



A movement for the diversity of cultural expressions

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The International Federation of Coalitions for Cultural Diversity (IFCCD) brings together a large number of cultural professionals from around the world. It brings together some 30 organizations representing creators, artists, independent producers, distributors, broadcasters and publishers in the literature, film, television, music, performing arts and visual arts sectors.

The General Secretariat of the IFCCD is based in Montreal. The French Coalition for Cultural Diversity represents the IFCCD at UNESCO in Paris.

1.1 ITS HISTORY

The International Federation of Coalitions for Cultural Diversity (IFCCD) grew out of a major civil society mobilization for the adoption and subsequent ratification of the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions.

The IFCCD was founded in Seville (Spain) on September 19, 2007 to replace the International Liaison Committee of Coalitions for Cultural Diversity (ILC). This Committee was created in 2003 at the initiative of the Coalitions for Cultural Diversity to facilitate cooperation and the development of common positions and actions. In particular, the ILC encouraged the development of the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions by coordinating the participation of civil society representatives and cultural sector professionals in international negotiation sessions.

Since its founding, the IFCCD has organized several campaigns for the ratification of the Convention in Asia Pacific, South America, Europe and Africa, and has supported the organization of numerous events to promote the diversity of cultural expressions.

It held its international congress in Salvador de Bahia (Brazil) in 2009, Bratislava (Slovakia) in 2012, Mons (Belgium) in 2015, Montreal (Canada) in 2018 and in Lome (Togo) in 2019.

1.2 ITS MISSION

The IFCCD's mission is to coordinate civil society efforts to implement the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions.

Article 11 of the Convention recognizes the fundamental role of civil society in protecting and promoting the diversity of cultural expressions. Since its inception, the IFCCD has been a driving force in the platforms available to civil society to make its voice heard by UNESCO's governing bodies.

The IFCCD supports the action of its members through research, tools or events that allow civil society to ensure vigilance and participation in debates and work that have an impact on the diversity of cultural expressions: revision of cultural laws, trade negotiations, discoverability of local content, etc.

The IFCCD also promotes the participation and consultation of its members and civil society during meetings of the Convention's monitoring bodies.

1.3 ITS AREAS OF WORK

At the congress in Lomé in October 2019, the members defined the priorities of the IFCCD for the coming years.

Trade

- Inform civil society about the importance of cultural exemption clauses in international trade agreements;
- Ensure that all states refrain from making liberalization commitments on cultural goods and services in bilateral, regional or international trade negotiations.

Diversity of expression in the digital age

- Defend the ability of governments to put in place policies to protect and promote the diversity of cultural expressions on the Web;
- Promote the availability and visibility of local cultural content;
- Contribute to the improvement of knowledge on the diversity of cultural expressions in the digital age in the field of data.

Mobilization of civil society

- Encourage and support the formation of national coalitions and groupings committed to the protection and promotion of the diversity of cultural expressions;
- Support collaboration among members at the regional level to implement actions that respond to regional challenges;
- Mobilize research groups around the issues of the diversity of cultural expressions, particularly the various UNESCO Chairs.

Relations with UNESCO

- Ensure active participation of the IFCCD in the implementation of the Convention;
- Involve the IFCCD in the work of the Convention's monitoring bodies and support actions that strengthen its implementation at the national, regional and international levels.

The UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions was adopted on October 20, 2005 in Paris. The signing of this agreement is historic. For the first time, the international community recognized the specific nature of cultural goods and services and the sovereign right of States to adopt and implement policies to protect and promote their cultural expressions.

This fundamental international treaty came into being in record time, thanks to a major mobilization of civil society.

2.1 CULTURE AT RISK

Since the end of the 1980s, cultural goods and services have become a major international issue. There was growing pressure on several countries to give up their right to adopt cultural policies and to fully liberalize the cultural market in the context of international trade agreement negotiations.

