

UNESCO World Conference on Cultural Policies and Sustainable Development – MONDIACULT 2022 (28-30 September 2022, Mexico City)

Final Declaration

We, the Ministers of Culture of the Member States of UNESCO, met at the UNESCO World Conference on Cultural Policies and Sustainable Development - MONDIACULT 2022 in Mexico City, from 28 to 30 September 2022, 40 years after the historic 1982 MONDIACULT Conference and 24 years after the 1998 Stockholm Conference – both convened by UNESCO – to share our vision of the future of cultural policies and to reaffirm the commitment of the international community in the face of the urgent and complex contemporary challenges in our multicultural societies, and to this end we adopt the present Declaration, which integrates our common priorities and outlines a forward-looking agenda that fully harnesses the transformative impact of culture for the sustainable development.

I. Preamble

1. Reaffirming the fundamental principles of the Declarations adopted at the UNESCO World Conferences on Cultural Policies held in Mexico in 1982 and Stockholm in 1998, as well as their conceptual advances, including the definition of culture as a “set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features that characterize a society or social group, [which] includes not only arts and letters, but also modes of life, the fundamental rights of the human being, value systems, traditions and beliefs”, which laid the ground for the development of UNESCO’s normative action, notably the 2001 Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity, acknowledging cultural diversity as “a source of exchange, innovation and creativity, [...] which is as necessary for humankind as biodiversity is for nature”;
2. Concerned by the impact of contemporary challenges associated with the global landscape, as well as multiple, protracted and multidimensional crises – linked in particular to the dramatic consequences of climate change and biodiversity loss, armed conflicts, natural hazards, pandemics, uncontrolled urbanisation and unsustainable development patterns – which lead notably to increased poverty, setbacks in fundamental rights, accelerated migrations and mobility, as well as exacerbated inequalities, including as regards the digital divide;
3. Commending the new impetus given to the role of culture for sustainable development, peace and stability, as a force for resilience, social inclusion and cohesion, environmental protection and sustainable and inclusive growth, and fostering a human-centred and context-specific development, which supports the foundations of multicultural human societies, while also reaffirming the power of culture to renew and broaden bilateral and multilateral cooperation, promote multilingualism and a culture of peace, and enable

dialogue and solidarity within and between countries, including through cultural diplomacy, as reflected by the growing engagement towards culture within the framework of the United Nations system, including at the country level, and further recalled by the relevant UN General Assembly resolutions and related reports of the UN Secretary-General on culture and development, the UNESCO Meetings of Ministers of Culture (2019, 2020), as well as the historical integration of culture in several political, economic and social fora at the global, regional and interregional levels;

4. Expressing our concern about the continued vulnerability of the cultural sector, particularly in the wake of the global COVID-19 crisis, which has profoundly disrupted the cultural ecosystem as a whole – exacerbating structural fragilities and inequalities, including social and gender gaps and unequal access to culture, as well as restrictions on fundamental freedoms, notably artistic freedom, status and livelihoods of artists, cultural professionals, practitioners and communities, particularly for women, in all areas of the cultural value chain;
5. Further reaffirming the imperative of protecting and promoting human rights and cultural diversity, in view of the increasing threats to culture and its use for purposes which are likely to expose it to destruction or damage in the context of armed conflicts, which result in the intentional or collateral destruction of cultural heritage, the acceleration of illicit trafficking of cultural property, the violation of human and cultural rights, including through discrimination, the disruption of living cultural practices, and exacerbated vulnerability of cultural actors, institutions, sites and markets, thereby undermining the intrinsic value of culture as a link between peoples and a source of income, while at the same time eroding cultural diversity on a global scale;
6. Acknowledging the evolution of the broad spectrum of UNESCO's standard-setting architecture of Declarations, Recommendations and International Conventions over the past decades, which have progressively broadened the scope of culture and provided a comprehensive framework for the protection, safeguarding and promotion of culture in all its dimensions, including, in particular, the Declaration of the Principles of International Cultural Cooperation (1966), the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity (2001) and the UNESCO Declaration concerning the Intentional Destruction of Cultural Heritage (2003); the Recommendation concerning the Status of the Artist (1980), the Recommendation on the Safeguarding of Traditional Culture and Folklore (1989), the Recommendation concerning Historic Urban Landscapes (2011) and the Recommendation concerning the Protection and Promotion of Museums and Collections, their Diversity and their Role in Society (2015); the Universal Copyright Convention (1952), the Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict (1954) and its two Protocols (1954 and 1999), the Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property (1970), the Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (1972), the Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage (2001), the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003) and the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (2005);

