



International Network for Cultural Diversity

*A Voice for Culture and the Arts
in the Era of Globalization*

NEWSLETTER

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1. UNESCO Convention Enters into Force

The UNESCO *Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions* enters into force on 18 March 2007. The total number of states that have advised UNESCO of their ratification or accession has now reached 50, the next important threshold, since the operational body of the Convention, the Intergovernmental Committee, will now increase to 24 states.

Speaking in Toronto, INCD Executive Director Garry Neil said: “This is the next benchmark in the campaign to promote cultural diversity and another important moment for INCD. Our Convention ratification campaign has played a role in achieving this threshold and we congratulate those governments that have understood the opportunity offered by the UNESCO Convention. We continue to urge others to complete their ratification processes quickly. The effectiveness of the Convention as a shield for cultural policies against the trade and investment agreements, and a positive tool for cultural development, will increase with each new State Party,” Mr. Neil concluded.

At meetings of INCD Africa on 4 March in Dakar, Senegal and INCD Europe on 8 March in Brussels, Belgium, delegates noted that the Convention is essential for European states and civil society, and equally for African states and civil society. Both INCD groups committed to continuing to work for the ratification and effective implementation of the Convention.

2. Convention Implementation

UNESCO's Director General has announced that the initial Conference of State Parties to the Convention will be convened within the next three months, likely in mid-June. The date is expected to be announced at or before a Convention information meeting being convened by the Director General on 23 March at UNESCO headquarters. The Conference of State Parties is the highest governing body of the Convention.

In a significant development, UNESCO has created a new secretariat on cultural expressions, in the Cultural Enterprise and Copyright section of the culture division. The secretariat is headed by Ms. Galia Saouma-Forero, with whom INCD met on 2 March. In addition to administering the new Convention, this section will be responsible for:

Universal Copyright Convention

Florence Agreement

Recommendation on the Status of the Artist

Global Alliance for Cultural Diversity

In discussing this new division with INCD, the officials indicated that UNESCO may launch an anti-piracy observatory as part of a new campaign to discourage piracy of copyright works. They also noted that the Global Alliance is due to conclude in 2008 and the relationship between it and the International Fund for Cultural Diversity established by the Convention needs to be considered.

The secretariat confirmed that NGO observers will be invited to the initial Conference of State Parties. The meeting will include the formalities of creating a new body within UNESCO, such as approving its own rules of procedure. The Conference must decide on modalities and elect the Intergovernmental Committee.

The Conference will deal with two other important matters:

- the mandate of the Intergovernmental Committee;
- the rules, commitments and the types of projects that will be funded by the International Fund for Cultural Diversity.

In its work with UNESCO and national governments, INCD has the following objectives for implementation of the Convention:

- A meaningful role for civil groups in the processes and deliberations. INCD will seek a formal place at the meetings of the Intergovernmental Committee, which can, under the Convention, invite experts to collaborate with it.
- State Parties to make a substantial commitment of new resources to the International Fund for Cultural Diversity.
- UNESCO to provide an appropriate framework and begin to collect the important cultural diversity data.
- Appropriate procedures to encourage countries to work together to monitor developments in other forums (particularly the trade negotiations) and to collaborate to achieve the objectives of the Convention. This should be a key part of the mandate of the Intergovernmental Committee and the responsibilities of the secretariat.
- Mechanisms to guarantee the implementation of the commitments to promote

sustainable cultural development. This also should be explicit in the mandate and the secretariat.

3. ARTerial Conference on Vitalizing African Cultural Assets

The Conference originally conceived by INCD and the Danish Center for Culture and Development, and which was organized by HIVOS, took place last week at the Gorée Institute in Dakar, Senegal. Sixty-three selected experts from around the Continent (a few came from Europe, one was from Canada) came together to discuss the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats facing Africa's arts and culture sector under four major concerns:

- economic sustainability;
- arts management capacities;
- cooperation and exchange; and
- lobbying and organization building.

While a final report from the Conference will be made available on the Internet (www.hivos.nl/english/arterial) over the coming weeks, delegates agreed to continue to work together and with funding partners to develop practical programs and projects to address the weaknesses and to take advantage of the opportunities identified at the Conference.

The delegates discussed and agreed that the UNESCO Convention provides a significant opportunity for the African arts and culture sector to address many of the weaknesses they had identified. To seize this opportunity, and among other measures, delegates agreed the following steps were necessary in the next year:

- a popular guide to the Convention should be developed and widely circulated;
- at least 20 African countries should become signatory to the Convention (there are now 11);
- work on developing national lobbies is essential and there is a need to link these lobbies with each other and with INCD; and
- a database of information about African policy experts, festivals and events, national lobbies, funders working on the continent, successful case studies, and other information should be developed.

Another stream of discussion concerned Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers. Many delegates believe that working nationally to incorporate a cultural dimension into the PRSPs is an essential vehicle to promote cultural development, since decisions of development agencies are frequently driven by the national priorities established in them.