Allowing the development of trade agreements that promote the liberalization of the cultural sector represents a threat to cultural industries. Such agreements limit the possibility of adopting national cultural policies.

The concept of diversity of cultural expressions and the need to protect it were thus born of the awareness of States of the impact of the liberalization of economic exchanges on their cultural sovereignty. This awareness of the danger to local and national cultural expressions is taking place in the context of the growing domination of the United States in the audiovisual sector, among others.

2.2 A COUNTERWEIGHT TO TRADE AGREEMENTS

In many countries, the cultural community is mobilizing to respond to this threat, including through the formation of national coalitions. Working in concert with governments that shared their concerns, they took this issue to the highest international authorities. In less than ten years, their efforts led to the adoption of the first legal instrument giving States a real force of resistance in the face of international trade agreements: the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions.

The 2005 Convention is a fundamental milestone in the fight for the diversity of cultural expressions in order to ensure that all citizens have access to their culture and to allow for a better balance in the exchange of cultural goods and services between States.

2.3 WHY IS THE FIGHT FOR CULTURAL DIVERSITY SO IMPORTANT?

- Because cultural expressions are bearers of values, identities and meaning that go beyond their simple commercial value.
- Because without cultural policies, citizens in many countries would not have access to books, films, music, visual and performing arts that engage them with their own experiences and tell their stories.
- Because if cultural expressions cannot be created, produced and accessed on their national territory, they cannot cross borders and become part of our global cultural landscape.

2.4 THE DIVERSITY OF CULTURAL EXPRESSIONS: A BRIEF HISTORY

1993: During the Uruguay Round negotiations on the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS), several countries firmly insist that culture be kept out of the WTO negotiations. A very large majority of countries agree not to make liberalization commitments for audiovisual and cinematographic services. But without a complete exclusion, the issue remains unresolved.

1995: New multilateral negotiations are underway, notably those on the Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI) under the aegis of the OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) - abandoned in 1998 -, those begun at the WTO (World Trade Organization) with the Seattle summit and the round of negotiations that will begin in 2001 in Doha. Bilateral negotiations are also underway, notably by the United States, which is putting pressure on many countries to give up their right to adopt cultural policies.

1998: Cultural professionals and political authorities are mobilizing to put in place an international legal instrument capable of counterbalancing free trade agreements. This instrument will affirm the right of States to define and implement their own cultural policies.

Spring of 1998: Creation of the Canadian Coalition for Cultural Diversity.

2001: Adoption of the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity. May 21 is proclaimed World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development.

2005: The Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions was adopted at UNESCO on October 20. For the first time, countries in favor of cultural policies no longer have to be on the defensive around the negotiating table. They can now proceed to the offensive.

2007: The Convention entered into force on March 18, 2007. Three months later, the 56 ratifying member states met in Paris for the first Conference of the Parties to begin the work of implementing the Convention.

September 2007: Founding Congress of the International Federation of Coalitions for Cultural Diversity (IFCCD) in Seville, Spain.

Between 2005 and 2007: Cultural professionals organized in national coalitions for cultural diversity play a key role in the campaign for ratification of the UNESCO Convention. Coalitions were formed in more than 40 countries, bringing together a total of more than 600 professional organizations. These coalitions, which have done extensive work with their governments and international bodies to raise awareness of the challenges of cultural diversity and the need to adopt an international legal text, are now focusing their efforts on ensuring that this text is effectively implemented and ratified by the greatest number of people.

2010s: The development of digital technologies raises new challenges. The diversity of cultural expressions online depends, among other things, on the existence of a balanced environment that allows for the creation, production and dissemination of diverse local cultural content; the availability and promotion of this content online, and its ability to be discovered; the ability of governments to implement cultural policies in the digital environment; and the collective ability of the cultural community to assess the diversity of cultural expressions on the Internet.

2017: The Operational Guidelines on the implementation of the 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions in the Digital Environment were approved by the Conference of Parties. They are intended to guide States and provide them with tools to implement the provisions of the Convention in the digital environment.

