Opportunities for Jamaica’s Culture and Creative Industries
An overview of key opportunities in the framework of UNESCO-led projects supported by the European Union in Jamaica and the Caribbean
April 28, 2022, 9:00am - 10:30am (Kingston time)

Greetings by
Saadia Sanchez-Vegas, PhD, Director and Representative
UNESCO Cluster Office for the Caribbean

Dear cultural and creative community of Jamaica,

I am most pleased to welcome you to this first virtual exchange to learn more about UNESCO's projects for Jamaica's cultural and creative sector and how you can participate and benefit from these opportunities.

I would like to begin by highlighting the significance of culture and cultural diversity. Culture and creativity are critical to strengthening the resilience of Caribbean communities, especially in times of crisis. They bring comfort, inspire, give hope, and build lasting bridges by bringing people together across borders and language barriers. The diversity of Cultural expressions broadens choices, fosters a variety of skills, human values, and worldviews, and provides the wisdom of the past to shape our present for a sustainable future. Cultural expressions such as literature, poetry, theater, music, film, dance, or the visual arts have an economic value as consumer goods; however, beyond that, they create sources of meaning, significance, and artistic perspectives; they convey identities and values and thus contribute to a mutual understanding, social cohesion, and more peaceful societies.
These values lie at the core of the “UNESCO Convention 2005 on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions.” With this 2005 UNESCO Convention, the global community formally recognized for the first time the dual nature of contemporary cultural expressions, produced both culturally and economically by artists and cultural professionals. The Convention represents an effort to foster an environment where artistic and cultural diversity can develop freely and be protected from a purely economic approach.

Guided by the Convention, UNESCO’s programmes and projects ensure that the economic and social rights and the human rights of artists and cultural workers are acknowledged and respected. This includes freedom of expression and protection from censorship. They promote young cultural workers with the skills for creative entrepreneurship. They strengthen cultural exchanges between Caribbean artists and international markets to promote cultural assets, establish interregional knowledge exchange, and build on lessons learned from other regions.

By placing culture at the center of sustainable development, UNESCO’s projects that we present here today are made possible by the generous funding of the European Union and its partner, the Organisation of African, Caribbean, and the Pacific States, which aim to harness diversity and connect artists and cultural professionals from Jamaica, the Caribbean, and interregional.

These projects are:

• Transcultura: Integrating Cuba, the Caribbean and the European Union through culture and creativity

• Creative Caribbean: an ecosystem of “Play” for growth and development

• EU/UNESCO Expert Facility on the Governance of Culture in Developing Countries: support for new regulatory frameworks to strengthen the cultural and creative industries and promote South-South cooperation

I would like to take this opportunity to greet the representatives of the European Union, who have joined this meeting and express my gratitude, on behalf of UNESCO, for their most generous financial support, to make the implementation of these highly relevant projects possible.

I thank you for your kind attention. I wish you all a fruitful exchange.