7. Welcoming favourably the growing shift towards enhanced transversality of culture in public policies, enabling *inter alia* inclusive and participatory cultural policies, involving a multiplicity of actors – governments, local authorities, civil society organizations, intergovernmental organizations (IGOs), private sector and communities - including women, youth, children, indigenous peoples, persons with disabilities and vulnerable groups, thus expanding the voices of diverse segments of society and taking full advantage of their potential and creative capacities and all resources available to them, to act at social, economic and environmental levels, within the broader framework of cultural policies, as well as the commitments set out in the present Declaration;
8. Underlining the structural impact of the digital transformation on societies and the cultural sector in particular, which affects the cultural industries, and access to cultural goods and services, while opening up prospects for broadening access to culture for all, enhancing the knowledge, documentation, conservation, safeguarding, promotion and management of heritage, and stimulating creativity and innovation; as well as expressing our concerns about the challenges it poses, increasing risks such as the reinforced global imbalance of flows of cultural goods and services, and the impoverishment of cultural and linguistic diversity online, linked to artificial intelligence systems and the insufficient regulation of algorithms, unequal access to culture, the unfair remuneration of artists, cultural professionals and practitioners, as well as deepened inequalities in the global exchange of cultural goods and services, in particular due to the unequal concentration of global cultural platforms;

II. Call to Action

9. We reaffirm our commitment to protect and promote cultural diversity, as the foundation of the identity of peoples and the founding principle of all UNESCO Conventions, Recommendations and Declarations in the field of culture, inseparable from respect for human dignity and all human rights, embodied in cultural heritage – including knowledge systems, practices, objects and cultural sites – as well as in linguistic diversity; and in this perspective, we reiterate the individual and collective responsibility, on behalf of future generations, to ensure the conservation, safeguarding and promotion of the entire cultural sector including cultural heritage, both tangible and intangible, as an ethical imperative, ensuring greater equity, geographical balance and representativity of heritage across all regions, as well as the promotion of cultural and creative industries, as fundamental dimensions to sustain cultural diversity and pluralism, the respect of which constitutes, today more than ever, a ferment of peace and a force for creativity and innovation to build a more sustainable world;
10. We commit, to this effect, to foster an enabling environment conducive to the respect and exercise of all human rights, in particular cultural rights – individual and collective – in all areas of culture, from cultural heritage to cultural and creative sectors, including in the digital environment, in order to build a more just and equitable world, and reduce inequalities, including for women, youth, children, indigenous peoples, people of African descent, persons with disabilities, and vulnerable groups, in particular by (i) supporting

inclusive access to culture and participation in cultural life and its benefits as an ethical, social and economic imperative; (ii) strengthening the economic and social rights of artists, cultural professionals and practitioners, facilitating their mobility and upholding their status, including by reinforcing intellectual property; (iii) protecting and promoting artistic freedom and freedom of expression; (iv) protecting and fostering the diversity of cultural contents, as well as linguistic diversity; (v) implementing legal and public policy frameworks that uphold the rights of peoples and communities to their cultural identity and heritage, including the expressions of the cultures of indigenous peoples; and (vi) expanding efforts to promote the protection, return and restitution of cultural property, including in consultation with the populations concerned and with their free, prior and informed consent;

11. We advocate for a systemic anchoring of culture in public policies, through the adaptation of development strategies and frameworks, at the international, regional, sub-regional, national and local levels, as well as within policies of other relevant UN funds and programmes, as an enabler and driver of resilience, social inclusion and economic growth from education, employment – especially for women and youth – health and emotional well-being to poverty reduction, gender equality, environmental sustainability, tourism, trade and transport, while also sustaining context-relevant models of economic and social development;
12. We call for the strengthening and adaptation of our cultural policies to contemporary challenges, through the effective implementation of relevant UNESCO Culture Conventions and Recommendations, as appropriate, notably by engaging a more systemic participation of a diversity of stakeholders, from national and local actors, including through the UNESCO Creative Cities Network, to cultural institutions, civil society, professional networks and experts, as well as concerned communities, for instance by means of the UNESCO Inter-Agency Platform on Culture for Sustainable Development, and by stimulating the exchange of good practices, in order to mobilize their transformative potential; and we further urge the preservation and strengthening of the financing for culture with the medium-term aim of allocating a progressively increasing national budget to meet the emerging needs and opportunities of the culture sector;
13. We underline the importance of enhancing synergies between culture and education, acknowledging the imperative of context-relevant education, which encompasses cultural heritage, history and traditional knowledge, with a view to (i) expanding learning outcomes and enhancing quality education – especially for young people – as well as the appreciation of cultural diversity, multilingualism, arts education and digital literacy, including in school curricula and lifelong learning, as well as through artificial intelligence; (ii) fostering the systemic integration of culture into formal, informal and non-formal education, including by valuing the contribution of all segments of society to the transmission of knowledge; (iii) supporting technical and vocational education and training (TVET) in the cultural sector through structural investment in public policies to foster the necessary adaptation of skills, to support employment; as well as (iv) investing in the educational and social role of museums, creative hubs, libraries, archives and cultural institutions; and in this regard we support the development of a revised UNESCO framework on culture and arts education, to encompass the evolutions of the cultural sector, in collaboration with relevant stakeholders, such as UNESCO National Commissions and expert networks;

