

## CONFERENCE OF PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION ON THE PROTECTION AND PROMOTION OF THE DIVERSITY OF CULTURAL EXPRESSIONS

Seventh session  
Paris, UNESCO Headquarters, Room II  
4-7 June 2019

### CONCEPT NOTE

Second edition of the Civil Society Forum  
Tuesday, 4 June 2019

#### 1. Context

Civil society has played an important role in the process of drafting and adopting the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions in 2005 (hereinafter "the Convention"), by creating a global movement of non-governmental stakeholders.

Article 11 of the Convention recognises civil society's fundamental role in protecting and promoting the diversity of cultural expressions, and provides that Parties shall encourage its active participation in their efforts to achieve the objectives of the Convention, for example by:

- *participating in the development of cultural policies* through consultations with governments;
- *acting as change agents* by proposing new ideas and approaches in the formulation of cultural policies, for example in the digital environment;
- *collecting data and providing information* to contribute to the development of informed policies and the preparation of quadrennial periodic reports.

In addition, the operational guidelines for the implementation of the Convention provide civil society organisations (hereinafter CSOs) with a number of opportunities to participate in the work of the Convention's governing bodies<sup>1</sup> at the international level, for example by:

- *attending the governing bodies' sessions as accredited observers*: on average, 50 CSOs regularly participate in governing body meetings;
- *submitting information documents* to the governing bodies on the priorities identified by the Parties;
- *contributing actively to the debates* of the governing bodies before decisions are taken.

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<sup>1</sup> The Convention has two governing bodies: the Conference of Parties to the Convention and the Intergovernmental Committee for the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions.

Since 2017,<sup>2</sup> the governing bodies of the Convention have **increasingly involved CSOs** in the implementation of the Convention and encouraged their participation at statutory meetings. For example, CSOs are invited to:

- *attend a working meeting between the Bureau and civil society representatives* before the sessions of the Committee to discuss agenda items and priorities of Parties and CSOs. Civil society representatives have the opportunity to ask questions directly to the Chairperson and Vice-Chairs of the Committee;
- *submit proposals for amendments* to draft operational guidelines on the implementation of the Convention in the digital environment. These proposals were included in the document negotiated by the Committee at its tenth session;
- *report on the contribution of civil society* to the implementation of the Convention. The first reports were reviewed by the Committee in December 2017. CSOs submitted their **second report** to the Secretariat on **15 February 2019**. These reports will be transmitted to the Conference of the Parties at its seventh session in June 2019;
- *attend the Civil Society Forum*, which is held every two years in advance of the Conference of the Parties. This Forum provides a framework for exchange and cooperation among CSOs and strengthens their contributions to the governing bodies' agenda. The second edition of the Civil Society Forum will take place on **June 4, 2019**.

The governing bodies' decisions and actions underline the importance they attach to the participation of CSOs. They ensure that CSOs take part in the implementation of the Convention and are involved in the debates and decisions taken at statutory meetings.

The level of engagement of CSOs in the Convention is unprecedented in international law. No other international convention enables CSOs to play such an active role in its implementation.

## **2. Goals of the second Civil Society Forum**

This second edition of the Civil Society Forum aims to:

- enable representatives of CSOs *to examine their current concerns and discuss issues* related to the implementation of the Convention;
- *make proposals to the Conference of the Parties* on issues or problems that CSOs consider to be priorities and that they would like to see reflected in the work of the Convention's governing bodies.

The Forum will be organized by the Secretariat and its agenda will reflect the concerns, issues, and recommendations expressed by CSOs in their reports to the eleventh session of the Committee.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Since 2007, the governing bodies have taken 22 decisions concerning the role and participation of civil society in the implementation of the Convention. The Secretariat has prepared more than 20 working and information documents on issues concerning civil society and the Convention to enable them to make informed decisions. By the end of 2019, the Secretariat had organized over 15 events (exchange sessions, Create | 2030 Talks) specifically dedicated to the engagement of civil society in the implementation of the Convention. The decisions and documents are available on the Convention's website: <https://en.unesco.org/creativity/governance/governing-bodies>

<sup>3</sup> See: Reports of civil society organizations on their activities, DCE/17/11.IGC/6REV, eleventh session of the Intergovernmental Committee (December 2017).

