels.com





The world's **104,000 museums** are also of “great importance for all societies, for intercultural dialogue among peoples, for social cohesion, and for sustainable development, society and as a factor in social integration and cohesion”, as highlighted in the UNESCO 2015 Recommendation concerning the protection and promotion of museums and collections, their diversity and their role in society. Yet, some studies suggest that they are not always welcoming to diverse populations due to ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation and identity, socioeconomic background, education level, physical ability, political affiliation and religious beliefs. For example, a 2017 study in the US found that racially and ethnically diverse visitors, as well as young people, were more likely to believe that cultural organizations were “not for people like me”. Many museums can invest more in their potential to promote cultural diversity and in valorising the diversity of cultures.



Iakov Filimonov/Shutterstock.com

Some museums around the world are coming up with innovative ways to reach marginalised populations, fulfilling their role as public spaces for reflection and debate on historical, social, cultural and scientific issues. A project in Edo Museum of West African Art, in Benin City in Southern Nigeria, due to open in 2025, intends to develop a shared understanding of the cultural heritage of the sub-region, contributing to the continent's “cultural renaissance”. Opened in 1982, the National Museum of Popular Cultures in Mexico's stated purpose is to be “an open door to the cultural diversity of ancestral traditions and new proposals of cultural manifestations... that promote respect for the cultural pluralism that characterizes our country.” Meanwhile, France has developed a model of mobile and low-cost digital museums called ‘micro-folies’ to improve social accessibility, whilst the Norway National Museum Network for Minorities and Cultural Diversity brings together over 20 museums to organize travelling exhibitions or the training of people of minority backgrounds to increase access to culture and inclusion of minorities in the respective institutions.





Media and digital technologies are also vehicles for sharing cultural content. The [UNESCO 2018 Re|Shaping Cultural Policies](#) report found that watching television and listening to radio are such widespread cultural activities that they are indispensable to inform people about diverse cultural expressions and to ensure their human right to cultural participation. Yet, there is a risk of concentration of media and a homogenization of expressions, leaving many voiceless. Therefore, it is vital to develop media pluralism, by expanding access and ensuring regulatory frameworks that help create media which are representative of evolving societies. Furthermore, promoting media literacy training and developing cultural literacy is vital, particularly for professionals to become sensitive to diversity and avoid the pitfalls of discriminating, stigmatising and stereotyping.

Global internet use penetration now stands at 53.6%, which means that nearly half of the world is still unable to partake in global online conversations, particularly women and people with disabilities, undermining fundamental rights. Furthermore, there is a vast linguistic divide in cyberspace today - with 77% of the internet in just 10 languages - that will only exacerbate the digital divide, as individuals and communities are marginalized. The [UNESCO 2003 Recommendation concerning the Promotion and Use of Multilingualism and Universal Access to Cyberspace](#) proposes measures fostering universal access to digital resources and services, and facilitating the preservation of their cultural and language diversity. Through algorithms, there is also a danger that, far from expanding choices, digital technologies and artificial intelligence can lead to a homogenization of access to cultural expressions.

UNESCO is leading a global discussion on how to address issues around transparency, accountability and privacy on artificial intelligence. A [global framework for regulating artificial intelligence](#) containing action-oriented policy chapters on a variety of issues, including culture, is set to be adopted later this year. The positive news is that communities are also using digital platforms to share and transmit their intangible heritage, as was [particularly observed during the pandemic](#).

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The ultimate renewable resource

Throughout the ages, culture has been the deep reservoir of innovation and creativity: the ultimate renewable resource. Yet, now more than any other time in history, the challenges we face are interlocked, multifaceted and indisputably global. Fragmented communities, rising inequalities, contemporary complex forms of conflict, coupled with the climate crisis and technological transformation are causing such upheaval that societies will only be able to overcome global challenges through enhanced diversification and tapping into cultural diversity, which is only possible if all cultures are equally valued.

In the globalised world, the modern State is resolutely and irreversibly multicultural. To ensure unity in diversity and avoid social fragmentation and tensions, public policies must build inclusive societies – embracing the diversity of all citizens regardless of race, origin and gender – while ensuring respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms in a democratic environment. Institutional developments at country-level over the past decade – including new ministries of culture and the protection of cultural diversity in legal documents, such as constitutions – bears witness to this aspiration of many societies. Therefore, it is imperative for the State to guarantee respect for cultural diversity by designing policies that valorize cultural diversity as a positive resource for progress and not instrumentalised to sow division.

