CULTURE: A TRANSFORMATIVE FORCE FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Throughout history, culture has been able to bring creative responses to the challenges of our times.

AUDREY AZOULAY
Director-General of UNESCO
In line with the United Nation's Decade of Action, UNESCO calls upon Member States in this first session of the SDG Moment to continue to harness the transversal potential of culture in the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

**CULTURE AND THE WORLD ECONOMY**

- The cultural and creative industries contribute US$2,250BN to the global economy (3% of GDP) and account for 29.5 MILLION jobs worldwide.
- Cultural tourism makes up nearly 40% of world tourism revenues. The UNESCO World Heritage List includes 1,121 sites globally, including 50 ocean spaces in 37 countries.
- Cities account for 70% of the global economy and there are 246 cities in the UNESCO Creative Cities Network.
- In 2013, the global trade of cultural goods amounted to US$190.5BN and the cultural and creative industries contributed US$200BN to the digital economy.

- Nearly 20% by surface area of all existing marine protected areas (MPAs).
Member States increasingly acknowledge the importance of culture in driving progress towards the 2030 Agenda in their Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs). Culture is the bridge that translates global ambitions into national and local realities; from social inclusion to tackling climate change, from food security to rebuilding communities following conflict, and from lifelong learning to stronger institutions.

Since 2016, 205 VNRs were submitted by 169 countries. Of the 47 countries that submitted their VNR in 2020, 63% have successfully integrated culture by mentioning concrete policies and initiatives.
Strengthening the link between cultural diversity and biodiversity fosters a more sustainable human-nature interactions.

The respect for cultural diversity - from the right to express and create to that of fostering access to cultural life - is inseparable from respect for human rights.

Protecting marine heritage helps achieve healthy and productive oceans.

Traditional knowledge and skills build resilience to counter the effects of natural disasters and climate change.

Culture can trigger behavioural changes towards more sustainable consumption and production patterns.

Creativity and cultural heritage are at the heart of people-based strategies for more sustainable cities and communities.

Respect for cultural diversity generates positive dialogue and social inclusion.

Energy consumption patterns are powered by cultural behaviours.

The cultural and creative industries offer job opportunities adapted to local realities and needs.

Cultural infrastructure and creative professionals drive innovation and diversify economies.

Community engagement in the safeguarding of cultural and natural heritage improves the sustainable development of water-related ecosystems.

Fostering cultural participation helps to advance gender equality and women’s empowerment.

Arts education and linguistic diversity encourage intercultural dialogue, equipping young people with the skills to become global citizens.

Culture strengthens communication and information for disease prevention.

Local and indigenous knowledge promotes sustainable agricultural practices and food security.

HOW CAN CULTURE HELP FILL IMPLEMENTATION GAPS IN THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE 17 SDGS?

Culture helps eradicate the social and economic aspects of poverty.

Artists, cultural professionals and policy makers are drivers of innovative partnerships.

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