XTH ANNUAL MEETING OF THE UNESCO CREATIVE CITIES NETWORK

MAYORS’ MEETING – POLICYMAKERS DIALOGUE
“Creative city making and the New Urban Agenda”

CONCEPT NOTE

Date 3 p.m. to 5 p.m., 15 September 2016
Venue Conference Hall, Frösö Convention Center
Participants Mayors and Deputy Mayors from the UNESCO Creative Cities. Session opened to the 116 UNESCO Creative Cities and UNESCO representatives.
Organizers Östersund City, Region of Jämtland Härjedalen, UNESCO
Theme Creative city making and the New Urban Agenda

- Prospects of implementing the SDGs locally, notably SDG 11 – “Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable”
- Broadening the interconnection between urban, peri-urban and rural areas
- Fostering culture and creativity in generating public spaces, enhancing participation, social cohesion, and enabling prosperity

The Xth UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN) Annual Meeting puts the spotlight on the crucial role of creativity as an enabler and driver for sustainable urban development. Approved by the international community in September 2015, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, across its 17 goals (SDGs), referred for the first time at the operational level to culture as a powerful lever for sustainable development with broad social, economic and environmental impacts. By engaging multi-level stakeholders, this milestone document stands as an “Agenda of the people, by the people and for the people” to achieve inclusive and sustainable development, with a particular focus on the action-oriented role of cities in this pursuit.

The UCCN has a key role to play in implementing the 2030 Agenda and its SDGs, in particular the SDG 11 to “make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable”, which highlights the importance to “strengthen the efforts to protect and safeguard the world’s cultural and natural heritage”. The common endeavour of achieving culture-led sustainable urban development goes hand-in-hand with a collective vision built on a spirit of cooperation, exchange and dialogue, as are the cornerstones of the UCCN's
forward-looking objective of “promoting and disseminating good practices in making better cities”\(^1\).

Yet, challenges remain in realizing sustainable urban development, such as growing inequalities, persistence of poverty, increasing urban sprawl, pollution, and rapid urbanization. Integrated, pragmatic and sustainable urban policies and strategies based on the tremendous potential of creativity can make the difference to achieve good quality of life, reduced inequalities, social cohesion, civic participation, promotion of the diversity of cultural expressions, environmental sustainability, and quality education for all. Indeed, as sharply pointed out in the Zero draft of the “New Urban Agenda” that will be examined at the Third United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III), “the battle for sustainable development will be won or lost in cities.”

### Documents of reference

- **“Hangzhou Outcomes”**, International Conference on Culture for Sustainable Cities, 10-12 December 2015
- **“Beijing Agenda”**, Second UNESCO Creative Cities Beijing Summit, 6-8 June 2016
- **Zero Draft of the “New Urban Agenda”**, Third United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development

In this context, the UCCN Mayors’ Meeting provides a unique opportunity for mayors and vice-mayors to discuss and exchange different approaches of integrating culture and creativity to the local policy-making for sustainable urban development. This policymakers’ dialogue is to focus on challenges of common interest, such as the effective means to harness the full potential of the UCCN in building multi-level cooperation, so as to respond to the “New Urban Agenda” to be adopted at the Habitat III Conference in Quito, Ecuador, this October.

Mayors and vice mayors will be invited to share their visions and experiences on the following themes:

1. **Prospects of implementing the SDGs locally, notably SDG 11 – “Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable”**

Today, more than half of the world population lives in urban areas, and it is expected that this number will continue to increase rapidly over the coming years. Thus, local and regional governments are called to play a major role in implementing the 2030 Agenda and the city-related SDG 11, in particular. This goal directly calls on local public officials and

\(^1\) Hangzhou Outcomes, International Conference on Culture for Sustainable Cities, 10-12 December 2015
policymakers to take forward-looking approaches based on cooperation, mutual support and peer-to-peer learning to move towards a sustainable development path, by ensuring housing and basic services (11.1), safe transport systems (11.2), participatory planning (11.3), awareness raising for cultural and natural heritage safeguarding (11.4), disasters prevention (11.5), reduction of environmental impact (11.6), access to green and public spaces (11.7), positive linkages between urban, peri-urban and rural areas (11.a), mitigation of climate change and risks (11.b), and resilient buildings (11.c).

Through inter-city partnerships, the UCCN recognizes that the current context of disparate and rapid urbanization requires participatory urban planning, engaging cross-sectorial and multi-level approaches to come up with appropriate and integrated local development policy frameworks and strategies. The Network also recognizes the need to offer special support to least developed cities from the Global South by enhancing North-South and South-South cooperation. While striving for local sustainable development in its various aspects, the Creative Cities understood the leveraging impact of cultural and creative industries, heritage and traditional knowledge in individual, social, environmental and economic development. Elevating cultural and creative assets, as well as investing in human potential in creativity, enable Creative Cities to build more innovative and people-centred future towards sustainable urban development.