Since: In 2021, 150 States, in addition to the European Union, have ratified the Convention. National coalitions and the IFCCD continue to work on the implementation of the Convention to give it full force at the national and international levels. The IFCCD continues to advocate for goods, services and digital cultural products to remain excluded from trade negotiations. The IFCCD is also working to promote collective reflection at the international level on the challenges posed by the digital environment and on ways to address them so that the diversity of cultural expressions is present on the Internet.

3 WHAT IS A CULTURAL POLICY?

The UNESCO convention reaffirms the right of countries to support their cultural sectors through policies and other measures that may take different forms, including not only comprehensive national cultural policies, but also specific measures focused on a particular sector such as literature, audiovisual, music, performing arts, visual arts or web.

They may include:

- Regulatory measures such as national content quotas and regulations to ensure services in different languages;
- Public financial assistance, such as production funds and tax credits;
- Public institutions such as national and provincial arts councils;
- Measures to support artists and professionals involved in the creation of cultural expressions;
- Measures to promote media diversity, such as public broadcasting.

The list of policy options is extensive. No two countries implement precisely the same combination of measures. Each country must have the right to adopt the policies it considers appropriate to ensure cultural diversity while respecting the fundamental principles of the convention, starting with respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

THE UNESCO CONVENTION ON THE PROTECTION AND PROMOTION OF THE DIVERSITY OF CULTURAL EXPRESSIONS: OBJECTIVES AND MEANS OF ACTION

The Convention adopted on October 20, 2005 by UNESCO serves as an international political and legal instrument to protect and promote the diversity of cultural expressions.

The Convention is legally equivalent to other international agreements: signatory countries commit themselves to respect its provisions when signing new agreements or implementing agreements already signed.

4.1 ITS OBJECTIVES

- Reaffirm the sovereign right of States to adopt cultural policies while ensuring the free circulation of ideas and works.
- Recognize the specific nature of cultural goods and services as carriers of identity, values and meaning.
- Define new modalities of international cultural cooperation, the cornerstone of the Convention.
- Create the conditions for cultures to flourish and interact freely in a mutually enriching way.
- Give a major role to civil society in the implementation of the Convention.

4.2 ITS WEIGHT IN RELATION TO TRADE AGREEMENTS

Countries that have ratified the UNESCO Convention have undertaken to take its provisions into account when entering into new commitments and when interpreting and applying previous treaties. It is important that states remain consistent and not question the right to adopt cultural policies that they have affirmed in the Convention. In other words, they must refrain from making liberalization commitments on culture in trade negotiations. If they have ratified the Convention, they can invoke it to refuse to make commitments and remain free to adopt and implement cultural policies as they see fit. The Parties commit to promoting the principles and objectives of the Convention in other international forums.

The Convention is far from being a protectionist instrument. It is intended to enable State Parties to open their markets to other cultures and thus promote public access to a wide range of cultural content and artistic expressions from all regions of the world. In particular, States should help developing countries to keep their national cultural goods and services alive on their territory before encouraging their export. The Convention commits Parties to adopt concrete measures to promote cultural diversity and thus restore balance and diversity in the supply of cultural goods.

4.3 OBLIGATIONS OF SIGNATORY STATES

- Strive:
 - To foster and promote the creation, production, diffusion and distribution of cultural expressions;
 - To guarantee access, for their citizens, to the diverse cultural expressions of their territory as well as those of other countries of the world.
- Ensure information sharing and transparency by providing, in their reports to UNESCO, appropriate information on measures taken to protect and promote the diversity of cultural expressions.
- Promote public understanding of the importance of the diversity of cultural expressions through education and awareness programs.
- Recognize the fundamental role of civil society by encouraging its active participation in the Parties' efforts to achieve the objectives of the Convention.
- Integrate culture into sustainable development and strengthen international cooperation in favor of developing countries through several means, such as strengthening their cultural industries, building their capacities in the elaboration and implementation of cultural policies, technology transfer, financial support and preferential treatment for their artists and other cultural professionals as well as their cultural goods and services.

