

Ninth Newsletter of the International Network for Cultural Diversity

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With GATS talks starting again in Geneva this March, the INCD has been active. Coordinator Garry Neil traveled to Geneva and has returned with an inside look at the World Trade Organization. Our members are attending important meetings relating to cultural diversity and trade. And plans are underway for next year's INCD conference in Lucerne, Switzerland.

Inside the Maze

Officials at the WTO in Geneva offered these cryptic clues about upcoming activities - some commentary has been added by Garry Neil.

Under its rules, the WTO must hold a Ministerial meeting this year. The time, place and objectives for the meeting have not yet been finalized.

The WTO Council meets early in the year and finalizing plans for the ministerial will be a key matter for that meeting to determine. (On January 23rd, after Garry Neil filed this report, the WTO Council agreed to host their fourth ministerial meeting in Doha, Qatar, from November 5-9, 2001.)

It is unlikely that the 2001 Ministerial meeting will attempt to launch a comprehensive new round of trade talks. There is not enough time and little political will for this approach. Michael Moore's (half-) term as WTO Director General expires at the end of 2002, and it is possible a Ministerial meeting to launch a new round could be called for Fall 2002.

Talks are proceeding slowly at the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) level. The deadline for submissions and proposals for proceeding with the GATS agenda was December 2000, but few countries responded. In January, staff will synthesize these submissions and prepare a report for the GATS Council. This report will recommend how to proceed with the talks on "the reduction or elimination of the adverse effects on trade in service of measures as a means of providing effective market access."

The culmination of this process will be the GATS Council meeting in March, a "stocktaking" exercise that will establish the objectives and timetable for the negotiations. While GATS talks alone are unlikely to succeed, some believe "progress" is possible if the talks on agriculture are included in the mix. It is possible Ministers will attempt to bring these two processes together at their 2001 meeting in an effort to resolve elements of both.

Other work at the GATS includes discussion of "classification" issues and domestic regulation. Each may have consequences for the cultural sector.

One of the countries that did make a substantive submission on GATS was the United States. The documents are available at www.ustr.gov.

Of primary concern is the proposal on Audiovisual and Related Services available at www.ustr.gov/sectors/services/audio.html. As expected, the US favours significant negotiations in this sector. "The proposal is intended to provide a framework for future work in the WTO that will contribute to the continued growth of this sector by ensuring an open and predictable environment that recognizes public concern for the preservation and promotion of cultural values and identity. At the same time, the proposal is intended to stimulate discussion of the significant role that the audiovisual sector plays in the digitally networked society." In a separate submission, the US also urges discussion about "value added telecomm" and e-commerce activities, both of which have implications for the cultural sector.

On the Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property (TRIPS) side, there is ongoing work on geographical indications, patents in biotechnology, and what is called NVNI (Non-violation, nullification and impairment). NVNI is a general principle that, effective January 2001 was to apply to the TRIPS. The principle gives member states the right to file a complaint against another member for a measure that, while not a technical violation of the agreement, nonetheless impairs the benefits the other member would reasonably expect to receive under the agreement. While the failure in Seattle meant that a number of issues about how this clause is to be implemented were not addressed, most believe the clause does now apply to TRIPS commitments. This may have consequences for the world's cultural community since artistic works are among the types of intellectual property protected by copyright.

INCD's Upcoming Appearances

Brazilian member Nitis Jacon will represent the INCD at the World Social Forum in Porto Alegre, Brazil, this January 25-30. Billed the "Counter-Davos forum," the event will convene at the same time as the yearly meeting of multinational CEOs in the exclusive ski resort of Davos, Switzerland. By contrast Porto Alegre is one of the few cities run by a socialist mayor and an elaborate system of participatory democracy.

Alternatives to the present form of globalization will be discussed by hundreds of civil society representatives from around the world. You can follow along at www.forumsocialmundial.org, where you will see that "Independent communication, culture, and art" are included on the agenda. Maude Barlow of the Council of Canadians will mention the launch and activities of the INCD from the podium, and Nitis Jacon will network on behalf of the INCD. Nitis, who is the artistic director of the International Festival of Londrina, is also representing the Latin American and Caribbean Presenters' Network and other regional cultural organizations.

