

## Cancun Declaration on Cultural Diversity

On the occasion of the 5th WTO Ministerial Conference in Cancun, Mexico, September 2003, the undersigned representatives of civil society, declare that cultural diversity is an inalienable element of humanity which we support and will promote now and in future. Thus, we adopt the following Declaration:

- Recognising that expression of culture is one of the fundamental human rights and the basis for a functioning democracy;
- reaffirming that cultural diversity is as necessary for humankind as biodiversity is for nature, and that, therefore, policies to safeguard and promote cultural diversity are an essential part of policies aimed at sustainable development;
- considering that services related to culture reflect and transmit unique societal values that go far beyond commercial interests and that relevant trade policy measures must take full account of those values;
- taking into consideration that the possibility for each individual to learn about, to access, and to participate in his or her own culture is the basis for sustaining and promoting cultural diversity;
- bearing in mind cases where trade policy has had negative consequences for cultural policies, and that, therefore, evaluating possible impacts of trade policies on cultural diversity must become an essential tool in any trade negotiations;
- recalling and endorsing the UNESCO Declaration on Cultural Diversity of November 2001 and the Council of Europe Declaration on Cultural Diversity of December 2000;
- mindful of the fact that globalisation poses new challenges to the preservation and development of cultures in different ways;
- emphasising that cultural diversity is based on freedom of expression, media pluralism, multilingualism, more balanced exchanges between cultures and the possibility for all forms of cultural expression to have equal access to the means of articulation, production and dissemination, including in digital form

we call upon Members of the World Trade Organisation

- to maintain and promote policies which safeguard a viable living space for audiovisual and other cultural goods and services on the local and national level;
- to study and adopt innovative cultural policies in order to sustain and promote cultural diversity in a globalised environment;
- to take all necessary steps in ongoing GATS negotiations and in any negotiations that might commence about investment, competition policy or government procurement to ensure that cultural policies aimed at preserving and fostering cultural diversity are neither compromised nor weakened as a consequence of the application of international trade rules;
- to involve fully cultural experts and all relevant bodies of civil society in a dialogue about any contemplated trade commitments that affect cultural diversity;
- to support policies assisting least developed countries, developing countries, and the countries in transition to build sustainable local environments where indigenous cultural expression can flourish in all media and in all art forms.