Interior of Dacheng Palace Hall, of the World Heritage site China, Quanzhou: Emporium of the World in Song-Yuan China
© Quanzhou maritime Silk Road World / Chen Yingjie'





Harnessing cultural diversity requires for States to adapt their policy instruments and build more comprehensive policies, encompassing the wider policy spectrum. By reviewing their policy tools and instruments, countries would be better adapted to today's multicultural societies that are knowledge-driven by creating the conditions that are conducive to mobilizing the ingenuity of all segments of society. Furthermore, this approach would provide opportunities for all citizens to engage and to contribute, building true global citizenship by equipping individuals with the capacities to make change in the society in which they live and for them to expand their development pathways.

Ensuring a flourishing of culture will propel new, more human-centred, models of economies and societies that build on and invest in human capabilities. When you invest in culture, you invest in human capital. Harnessing the power of culture is not limited to economic models but across the public policy spectrum from education, health, digital development, ecological transition and employment. Greater interdependence, but also diversification, are necessary for sustainable development. The spirit of the 2030 Agenda is that one size does not fit all. Only culture can bridge the gap between global ambitions and local solutions, as culture offers new platforms for dialogue between decision-makers and citizens. 2021 marks the first steps on the road to the UN Decade of Action to boost progress toward the achievement of the SDGs. Back in 1994, The World Commission on Culture and Development decried that "our social and political imagination has not kept pace with our scientific and technological imagination." This observation is now more pertinent than ever. Now is the time to place culture at the heart of development strategies, using our creative diversity.

Alex Sorto/Unsplash.com





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The first meeting of the Scientific Committee for the Culture of Peace – an advisory body for the Biennale of Luanda Pan-African Forum for the Culture of Peace – took place on 10 June. The Committee brings together 21 experts, scientists, academics, writers and scriptwriters from the 5 regions of the African Union and the Diaspora, as well as 3 observer members (UNESCO, the African Union and the Angolan government). Its role is to identify practices for conflict prevention in Africa and to create of an Alliance of Partners for the promotion of a culture of peace. The meeting addressed the issues of migration, education for peace, illicit trafficking and the return of cultural goods, and the challenges affecting African youth. The Biennale is due to take place from 4-8 October 2021.

The African Union held on 6 July its 7th Meeting of the Technical and Advisory Committee of the Great Museum of Africa (GMA) to discuss preparations for the museum's launch due later this year in the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria, having been delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The establishment of the GMA was inspired by the AU Agenda 2063 and by the Charter for African Cultural Renaissance of 2006, which recently entered into force.

The United Nations World Tourism Organization's (UNWTO) African Member States have unanimously endorsed the Windhoek Pledge on Advocating Brand Africa to realise the continent's tourism potential. Under the terms of the Windhoek Pledge, Members will engage both public and private sector stakeholders, as well as local communities, to build a new, inspiring narrative for tourism across the continent. Over the coming weeks, UNWTO will work with all signatories to create a common roadmap towards establishing Brand Africa. This will include establishing common values and goals and identifying funding needs and opportunities, as well as providing branding toolkits for destinations, including guidelines and recommendations and training and capacity building in market intelligence, digital marketing and data management.

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Committee on the Return of Cultural Properties to their Countries of Origin held its first meeting on 29 June. The Committee is designed to monitor the implementation of the ECOWAS Action Plan 2019-2023, approved by the regional Heads of State and Government, that aims to contribute to the returning of ECOWAS Member States' cultural goods to their countries of origin, in order to reconstitute the regional cultural heritage.



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On 29 June, Arab League Educational, Cultural, and Scientific Organization (ALECSO) held an extraordinary meeting of the Standing Committee for Arab Culture mainly devoted to discussing the first draft project "Reviewing and Developing the Comprehensive Plan for Arab Culture". The final version of the plan is expected to be presented to the next meeting of ministers responsible for cultural affairs in Arab countries. It was announced that Saudi Arabia will host the 23rd Conference of Arab Culture Ministers in 2022. Held biennially by ALECSO with 22 Member States, the conference is an important cultural event in the Arab world enhancing the exchange of cultures and bridging gaps between Arab countries.