We hope the meetings in Porto Alegre will inspire cultural organizers to make their presence felt at the Peoples' Summit of the Americas this April in Quebec City. The Summit will protest the meeting the Free Trade Area of the Americas negotiations. Its program is available in the

Events section of the Common Frontiers web site, www.web.net/comfront/ Meanwhile the International Forum on Globalization (IFG) will hold a teach-in on February 24- 25 in New York City on technology and globalization. Unlike previous teach-ins in Seattle and Washington, this will not likely be followed by marches or riots since there are no WTO or IMF meetings planned at that time. However, it will feature international leaders such as Vandana Shiva (India), Martin Khor (Malaysia) and Jeremy Rifkin (USA). INCD steering committee members James Early (USA) and Megan Williams (Canada) will attend, as will coordinator Garry Neil (Canada). Since IFG president Jerry Mander spoke in Santorini, our network has been committed to collaborating with them on these issues. See more about the meetings at www.ifg.org.

In Europe, Peter Curman (Sweden) will represent the INCD at a seminar on the status of artists in the European Union in Gotland, Sweden, from March 29 to April 1, 2001. Email council@klys.se for more information, or see the Events section of our website.

A little further down the road, Japan Mthembu (South Africa) plans to represent the INCD at the World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia, and Related Forms of Intolerance (usually abbreviated to WCAR) in Durban, South Africa, this coming August 31 to September 7. With well-attended preparatory conferences around the world raising issues of cultural diversity, the WCAR promises to be an important forum for the advancement of our cause. See www.hri.ca/racism/.

And of course the INCD's own conference in Lucerne, Switzerland, will occur from September 22-24 - more details on this below.

INCD's Recent Appearances

In early December in Ottawa, INCD Secretariat members attended the first International Summit of Arts Councils, and so assisted at the creation of another international network in the cultural fields. Delegates were enthusiastic about this chance to share their stories and strategies. The more than 300 delegates (from 50+ countries) endorsed the creation of an International Federation of Arts Councils, to be housed at the Australia Council in Sydney (see more on this at www.canadacouncil.ca).

Since delegates were enthusiastic about sharing stories and strategies, but not interested in taking or advocating political positions, this network will be quite different from the INCD. Arts Council of Sri Lanka representative Mahinda Ralapanawe, who is also an INCD member, has written some remarks on the conference which can be found on the Forums section of our web site at www.incd.net.

On November 28 in Washington DC, Steering Committee Member James Early (USA) attended The White House Conference On Culture and Diplomacy on behalf of the INCD, and offers this report:

The conference invited cultural, artistic, corporate, governmental, media, and foundation leaders, including guests from Asia, Africa, Europe, and Latin-America, "to discuss the role of culture in modern public diplomacy and its resonance in

international relations."

Conferees were requested to formulate recommendations to outgoing President William Clinton and Secretary of State Madeline Albright who convened the conference. The gathering tilted towards an "instrumentalist" focus on culture and U.S. image, and political and economic foreign policies abroad, and skirted issues of culture and global commerce, about which there presently exists a sharp divide in diplomatic execution of the art and practice of conducting negotiations between nations. For a comprehensive overview of the conference, visit the State Department's website (www.state.gov). We have also posted a transcript of the press briefing for this conference on our website in the events section.

Ben Goldsmith of the Key Centre for Cultural and Media Policy in Australia attended the World Television Forum at the United Nations in November of 2000. His report of the conference is posted on the Events section of our website.

From Santorini to Switzerland

For those of you who weren't able to make it to Santorini - and for those who want to see what we made of all that discussion - the full report of the Santorini meetings, along with the Founding Statement which came out of it, has now been posted in the Events category of our site, www.incd.net.

There was also a brief report on the Santorini meeting in the November issue of the Culturelink Journal.

The next meeting of the INCD has been set for Lucerne, Switzerland on Saturday/Sunday 22-23 September. An event will be organized for Friday evening since delegates will arrive on that date. The Ministerial Network will meet in the same city beginning Monday 24 September. German-speaking delegates might be interested in a public forum on Culture and Audiences being organized by the City of Lucerne on 24-25 September.

The co-host of the INCD meeting will be Suisseculture, an umbrella group representing organizations of individual artists and some producers throughout Switzerland. Yolanda Schweri, Suisseculture's General Secretary, is a member of the INCD Steering Committee.

The Steering Committee has begun considering the agenda for this year's INCD gathering. Ideas from members will help ensure the meeting is relevant and should be sent to Janet Creery at the secretariat. However, two matters are clear. The focus of the discussion will be more strategic and tactical than was the case at the Founding Meeting in Santorini. Secondly, since many of the intergovernmental agencies of interest to INCD members are located in Geneva or Paris, the location provides an opportunity to expand our dialogue with these institutions.

The Ministers will be discussing the issues of culture and trade; the new instrument for the promotion and protection of cultural diversity; heritage and public/private partnerships. The INCD Steering Committee will meet with the Ministers of Culture at the beginning of their session to exchange views. Unlike the meeting in Santorini, initial plans provide an opportunity

for a significant dialogue between the INCD and the Ministers.

