



International Network for Cultural Diversity

*A Voice for Culture and the Arts
in the Era of Globalization*

NEWSLETTER

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1. **INCD calls for Intergovernmental Committee action to make the UNESCO Convention as effective as possible**

In preparation for the first meeting of the Convention's Intergovernmental Committee, taking place in Ottawa, Canada beginning 10 December 2007, INCD has released its updated recommendations for how to make the UNESCO Convention effective.

The Intergovernmental Committee, the operational body of the Convention, was elected by the Conference of Parties held in Paris in June 2007. Countries on the IC are:

Two-year term: Albania, Austria, Brazil, Burkina-Faso, Canada, China, Finland, France, Guatemala, Mali, Slovenia and Tunisia.

Four-year term: Croatia, Germany, Greece, India, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Mauritius, Mexico, Oman, Saint-Lucia, Senegal and South Africa.

INCD has called on the Parties, the UNESCO Secretariat responsible for the Convention and on the network of culture ministers, to implement concrete programs and measures to bring the Convention to life. INCD believes that, through effective implementation, its fundamental vision for the Convention can be realized:

- The Convention is a positive tool to encourage cultural policies in each country.
- Culture is integrated into sustainable development strategies and developing countries receive the support they need from developed countries to realize the potential of their artists, cultural producers and cultural industries.
- The Convention is the primary international instrument for states on matters of trade in cultural goods and services.

Unfortunately, non-governmental organizations were marginalized at the first session of the Conference of Parties (the Convention's highest governing body) held in Paris last June. They were permitted to make only one joint presentation and had no other formal or consultative role. In a presentation put forward by eight organizations (including INCD and four of its members), NGOs pointed out that the Convention acknowledges the fundamental role of civil society in promoting cultural diversity and commits member states to encourage their active participation in the work. INCD believes this strong commitment must translate into a meaningful role for NGOs in the governance bodies of the Convention, including the IC, and in the Fund.

With respect to other substantive issues, INCD has put forward many other ideas, including that parties make a commitment of significant new resources to the International Fund for Cultural Diversity; UNESCO initiate and oversee collection of key data; and parties integrate the Convention commitments into their bilateral cooperation agreements. INCD also urges the Intergovernmental Committee to consider developing a Cultural Passport, to facilitate access to developed countries for artists and other cultural professionals from developing countries, and to support a campaign to promote fair trade certification for cultural goods and services.

A copy of the complete INCD report is available at www.incd.net. The Steering Committee welcomes all comments and suggestions to: incd@neilcraigassociates.com.

The INCD Convention implementation paper was presented to the INCP working group meeting in Seville in September, and distributed to UNESCO and members of the IC.

2. INCD meets in Seville, Spain. Final Declaration calls for culture ministers organized in INCP to embrace a broader agenda for cultural diversity.

A number of INCD members met in Seville, Spain from 17-20 September, to discuss the state of the global cultural diversity movement, the Convention and the relationship between INCD and the network of culture ministers organized in the International Network on Cultural Policy.

While financial constraints made it impossible for INCD to organize the kind of meeting it has held in collaboration with INCP each year since 2000, delegates from the INCD meeting interacted formally and informally with the culture ministers and others attending the INCP sessions.

Steering Committee members James C. Early, from the United States, and Jacques Béhanzin, from Bénin, presented the INCD annual report to INCP on 20 September. This report was developed by the secretariat, Steering Committee and the members in Seville. The full document is available in English and French on the INCD website.

In its annual report, INCD calls on the culture ministers to acknowledge that the

Convention “is only the next step towards the institutionalization of an effective cultural policy framework that can foster and make manifest the transversal role of culture and the arts in the global era.” INCD also urged Ministers “... particularly those from the South, to explore working in a more coordinated, strategic collaboration with each other and other countries to provide the leadership on the full range of issues that intersect with cultural diversity.”