14. We reiterate our call for the protection of cultural heritage, tangible and intangible, as well as cultural expressions, notably in times of crisis, including extreme climate events and natural hazards, and condemn actions that target culture in the context of armed conflicts and the use of cultural properties or its surroundings for military purposes, and we support efforts for the effective implementation of norms and standards of international law in this field, in particular the UNESCO 1954 Convention and its two Protocols (1954 and 1999), the UNESCO 1970, 1972, 2001, 2003 and 2005 Conventions, as well as the UNIDROIT 1995 Convention and the UNESCO Declaration concerning the Intentional Destruction of Cultural Heritage (2003), including by strengthening action in emergency situations as an ethical and security imperative to combat organised crime and the financing of terrorism, based on the relevant UN resolutions, by bringing together all concerned international institutions and organisations and the existing technical and financial mechanisms related to the UNESCO Conventions in the field of culture, with a view to supporting countries in their protection efforts, international solidarity and national recovery strategies;
15. We stress the importance of integrating cultural heritage and creativity into international discussions on climate change, given its multidimensional impact on the safeguarding of all forms of cultural heritage and expressions and acknowledging the role of culture for climate action, notably through traditional and indigenous knowledge systems; we therefore encourage UNESCO to develop operational guidelines on the subject, in the framework of the UNESCO conventions and recommendations in the field of culture, including the UNESCO 1972, 2001, 2003 and 2005 Conventions and the UNESCO 2011 and 2015 Recommendations, in synergy with relevant international organizations, frameworks and mechanisms, such as the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO), the United Nations Agriculture Organisation (FAO), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), as well as the Flexible Mechanism for addressing the impacts of climate change on cultural and natural heritage (2020), with the aim of assisting Member States in the development of their policies and strategies to address extreme climate impacts affecting the entire cultural sector, which encompasses cultural heritage, including underwater and natural heritage, cultural and creative industries, and livelihoods; as well as with a view to deepen the dialogue with Member States on reducing the carbon footprint of the cultural sector;
16. We mark our commitment to fight against the illicit trafficking of cultural property by ensuring the effective implementation of the UNESCO 1970 Convention and its associated mechanisms, and by strengthening international cooperation with all relevant partners, including INTERPOL, the World Customs Organization (WCO), UNIDROIT, the International Council of Museums (ICOM) and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), as well as with the art market; and we request UNESCO to scale up its response on a global scale, by (i) strengthening advocacy and action concerning the impact

of illicit trafficking on the memory, identity and future of peoples; (ii) encouraging the introduction of penal or administrative sanctions in national legislations; (iii) promoting the development of national and local capacities in all countries; (iv) fostering increased and effective cooperation with art market actors, notably with regard to reinforcing the codification of the certificate of origin of cultural property and preventing the acquisition of unprovenanced objects, for museums and private collectors; and (v) ensuring the engagement, mobilisation and coordination of all stakeholders, as well as the public at large, including through digital technologies and online platforms, taking into account the increase in the online trade of cultural property, and supporting awareness-raising;