Upcoming Events Related to Cultural Diversity

Beyond Multiculturalism? Policies & Strategies: past, present and future

February 11th to 16th, 2001
Birmingham, United Kingdom

This British Council International Networking seminar has several aims: to share experiences of the past and present in relation to debates, policies and practices regarding multiculturalism and the arts/cultural/heritage sectors; to engage participants in discussions about future possibilities and opportunities for dealing positively with the potential and the tensions of working in a multicultural context; to explore the ways in which various individuals and organisations have sought to transform the ways in which we think about multiculturalism and the arts, through enabling and empowering those working in the sector.

For more information visit their website
www.britcoun.org/networkevents/2000/0029p.htm

World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Other Forms of Related Intolerance

Quito, Ecuador
13-17 of February, 2001
Forum of NGOs of the Americas

This alternative event is part of the process culminating in the World Forum and Conference "Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and other forms of Related Intolerance" which will take place in Durban, South Africa in August-September, 2001. There will also be African Regional NGO Meeting in Dakar, Senegal the 29-30 of January, 2001. See www.hri.ca/racism/.

For additional information, contact :

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Uncovering Cultural Pathways

February 22, 2001

Whitworth Hall, University of Manchester, United Kingdom

This one day conference will be hosted by International Hindi Convention, The Council of Indian Languages (Ahinsam) and the Faculty of Education, University of Manchester.

Some of the objectives of this conference are: to profile diversity in modern Britain, highlight issues and opportunities in cultural diversity, and promote awareness of Indian languages, culture and philosophy. Contributors will include his Excellency Nareshwar Dayal, The High Commissioner for India, the RT Hon Chris Smith, Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, Peter Hewitt, Chief Executive, Arts Council of England, James C. Early, Director, Smithsonian Centre-Folklife & Culture, USA and Martin Pagel, Manchester City Council.

To register or to receive more information contact Dr R. S. Suma c/o ranjit@sumra.demon.co.uk or visit the website of the Faculty of Education of the University of Manchester www.man.ac.uk/education/ and look under the heading "Research Projects and Conferences".

Globalization: The Technological Dimension Do We Know Where We're Headed?

February 25 and 25, 2001
Hunter College , New York

This Teach-In is presented by the International Forum on Globalization (IFG) with the N.Y. Open Center, the International Center for Technology Assessment, Lapis Magazine, and the Nation Institute. This event will spotlight the interfaces between technology, global corporations and economic globalization itself. Forty of the world's leading activists, thinkers and writers on these subjects will speak and lead twenty-five workshops questioning what is gained, and lost, and to ask if we need a change of direction. The speakers will include Jeremy Rifkin (Foundation on Economic Trends), Jerry Mander (International Forum on Globalization), Vandana Shiva (Research Foundation for Science, Technology and Ecology - India), David Suzuki ("The Nature of Things" - Canadian Broadcasting Corporation), and Martin Khor (Third World Network - Malaysia).

For more information visit the International Forum on Globalization's website www.ifg.org.

Market for African Performing Arts (MASA 2001)

March 3 - 10, 2001
At the Palais de la Culture, Abidjan, Ivory Coast

This Panafrican artistic project combines business opportunities, a forum for professionals and a festival. Its main objective is to promote African artists and their works and incorporate them into international distribution channels in order to

contribute to the economic and socio-cultural development of Africa.

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A Seminar on the Conditions for Artistic Work in Europe

March 29 to April 1, 2001
The Island of Gotland, Sweden

This seminar on the status of artists in the European Union includes such sessions as "Legal and Policy Frameworks for Artists in Europe" and "The Romantic Ideal of the Lone Creator and the Reality of Working Conditions, Dependencies and Status Problems".

Email council@klys.se for more information.

Second People's Summit of the Americas

17 to 21 April, 2001
Quebec City

Organized by the Hemispheric Social Alliance, these meetings will bring together activists from all sectors to offer an alternative vision of development in the Americas. The city of Quebec is small and a huge turnout is expected - plan early if you are interested in attending. For information see www.webnet/comfront/quebec.htm

Re-Inventing Society in a Changing Global Market Economy

March 3 to 10, 2001
The University of Toronto, Toronto Canada

Sessions will include "Culture and Social Values in the Changing Market Economy", "Nationalism and Migration" and "Ethnicity and Language".

For more information email Raymond Breton at reinventing.society@utoronto.ca.

If any of you are planning to attend these meetings, please let us know so that we can provide information about the INCD for interested delegates. You can contact us at: janet_creery@mail.culturenet.ca.