INCD Africa Launched

At a meeting in Dakar held on 4 March in collaboration with the ARTerial Conference, INCD Africa was officially launched. Based in Dakar at an office provided by the Senegalese Network of Socio-Cultural Actors, INCD Africa will bring together networks from around the continent to work for the ratification and effective implementation of the

Convention, to develop lobbies that can encourage supportive national, regional and continental policies and to represent the interests of the arts and culture sector at the African Union, NEPAD and other important continental institutions. The group will also work to ensure that the needs and perspectives of Africa are fully integrated into the global cultural diversity movement.

On 8 March, INCD Africa met with Senegal President Abdoulaye Wade, whose re-election victory in the first round of voting conducted on 25 February was confirmed only days before the Conference began. At the meeting, President Wade welcomed the creation of INCD Africa, offered an *Accord de Siege*, which is an essential legal status for an NGO in that country, and promised to talk with other African Heads of States about the importance of the ratification and effective implementation of the UNESCO Convention. We also discussed practical collaboration between INCD Africa and his government.

Look for more news about INCD Africa in upcoming newsletters or contact Ibrahima Seck, INCD Africa Coordinator at iseck@yahoo.fr.

4. South Koreans Continue the Fight to Save the Cinema Screen Quota

As reported in previous newsletters (Vol.7 No.1, No.2), South Korean filmmakers are engaged in a struggle to save the cinema screen quota system responsible for the flourishing of Korean movies in the past decade. In January 2006, the South Korean government slashed the quota in half as a pre-condition for beginning negotiations for a free trade agreement with the United States. The reduced quota took effect in July 2006.

The film industry has held large demonstrations, worked internationally to gain the support of key filmmakers and film festivals, and conducted a general strike to press its views. As part of its campaign, filmmakers have been raising awareness of the importance of the UNESCO Convention. In November 2006, the government banned all public demonstrations concerning the proposed FTA and several leading members of the Coalition fighting for the quotas were summoned to appear in court.

As well as protecting the quota, cultural activists in South Korea are alarmed by some of the issues being negotiated with the United States. The U.S. demands include fully opening online distribution of films, music and television, fully opening video on demand services, lifting foreign ownership limits in television broadcasting and further easing broadcasting regulations and quotas. As with other major FTAs signed in the past few years, the U.S. is seeking full liberalization of the digital market, including all services produced, stored or delivered electronically.

South Korean filmmakers have joined with other civil society groups in broader opposition to the proposed FTA. In July 2006, they were part of a 100,000-strong demonstration in Seoul protesting against the undemocratic nature of the negotiations and raising concerns about the many aspects of Korean life and economy that could be negatively affected by the FTA. With the U.S. President's trade promotion (Fast-Track)

authority set to expire in June 2007, there is some hope that the agreement will not be concluded in time. However, the Korean Screen Quota Action Alliance intends to continue its campaign through the December 2007 Presidential election.

5. INCD Membership Renewal Campaign

INCD has launched a drive to renew and expand its membership. Membership in the network is open to all organizations of artists and creators, cultural producers from every media, academics, heritage institutions and others who share our view that diverse cultures and artistic expressions can and must thrive in a world of global marketplaces and rapidly changing media technologies. For more information, please contact incd@neilcraigassociates.com, or visit our website, www.incd.net.

6. Studies and Reports

Culturelink Book on UNESCO Convention

The first independent assessment and authoritative analysis of the UNESCO Convention has been published by the Culturelink Network. Edited by Joost Smiers and Nina Obuljen, *UNESCO's Convention on the Protection and the Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions: Making it Work*, provides the history behind the adoption of the Convention, analyses its legal value and potential impact, and tries to envisage the most appropriate strategies for its effective implementation. With chapters authored by some of the leading experts in the field from every part of the globe, the book is essential reading for all those involved in the cultural diversity movement. For information on ordering, visit www.culturelink.org.

Burama Sagnia Report on Culture and Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers

In a study commissioned for the ARTerial Conference by INCD and DCCD, African cultural development expert Burama Sagnia has reviewed the cultural effectiveness of Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers in West and Central Africa. He shows how cultural activists in Ghana and Senegal have succeeded in integrating culture into the PRSP of each of those states, while other states have completely ignored the economic and social potential of cultural development. A copy of the report is available at www.incd.net.

International Music Council Releases Study on Musical Diversity

This is a comprehensive study carried out for UNESCO by the IMC. Richard Letts, the principal investigator, and a large number of consultants and informants have produced a definitive analysis of the challenges and opportunities for musical diversity around the world. It explores music diversity issues around a number of themes: human rights, sustainable development, peace, the standards regulating musical diversity, the imposition of monoculture, musicians, identity and, challenges and responses. The report is available at www.unesco.org/imc.

With so much reading to do, we believe that cultural diversity activists will be too busy in the next few weeks to attend any conferences. The Events and Announcements feature will return in the next edition.

The INCD would like to thank the Swedish International Development Agency, the Danish Center for Culture and Development and the Flemish community for providing important contributions to our work. We also wish to thank l'Organisation internationale de la Francophonie for providing much needed support for our recent meeting in Rio de Janeiro.

**INCD/RIDC
5 Brulé Crescent,
Toronto ON M6S 4H8
Canada
Tel 1.416.604.3326
incd@neilcraigassociates.com
www.incd.net**

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