CHANGSHA INITIATIVE

The Third International Youth Forum on Creativity and Heritage along the Silk Roads

31 March - 5 April 2019
Changsha and Nanjing
The People's Republic of China
PREAMBLE

We are young people from the countries of the Silk Roads and beyond who participated in the Third International Youth Forum on Creativity and Heritage along the Silk Roads held in Changsha and Nanjing, China, from 31 March to 5 April 2019.

Initiated in 2017, the Forum is organized within the framework of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the “Belt and Road” Initiative (BRI) proposed by China, two endeavours that ‘aim to deepen “connectivity” across countries and among peoples’, as stated by the United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres. This third gathering is an active response to Chinese President Xi Jinping’s letter of reply to youth representatives who participated in the second Forum, in which President Xi encourages young people to make their own efforts in building a community with a shared future.

During this Forum, we came together in the spirit of the ancient Silk Roads and interacted with peers, young entrepreneurs, youth leaders and municipal, national and international governmental officials, from within the cultural and creative industries. We discussed and experienced first-hand how youth can contribute to innovation and heritage, promoting economic development, social progress and people-to-people bonds. We confirmed the important role culture plays in the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, and the objectives of the BRI in safeguarding world peace, cultural diversity and promoting sustainable development. We share the spirit of the following instruments:

- 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development
- Convention for the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (1972)
- Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003),
- Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (2005),
- Youth2030: The United Nations Strategy on Youth
- UNESCO Operational Strategy on Youth 2014-2021
- Agenda 2063, the strategic framework for the socio-economic transformation of the African continent, and
- Vision and Actions on Jointly Building Silk Road Economic Belt and 21st Century Maritime Silk Road.
As participants of the Third International Youth Forum on Creativity and Heritage along the Silk Roads:

We reaffirmed our positive and constructive role in innovation-driven development, and the conservation and transmission of heritage to achieve the important objectives of Sustainable Development Goals and the BRI. We came to realize that exchange and mutual learning constitute an exceptional catalyst for enabling lasting cooperation, promoting the sharing of experiences and fostering solidarity within and among communities, cultures, faiths, generations and nations. We are determined to strengthen capacity building, engage in developing innovative ideas, safeguarding and transmitting heritage and to promote the development of education, sciences, cultural inheritance and innovation, and multi-field interconnection worldwide.

As young people, we have the creativity, the potential and the capacity to make change happen – for ourselves, for our communities, and for the rest of the world. In the meantime, we are also confronted with multiple challenges. The imbalance between global and regional development has led to an imbalance of youth participation in these tasks. Building partnerships and utilizing innovative strengths are conductive to meeting challenges together and creating a better future shared by all.

Therefore, we call for the establishment of an open youth innovation partnership to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. This Partnership can leverage the power of youth, utilize the resources of cities, and be driven by innovation and creativity to promote the important role of youth in maintaining world peace and sustainable development through exchange, mutual learning and cooperation.

Based on this Partnership, we have proposed the following consensus and concrete recommendations:

Consensus 1: Young women and men are the living force of creativity and innovation.

Creativity and innovation enable and drive inclusive, sustainable and meaningful development. Young people can play a vital role in innovation-driven development, conservation and transmission of heritage.

We should have access to the necessary environment and conditions to give full play to our innovative spirit and to perform creative work.

Recommendations:

1. Financial and intellectual support from governments, enterprises, schools and other parties should be provided to promote youth development, innovation and entrepreneurship.
2. Multi-stakeholder collaboration should be encouraged for the digitization of underrepresented cultural heritage, including locally-relevant culture, to be used as educational materials and integrated into school curricula.
3. Policies should be elaborated that are inclusive and accessible, so as to engage a broad range of youth, including persons with different physical and mental disabilities, gender and sexual identity, to play an active role in policy-making and to foster creativity and innovation.

Consensus 2: Young women and men are beneficiaries of and contributors to exchange and mutual learning:

Exchange and mutual learning are important ways for young people from around the world to enhance mutual understanding and lay the foundations that will enable young people to cooperate internationally and to work actively together. From another perspective, young people’s active engagement in dialogue and communication could enrich exchange and mutual learning. The energy and ideas generated during International Youth Forum meetings should be harnessed to establish connections between alumni of IYF3 and alumni of the first two Forums, as well as of future Forums.

We need platforms that allow us to share ideas, and to learn from one another.

Recommendation:

4. Networks should be reinforced or established to provide off-line and virtual spaces for young people to share ideas on creativity and heritage protection, and information on international youth cooperation projects, awards and competitions, and to foster exchanges of global youth to develop ideas and to protect heritage.

Consensus 3: Young people with capacities and skills are better dream-chasers and contributors to a better world in this new era:

Young people (particularly young women, and youth from Africa and small island developing States (SIDS)) should have access to learning and training opportunities that equip them with the necessary skills and competencies as a means of reducing poverty and promoting relevant and sustainable development.

To build our capacities and to obtain meaningful development, we need to be empowered.

Recommendations:

5. More resources, financial and in-kind, need to be allocated to culture. Young people need to be made aware of these resources and taught how to access them with the support of governmental and academic institutions.

6. Cooperation amongst young people should be encouraged so that they share their resources and exploit their strengths.
7. A series of representative stories and examples of young leaders as role models should be disseminated by the means of media arts in order to inspire youth all over the world to become involved in social issues.

8. Workshops, residency programmes, creative industry exchanges and other forms of opportunities should be opened up to young people together with local cultural events, music festivals, book fairs, art exhibitions and other creative cultural activities to provide platforms for youth capacity building.

9. Educating and enabling young people on the practical use of the Internet as a vehicle for global social and sustainable entrepreneurship should be encouraged.

10. Global volunteering opportunities in the cultural and creative industries should be made accessible and promoted.

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