The report outlines INCD activities of the past year and comments on Convention implementation issues. In this section, INCD stated “... concern that too much focus on the important procedural matters of ratification could divert attention and energies away from the critical importance of implementing priority aspects of the Convention.”

3. Defending Cultural Diversity: 5th Cuban International Congress on Culture and Development

James C. Early

INCD activists James Early, U.S.A.; Joost Smiers, Holland; and Bruce Paddington, Trinidad and Tobago, joined nearly 800 cultural workers, intellectuals, and artists at the 5th International Congress on Culture and Development held June 11-14 in Havana, Cuba. Congress sponsors included UNESCO and UNICEF, and several Cuban institutions including the Cuban Institute of Art, the Film Industry, the Institute of Music, Cuban Book Institute, and the National Council for Cultural Heritage.

The 2007 Congress had representation from 64 countries, including 17 from the Caribbean and 10 from Africa. Much attention was given to the UNESCO Convention for the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions.” Katerina Stenou, Director of the Division of Cultural Policies and Intercultural Dialogue attended, along with other UNESCO and UNICEF officials.

Under the general theme *Defending Cultural Diversity* the Congress Call stated that in a world diminished by globalization “the voices of the excluded people” are beginning to be listened to, that “the resistance begins to take shape” as “the autochthonous peoples claim their rights to preserve their languages and life styles. The Afro-Descendants claim their identity profile and their place in society. Women and homosexuals fight for the elimination of discriminatory barriers.” See: www.cultydes.cult.cu/5/esp/index.php.

The Cuban Ministry of Culture initiated the Congress on Culture and Development in 1999 following the 1998 UNESCO Conference in Stockholm, Sweden which set forth the Stockholm Action Plan on Cultural Policies for Development, including commitment to promote the idea that cultural goods and services should be fully recognized and treated as unlike other forms of merchandise.

Every two years the Cuban Ministry of Culture invites participation from across the world to come together to debate and seek common ground on advancing cultural

diversity among and within nations.

Objectives of the 2007 Congress were;

- Reflection, debate and exchange of ideas on the recognition of the cultural plurality and the diversity of its expressions, the culture of resistance....
- Analysis of the role of cultural industries, technological changes and cultural services and product commercialization.
- Encouraging the exchange of ideas and projects to foster human creativity facing current challenges.
- Promoting the search for common tendencies and the coordination of strategies and projects to foster cultural development by means of cooperation.

4. ARTerial Network launches work in Africa

As reported in the last issue of the newsletter, delegates to the conference on *Vitalising African Cultural Assets*, held earlier this year in Dakar, Senegal, are continuing to work together to implement the strategies developed at the Conference. Since then, with funding from Hivos and the Danish Center for Culture and Development, the ARTerial Network has grown and is developing a three-year plan to present to potential partners in the next few weeks. Information about the Network and the final statement can be found at: <http://www.hivos.nl/english/english/arterial>.

ARTerial is developing concrete ideas for how the needs of the African cultural sector can be met in the short, medium and long term to move forward in each of the priority areas:

- Economic sustainability
- Arts and culture management capacity
- Cultural cooperation and exchange
- Lobbying.

INCD Steering Committee member Tade Adegunle, from Nigeria, is a member of the ARTerial Task Team. He can be contacted at tadekunle@yahoo.com.

5. INCD News

Membership Campaign

INCD's membership campaign continues. If you have not yet renewed your membership, you can do so now at www.incd.net. Membership fees and contributions can be made to INCD electronically, through Paypal or by credit card, in many local currencies.

Website

Be sure to visit the INCD website www.incd.net to find all the latest information about the INCD and its campaigns, as well as background information about the UNESCO

Convention, articles on culture and trade, research papers on cultural development, and information about the history and development of the INCD. All back issues of the newsletter are available and the site has contemporary links to other related sites.

INCD deeply regrets that its ongoing financial challenges prevent the French and Spanish sites from being as current as the English-language one. INCD is committed to correcting this imbalance as soon its resources allow.

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