The Secretariat's analysis of these reports highlighted four themes that underpin the main opportunities and challenges faced by CSOs and take into account the different types of CSOs, the diversity of the cultural and creative industries they represent, and their geographical diversity.

In order to finalise the four themes, the Secretariat invited CSOs to share ideas and propose amendments before February 28<sup>th</sup>, 2019. Their responses enabled the Secretariat to finalize the Forum's programme.

Four workshops will be organized based on the selected themes:

### **Workshop 1: How to improve the diversity of cultural expressions in the media in the digital age? Examples of good practices.**

The issue of the diversity of cultural expressions in the media is crucial, since the media are at the heart of the creation, production, and dissemination of an ever-increasing amount of cultural and artistic content, particularly in the digital environment. Moreover, the diversity of creative content in the media is essential for the promotion of the diversity of cultural expressions and is considered to be a key indicator for monitoring the implementation of the 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions.

One of the main challenges is to strengthen national production in order to achieve a balance between local, regional, and international content. Moreover, the widespread under-representation of women in the creative economy makes gender an important issue to ensure the diversity of cultural expressions in the media.

This workshop will give participants the opportunity to discuss topics such as the effectiveness of policies to regulate content diversity in the digital age, content and platform concentration in the media, the impact of algorithms on the access and discoverability of local cultural content, etc.

### **Workshop 2: How to strengthen the Convention's international cooperation and assistance mechanisms in partnership with CSOs?**

The 2005 Convention has developed a number of international cooperation and assistance mechanisms, such as technical assistance, capacity building, and funding through the International Fund for Cultural Diversity (IFCD).

CSOs are key partners to implement the Convention's international cooperation and assistance mechanisms, as they contribute to the execution of projects and programmes for the development of cultural industries, participate in public policy development and carry out advocacy activities.

This workshop will provide an opportunity for participants to discuss the ways in which the international cooperation and assistance mechanisms of the 2005 Convention can be strengthened to foster the emergence of dynamic cultural and creative sectors in beneficiary countries.

### Workshop 3: How can UNESCO Chairs and CSOs collaborate to contribute to the development of public policies for culture and sustainable development?

UNESCO Chairs act as think tanks and contribute to bringing together academics, members of civil society, researchers, and policy-makers. The Chairs working in the areas of the Convention promote cooperation and networking among universities at the international level to strengthen institutional capacities through knowledge sharing and collaboration in the cultural and creative industries sector.

Through this network, the Chairs dedicated to the Convention can pool their resources, both human and material, to meet the challenges linked to the development of informed cultural policies, for example by publishing research papers, organising conferences and teaching university students.

These achievements need to be strengthened, notably by facilitating cooperation between them and with CSOs. This workshop will provide an opportunity for CSOs to learn more about the projects and work of UNESCO Chairs and to identify potential synergies.

### Workshop 4: How to overcome barriers to the mobility of artists and cultural professionals?

The mobility of artists and cultural professionals is a major challenge, as is the balanced exchange of cultural goods and services.

Mobility is not a choice for artists and cultural professionals, but rather a condition for their professional survival, as it ensures their career prospects, access to international markets, the creation of jobs and networks and the promotion of the diversity of cultural expressions.

For years, obstacles to the mobility of artists and cultural professionals have been the result of increasingly restrictive immigration policies, in particular concerning visas and issues of social security and taxation. Thus, there is an urgent need to rethink policies and programmes for the mobility of artists in order to overcome these obstacles and promote a greater flow of ideas and diversity of cultural expressions around the world.

## 3. Expected results

These four workshops will enable CSOs to define concrete areas of action to recommend to the Convention's governing bodies.

Such recommended areas for future work will be presented to the seventh session of the Conference of the Parties by the Forum's Rapporteur (item 5 of the provisional agenda entitled "General debate on the implementation of the Convention by its stakeholders").

UNESCO will ensure the logistical organisation of the Forum. Simultaneous interpretation will be provided in French and English.