CURRENT CHALLENGES FOR THE DIVERSITY OF CULTURAL EXPRESSIONS

For the IFCCD, the 2005 Convention remains a fundamental instrument for addressing the contemporary challenges of the diversity of cultural expressions. However, the IFCCD's work takes place primarily outside of UNESCO. While the IFCCD's work is not limited to these elements, the following challenges should continue to occupy the IFCCD and its member organizations in the coming years.

5.1 SUPPORTING THE WORK OF CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS

The IFCCD's main objective is to support the work of its members in their local approach, which is expressed in a variety of priorities depending on the context: recognition of civil society by governments, adoption and implementation of cultural policies, social protection programs for artists, creators and cultural professionals, support for the cultural industries, respect for artistic freedom, consultation of civil society in the context of trade negotiations, showcasing of local expressions in the digital environment, etc.

In this context, the IFCCD works with its members at the regional level to identify the specific needs of civil society organizations in order to create initiatives to develop expertise, pool the various realities and create a space for exchange in order to strengthen collaborative networks between IFCCD members. It also advocates, in the meetings of the organs of the Convention, for support from the States Parties to the civil society organizations working to implement the Convention.

5.2 THINKING ABOUT THE FUTURE OF THE CULTURAL SECTOR IN THE CONTEXT OF A HEALTH CRISIS

The Covid-19 has profoundly affected cultural ecosystems around the world and destroyed often precarious balances affecting all individuals and organizations active in all cultural sectors. Tens of millions of artists, creators, professionals, companies and organizations in the sector have lost their jobs or closed their businesses around the world. The impacts will continue to accumulate over time and will have negative effects on the diversity of cultural expressions, which may be difficult to quantify.

The crisis has revealed the importance of culture to people's health and well-being, but also the great vulnerabilities of the cultural sector. The impacts of the crisis are felt in different ways around the world, but two priorities seem to emerge: the social protection of artists, creators and workers in the sector (health, unemployment, income support, etc.), and the adaptation of cultural policies to the digital environment.

The pandemic context has indeed accelerated the transition to digital and this will also lead to an increase in trade negotiations. Civil society organizations should pay particular attention to clauses concerning digital trade as well as to new provisions that may have an impact on the diversity of cultural expressions, notably in relation to intellectual protection, data and intermediary liability regimes.

5.3 CULTURE AS THE 4TH PILLAR OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The IFCCD and the other international partner organizations of the #Culture2030Goal campaign are working towards the recognition of culture as the 4th pillar of sustainable development.

The goal is for culture to be given a more prominent place in the implementation of the current global development agenda (the UN 2030 Agenda), for culture to inspire a distinct objective in the post-2030 development agenda, and for a global agenda for culture to be developed.

Beyond these global objectives, the idea is to recognize the societal and economic contribution of culture in the development of all societies, so that it occupies a more central position when making key budgetary and development decisions at all levels of governance.

The climate emergency affects all sectors of activity, and all sectors of activity have an impact on nature and the climate. The sector is therefore increasingly invited to analyze its practices in order to reduce its ecological footprint. But it must also reflect on the impacts that climate change will have on the diversity of cultural expressions.

6

JOINING THE IFCCD

The IFCCD invites the public and public and private organizations to join the international civil society movement that successfully advocated for the adoption of the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions in 2005.

If you are a member of a cultural organization, you can join the IFCCD as an associate member. You can also join with other organizations to form a national coalition. [See the document [Creating a Coalition for the Diversity of Cultural Expression and Becoming a Member of the IFCCD](#)]. Individuals can also lend their support to our cause.

The process can be gradual and it is sometimes easier, for legal and judicial reasons, to become an associate member before creating a national coalition.

To join the IFCCD: <https://ficdc.org/en/membership/>

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