On June 28 the ALECSO Arab Experts on Cultural and Natural Heritage Committee held its 15th annual preparatory meeting ahead of the 44th session of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee (16-31 July).

The Islamic World Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ICESCO) and the Mohammadia League of Scholars launched on 7 July the first volume of the Encyclopedia on Deconstructing the Discourse of Extremism, entitled "Deconstructing the intellectual backgrounds of the discourses of extremism." The three volume series aims to protect young people from the discourse of extremism and hatred, particularly in the digital space, and build peace.





ASIA AND THE PACIFIC



naeem mayet/Pexels.com

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), in collaboration with the International Labour Organization, on 9 July launched a report relating to green jobs within ASEAN. [The Regional Study Report on Green Jobs Policy Readiness in ASEAN](#) makes reference to how the green transition contributes to cultural heritage protection. For example, the protection of cultural heritage is a stated aim in Cambodia's National Strategic Plan on Green Growth 2013-2030 whilst the Mongolian Sustainable Finance Association has established 8 Sustainable Finance Principles, one of which is the protection of cultural heritage.

In the Pacific, the European Union [has launched an initiative](#) to provide financial support, technical advice, and mentoring and capacity building to artists and cultural producers from across the sub-region. The EUR 3.7 million project is implemented by the Pacific Community's (SPC) Human Rights and Social Development Division and the Queensland University of Technology. The "ACP-EU Enhancing capacity for the sustainability of Cultural and Creative Industries in the Pacific Project" aims to increase the contribution of the cultural and creative sector to economic development, and enhance recognition of its role in national economies in the Pacific.



Theodor Vasile/Unsplash.com

The Council of the European Union has approved conclusions reaffirming the EU's strong commitment to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which continues to guide the EU internally and externally to build back better and greener. The document "A Comprehensive Approach to Accelerate the Implementation of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development – building back better from the COVID-19 crisis" explicitly recognises the contribution of culture and of the cultural sector to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Six countries of South East Europe have started rolling out the UNESCO Thematic Indicators for Culture in the 2030 Agenda (Culture|2030 Indicators) to monitor the progress of culture's contribution to the national and local implementation of the SDGs. The proposed indicators will evaluate the level of commitment of public authorities and institutions in integrating and leveraging cultural knowledge to foster respect and appreciation of cultural diversity, as well as to assess the contribution of culture in building social cohesion, fostering inclusion and cultural participation. They will be implemented in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Romania and Serbia, with support from UNESCO's Sarajevo Antenna office.

A report on the "Status & Working Conditions for Artists, Cultural and Creative Professionals" has been published following a brainstorming meeting that took place in April this year between the European Commission and civil society actors of the cultural sector. The report highlights how COVID-19 has exposed weaknesses of the sector and proposes recommendations.

The Network of European Museum Organizations (NEMO) has updated its interactive map of museum re-openings to show that all countries across Europe included in the map have reopened their museums, following Italy's official announcement on 21 June 2021.



LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN



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The Southern Community (Mercosur) held its 49th Meeting of Ministers of Culture during which the Ministers of Culture signed the Declaration of MERCOSUR Cultural - 30 years after the creation of the bloc - and pledged to join forces, to align the objectives of the cultural integration of the region, in the face of new global challenges. In addition, Mercosur Cultural launched, in partnership with the Ministry of Culture of Argentina, a film festival to publicize the cultural diversity of Mercosur and reflect on the relationship between cinemas and audiences.

The Organization of Ibero-American States for Education, Science and Culture (OEI) has partnered with the Ortega y Gasset Foundation - Gregorio Marañón to strengthen innovation in the cultural sector of the region. One of the key initiatives is the "Training Programme on Creativity and Cultural Leadership" that strengthens the OEI strategic axis of work for the promotion of creative and cultural industries.