### Suggested questions for reflection

- How to integrate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and its SDG 11 in particular, into medium and long-term local and regional strategies and plans?
- How to use culture and creativity as enablers of sustainable urban development?
- How to harness the full potential of the UCCN to strengthen multi-level partnerships, including North-South and South-South cooperation?
- How to monitor and assess the impact of culture-led development at the local and regional levels and the implementation of SDGs, including SDG 11?

### 2. Broadening the interconnection between urban, peri-urban and rural areas

Urban-rural linkages refer to complementary and synergetic functions and flows of people, goods and services, knowledge and information between rural, peri-urban and urban areas. Indeed, sustainable urban development cannot be achieved without taking account of the mutual dependency between urban and rural areas. Cities depend on rural territories for a wide range of goods and services including food, clean water, environmental services, as well as raw materials and natural resources. In turn, rural areas depend on cities for access to services, employment opportunities and markets.

The increasing urbanization process has been profoundly reshaping human habitat and has showed its ability to both positively and negatively affect its social, economic and environmental dimensions. Disparities and heterogeneous opportunities and benefits can significantly hinder sustainable development by driving wedges across the territory. Therefore, integrated urban-rural policies can provide necessary support to create positive
economic, social and environmental impacts and strengthen linkages between urban, peri-
urban and rural areas. As highlighted in the Habitat III Issue Paper on Urban Rural Linkages, “more effort is needed to develop legislative frameworks to strengthen urban-rural linkages and to ensure they serve an agenda of balanced sustainable and inclusive development”.

This synergic interconnection will thus be at the core of this year’s Annual Meeting in Östersund, where urban-rural connection is used as another driver, alongside culture and creativity, for a collective sustainable development of the Jämtland Härjedalen region. In this session, the focus will thus be put on how culture and creativity can contribute to foster rural-urban interconnection, by notably incubating cultural and creative industries, generating new employment opportunities, fostering the mobility of cultural professionals, beyond and across urban and rural areas.

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<th>Suggested questions for reflexion</th>
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<td>▪ How to broaden perspectives on the interconnection between urban and rural areas to reduce disparities throughout the territory and achieve sustainable development?</td>
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<td>▪ How urban-rural dialogue can foster equal cultural, social and economic benefits and opportunities?</td>
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<td>▪ How to establish efficient multi-level and multi-stakeholder approaches for collaborative and inclusive urban planning in the field of culture and creativity?</td>
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<td>▪ How to enhance and promote connectivity and mobility between urban and rural areas through culture and creativity?</td>
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3. Fostering culture and creativity in generating public spaces, enhancing participation, social cohesion, and enabling prosperity

Culture and creativity are intrinsically linked to public spaces, in which social cohesion, intercultural dialogue and civic participation can be strengthened, while access to markets, jobs, information and public services can be enlarged. Public spaces shape a city’s identity and help fostering the quality of life of citizens, to whom free access and movement have to be naturally granted. As highlighted in the Zero draft of the “New Urban Agenda”, public spaces “must be seen as multi-functional areas for social interaction, economic exchange, and cultural expression among a wide diversity of people and should be designed and managed to ensure human development, building peaceful and democratic societies and promoting cultural diversity.” The multi-functionality of public spaces directly calls for greater possibilities for citizens to express themselves, appropriate, reshape, build and improve their city with innovation and creativity.

Policy makers should ensure good quality of public spaces, by designing efficient, integrated and innovative measures that allow cities to foster resilient, safe and sustainable urban environment in the best possible ways, as well as to provide adequate infrastructure and support for creators and cultural professionals. Public spaces should also been seen as driver for economic development, productivity and prosperity. The potential roles of creativity and cultural industries in shaping and making public spaces live and evolve would be highlighted in this third session.
Suggested questions for reflexion

- How to release the full potential of public spaces as enablers of social cohesion and stability, as well as cultural and civic participation?
- How to foster inclusive cultural participation through public spaces?
- How to ensure equal access to, and distribution of, local services and markets while nurture prosper economic productivity, in particular for the creative industries?
- How to use creativity as a lever to build safer, greener, more inclusive, resilient and sustainable public spaces, thus improving the overall quality of urban life?

Outcomes

- Summary of discussions between the policymakers of the Creative Cities.
- Joint declaration of the UCCN mayor’s and vice-mayors addressed to the upcoming Habitat III Conference.
- Live online broadcast of the Mayors’ Meeting.