17. We call for an open and inclusive international dialogue for the return and restitution of cultural property, including illegally exported property, to countries of origin under UNESCO's aegis, as well as those outside the scope of the UNESCO 1970 Convention, as an ethical imperative to foster the right of peoples and communities to the enjoyment of their cultural heritage, and in light of the increasing claims from the countries concerned, with a view to strengthen social cohesion and intergenerational transmission of cultural heritage; and we encourage UNESCO to promote the effective implementation of existing legal frameworks or policies for the return of cultural property to its countries of Origin or its restitution in case of illicit appropriation, through proactive mediation by the UNESCO Intergovernmental Committee for Promoting the Return of Cultural Property, and to assist countries in the conservation and management of cultural property *in situ*, through capacity building and the promotion of educational and culturally sensitive approaches, notably in museums and cultural institutions. We also call on UNESCO, as the leading UN agency in the fight against illicit traffic in cultural properties, to propose concrete measures and initiatives to combat this increasing phenomenon and encourage art market actors, museums and private collectors; and to adopt an updated text of the International Code of Ethics for Traders in Cultural Property;

18. We are determined to foster the development of sustainable cultural and creative sectors to support the creative economy within Member States through the effective implementation of the UNESCO 2005 Convention and the UNESCO 1980 Recommendation; *inter alia* by guaranteeing the social and economic rights of artists and cultural professionals, facilitating the mobility, and better regulating digital platforms and engaging them in a participatory dialogue and we call upon UNESCO to assist Member States in harnessing the digital transformation in the cultural sector, building on the 2017 Operational Guidelines on the Implementation of the Convention in the Digital Environment and the culture-related provisions of the 2021 UNESCO Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence, with a view to (i) facilitate equitable access to cultural markets; (ii) design, develop and implement policies and regulatory frameworks, as well as action plans for the production, dissemination and consumption of cultural goods and services, in the digital environment – notably by fostering a structured dialogue between all stakeholders – from the private sector, relevant NGOs and IGOs, in particular the World Trade Organisation (WTO), the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO), the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the International Labour Organisation (ILO), as well as global digital platforms and internet providers; and (iii) build capacities to leverage digital technologies for cultural employment, as well as to enhance

the safeguarding, promotion, digitisation, and inventorying of cultural heritage, including through TVET and by fostering South-South and North-South cooperation;

We, the Ministers of Culture, meeting in Mexico at a critical juncture for the world at large, we commit to a reinforced multilateralism, that recognises culture as a global public good with an intrinsic value to enable and drive sustainable development and we take the full measure of our responsibility, by requesting that UNESCO work towards the joint implementation of the following strategic directions, building on its global and specialized mandate on culture, and its normative instruments and programmes, as follows:

19. We call on the UN Secretary General to firmly anchor culture as a global public good, and to integrate it as a specific goal in its own right in the development agenda beyond 2030 and, to this end, we ask the Director-General of UNESCO to launch a broad consultation involving Member States, civil society, academia and the private sector on the multidimensional impact of culture in our societies as a global public good, and to strengthen advocacy for the inclusion of culture in the United Nations Future Summit, scheduled in 2024, echoing UNESCO's founding mandate to "build peace in the minds of men and women" through social justice and human dignity;
20. To support the positioning of culture as a global public good, advance the implementation of the *Our Common Agenda* report and the *Declaration on the commemoration of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations* adopted by the UN General Assembly, and inform future cultural and public policies and strategies, as well UNESCO's programmatic action, we underline the need to coordinate, strengthen and develop instruments and mechanisms for the integrated analysis, monitoring and measurement of culture and its impact on sustainable development, and call upon the Director-General of UNESCO to develop conceptual studies on the impact of culture in all its dimensions, together with relevant data, and produce a comprehensive Global Report on Cultural Policies on a quadrennial basis, building on information, data and existing indicators provided by its Member States, notably in the framework of the periodic reports of the Organization's complete set of normative instruments in the field of culture, as well as related programmes and statistical and indicator frameworks at its disposal;
21. We consider meeting at the ministerial level to measure progress, impacts, and opportunities in the field of culture to be highly important and to this end, we call on UNESCO to consider convening, from 2025 onwards, a World Forum on Cultural Policies, every four years, within the appropriate existing procedures and mechanisms, with the aim of addressing priority areas for cultural policy in a constructive and inclusive dialogue of all actors concerned, to strengthen multilateral action, collaboration and solidarity between countries and to contribute to the strategic lines of work for UNESCO within the framework of its Governing Bodies and building on the findings of the Global Report on Cultural Policies;
22. Finally, we request that the Director-General of UNESCO develop a plan with concrete actions and timeframe to accelerate the implementation of the provisions of the present Declaration in the framework of the Medium-Term Strategy of the Organization and its

Programme and Budget, sustain an effective dialogue with the UNESCO Member States and relevant stakeholders, and provide regular reporting to Member States on implementation achievements and challenges.