The Central American Network of First Aid Volunteers to Protection of Documentary Heritage was launched on 21 June as a response to the vulnerability of documentary heritage to disasters, including floods. Launched by UNESCO - with the support of the Ministry of Culture of Panama - archivists, librarians and emergency responders in Panama took part in a series of drills in risk management. Future activities include further training, workshops and conferences. The initiative - which is planned to be launched in Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Honduras and El Salvador in 2022 - is part of UNESCO's Memory of the World Programme.



cultura.gov.it/g20cultura

G20 AGREES FIRST DECLARATION ON CULTURE

The Ministers of Culture of the G20 group of the world's largest economies agreed on 30 July for the first time in history on a G20 Declaration on Culture that firmly positions culture as a major engine for sustainable socio-economic recovery in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. It includes five key priorities identified by the Italian Presidency on: the protection of cultural heritage; culture and climate change; culture and education; cultural and creative industries; and culture in the digital transformation.

Italy also took steps to permanently integrate culture into the G20, including by formalizing the Culture Working Group to build consensus among Members that contributes to the G20 Meeting of Ministers of Culture and the G20 Summit of Heads of State and Government. This builds on the momentum following the historical move by Saudi Arabia to include culture on the G20 agenda in 2020. UNESCO has provided advice throughout the process. Alongside Italian Prime Minister, Mario Draghi, UNESCO Director-General, Audrey Azoulay, opened the meeting. She also participated in the ministerial working sessions.

The Declaration - agreed in Rome, Italy, at the Colosseum, a UNESCO World Heritage site - will feed into the overall process of the G20 Summit of Heads of State and Government, due to meet later this year. The inclusion of culture echoes the progressive broadening of the scope of the G20's discussions in recent years to a more global reflection on contemporary societal issues. It also demonstrates an increasing alignment of G20 priorities to the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, notably by supporting inclusive and balanced growth patterns and expanding governance mechanisms to other stakeholders, such as inter-governmental organizations and civil society.

Fillippo Attili - PCM
Italian Ministry of Culture and G20 Italy





G20 MEMBERS

	Argentina		European Union		Italy		Saudi Arabia		United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
	Australia		France		Japan		South Africa		United States of America
	Brazil		Germany		Mexico		Spain <i>(Permanent Guest)</i>		
	Canada		India		Republic of Korea		Turkey		
	China		Indonesia		Russian Federation				



Population

60%

of the world population



Economy

80%

of global GDP



Trade

75%

of global exports

The G20 was reinforced during the global financial crisis in 2008. It is, therefore, timely and relevant that culture has been included in response to another global crisis: the COVID-19 pandemic. The 2021 Declaration on Culture recognises that culture has intrinsic value but also plays an essential role for the regeneration of our economies and our societies, which have been heavily affected by the pandemic. Not only does the Declaration send a clear political message, the Ministers of Culture agreed to a certain number of actionable points (see below).



Culture makes its way onto the G20 Agenda



“

The G20 Culture Declaration has the capacity to conjugate memory and vision.

Mario Draghi
Prime Minister of Italy

“

With this G20 ministerial meeting, we are reinforcing a commitment to make culture central to one of the main forums for international cooperation. [...] We must improve the status of artists and their social protection, and address the unequal distribution of value between creators and digital platforms.

Audrey Azoulay
Director-General of UNESCO





“

Protecting culture, as UNESCO does, means contributing to international dialogue, to the recognition and respect for diversity.

Dario Franceschini
Minister of Culture of Italy

UNESCO

“

We urge Governments to mainstream culture as an integral part of wider policy agendas [...] and to include culture and cultural heritage in national and international post-pandemic recovery strategies.

Extract from Final Declaration on Culture of G20 Ministers of Culture

30 July 2021

PRIORITIES WITHIN THE G20 DECLARATION ON CULTURE

PRIORITY ONE: PROTECTION OF CULTURAL HERITAGE



I During the meeting, G20 Ministers of Culture underscored the importance of cultural heritage for identity, social cohesion, peace and security. They also highlighted that culture has increasingly been brought to the frontlines of conflicts. The Ministers exchanged about transnational concerted actions, public-private collaborations, and coordinated research and action to face threats to cultural heritage. These threats include the looting and illicit trafficking of cultural property, the destruction or misuse of cultural heritage and traditional knowledge of indigenous people, uncontrolled urban development, and environmental degradation and extreme natural events.



ACTIONABLES

- **Harmonise regulation and law enforcement to combat illicit trafficking of cultural property**
- **Establish a new international rapid intervention mechanism to protect cultural heritage in emergency situations**

PRIORITY TWO: CULTURE AND THE CLIMATE CRISIS



Deb Dowd/Unsplash.com

The G20 Ministers of Culture expressed their concern about the increased frequency and intensity of hazardous events linked to climate change and their impact on culture and cultural heritage. They also acknowledged that culture - including intangible and tangible cultural heritage, creativity, indigenous peoples' languages and knowledge systems - offer great potential to drive forward climate action. They welcomed the ongoing efforts of all relevant intergovernmental organizations - including UNESCO - in anchoring culture more firmly within the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.



ACTIONABLES

- **Strengthen the place of culture in climate action on the global agenda**
- **Adapt and implement international climate change impact guidelines for the preservation of cultural heritage**

PRIORITY THREE: CULTURE AND EDUCATION



The G20 Ministers of Culture discussed the synergies between culture and education in bridging current gaps and building new skills and capabilities. They emphasized the need to mainstream cultural education and training across disciplines and sectors. Investing in education, training and awareness-raising to foster job creation, especially for youth, was singled out. They also recognised the role of heritage education, museums, libraries, archives, conservation institutes, universities, indigenous communities, as well as other cultural institutions and cultural heritage sites to boost learning, by fostering innovation and inter-sectoral convergence across science, technology, the art and humanities.

Zurijeta/Shutterstock.com*



ACTIONABLE

Prioritise investment in technical and vocational training in culture-related employment – both in formal and non-formal contexts – to adapt labour skills for the digital and ecological transition

PRIORITY FOUR: CREATIVE INDUSTRIES

IV

Cultural and creative industries generate spillovers into the wider economy, being a source of creative skills, leveraging growth and innovation in other policy areas. The G20 Ministers of Culture also acknowledged the social impact of the cultural and creative sectors in increasing well-being, as well as promoting social inclusion, gender equality and driving transformation towards more sustainable production and consumption patterns. The Ministers agreed on the need to adapt policies on employment, social protection, innovation and entrepreneurship to the specific characteristics of the sector, supporting cultural professionals in COVID-19 recovery strategies and enabling a flourishing and sustainable creative sector.

Anton Mislawsky/Unsplash.com



ACTIONABLE

Adapt public support schemes and regulatory frameworks to strengthen the rights and working conditions of artists and cultural professionals – on and offline – ensuring fair remuneration for a more resilient ecosystem

PRIORITY FIVE: DIGITAL TRANSITION FOR CULTURE



V

The ministerial discussion focused on the increasing importance of the digital environment in promoting diversity and inclusion, fostering cross-cultural knowledge production and transfer, as well as the development of global cultural markets. The G20 Ministers of Culture highlighted the need for cooperation to overcome the digital divide - accentuated by the COVID-19 pandemic - to ensure universal access to culture through digital tools, supported by media and information literacy training. Strengthening research, knowledge-sharing and political engagement was also underscored as a priority to create a safe digital ecosystem to fight disinformation and hate speech online. Furthermore, the promotion of diverse linguistic and cultural content, the fair remuneration of creators and the protection of freedom of expression were also highlighted.

note thanun/Unsplash.com



ACTIONABLES

- **Strengthen access to culture online**
- **Protect cultural and linguistic diversity of online content, in particular through the regulation of the digital environment**



PUBLICATIONS AND NEWS

10TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE 2011 UNESCO RECOMMENDATION ON THE HISTORIC URBAN LANDSCAPE

The 10th Anniversary celebration of the Recommendation took place online through a launch event for the UNESCO HUL Call for Action and a global conference on the application of the HUL Recommendation to World Heritage cities.



[READ MORE](#)



WORLD HERITAGE COMMITTEE

Held from 16 to 31 July 2021 in Fuzhou, China and online, the 44th session of the World Heritage Committee inscribed new World Heritage sites, reaffirming a recognition of the diversity of the world's treasures.

In celebration of the host country, a Special Issue of the World Heritage Review delves into the World Heritage of China.

[READ MORE](#)

[READ SPECIAL ISSUE](#)

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We are counting on partners to support its production in other UNESCO official languages, to expand the global discussion on culture and public policy.

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