



10th Session of the Conference of Parties to the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions: Position of the International Federation of Coalitions for Cultural Diversity (IFCCD) on Agenda Items 8.a and 8.b

June 18–20, 2025, UNESCO Headquarters, Paris, France

Summary of the IFCCD's Position on Agenda Items 8.a and 8.b Presented at the 10th Session of the Conference of Parties

Item 8.a – Implementation Plan for the Recommendations Adopted by the Committee

- The IFCCD supports the implementation of the current Action Plan and encourages Parties to ensure that the Secretariat has the necessary resources to carry it out effectively.

Item 8.b – Comparative Analysis of the Effectiveness of the Various Legal Options Examined by the Reflection Group, Including the Technical and Legal Aspects of a Protocol

- The IFCCD maintains its support for the adoption of an additional Protocol to the Convention, while expressing regret that the current timeline foresees adoption in 2029, rather than in 2027 as proposed in the scenario presented at the 18th session of the Committee.
- In addition to this long-term, priority and necessary action, the IFCCD therefore supports the prompt adoption of a general declaration by the Conference of Parties.

1- Introduction to the International Federation of Coalitions for Cultural Diversity (IFCCD)

The [International Federation of Coalitions for Cultural Diversity](#) (IFCCD) represents the voice of cultural professionals around the world. It brings together around thirty organizations that represent a wide range of creators and artists, independent production and publishing companies, as well as collective management organizations in the book, film, television, music, performing arts, and visual arts sectors.

Born from a remarkable mobilization of civil society in support of the adoption and subsequent ratification of the [2005 UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions](#) (hereinafter “the Convention”), the IFCCD is committed to coordinating civil society efforts to ensure its effective implementation at the national, regional, and international levels.

At the statutory meetings of the Convention’s governing bodies, the IFCCD plays a key role in promoting the active participation and coordination of the organizations it represents. In parallel,

it supports its members' activities, notably through events that enable civil society to contribute to debates and work that impact the diversity of cultural expressions.

2- Promoting the Diversity of Cultural Expressions in the Digital Environment: A Vision Shared by the IFCCD and Several Parties to the Convention

In several Parties to the Convention, we are witnessing the adoption of laws regulating digital platforms, the implementation of discoverability strategies, and the funding of structural programs supporting the digital development of cultural industries.

The IFCCD wishes to highlight a strong consensus on the need for a renewed approach to enhance the implementation of the Convention in the digital environment. This is reflected in the decision adopted at the 9th session of the Conference of Parties to support the creation of an international group of experts tasked with examining:

- The promotion of linguistic diversity in cultural content;
- The discoverability of national and local cultural content on digital platforms;
- The importance of greater and more meaningful transparency of digital platforms on cultural issues, including artistic freedom;
- The impact of artificial intelligence on the cultural and creative industries.

Following a call for experts that received a remarkably high number of applications, 18 individuals were appointed to the committee. The IFCCD acknowledges the leadership of Canada and Québec, as well as France, which respectively hosted the first and second meetings of this group of experts.

Moreover, the IFCCD had the honour, alongside the Canadian Commission for UNESCO, of partnering with the [Coalition for the Diversity of Cultural Expressions](#) (CDCE) in organizing a high-level [conference](#) held prior to the first meeting of the Reflection Group on the Diversity of Cultural Expressions in the Digital Environment (hereinafter "Reflection Group"). Held on May 27, 2024, this side event provided a platform for rich and constructive exchanges, highlighting the perspectives, concerns, and needs of international civil society, while informing the experts' discussions on cultural issues in the digital environment. This side event resulted in a [report](#) containing a summary of the key points discussed, as well as consensus-based recommendations from its participants, who were broadly representative of the Québec and Canadian cultural sectors.

One year after these major events, the Government of Québec, in partnership with the Organisation internationale de la Francophonie, hosted the [5th Conference of Francophonie Ministers of Culture](#). Further demonstrating the widespread recognition of the need for coordinated action to foster a digital environment that supports the diversity of cultural expressions, the Conference led to the publication of a [Declaration](#). In it, ministers of culture from French-speaking states and governments committed to:

- Develop, implement, and adapt cultural policies—as well as cultural legislative and regulatory frameworks—to the digital environment at national, regional, and international levels; and

- Foster cooperation and dialogue at the multilateral level, by advocating for a common Francophone position on discoverability and access to a diversity of Francophone cultural content in the digital space.

During this event, the IFCCD's Secretary General, Marie-Julie Desrochers, addressed all participants of the Conference with a speech presenting [key messages](#) that emerged from the first Cultural Forum on AI and the Francophonie, which had brought together civil society and academic actors in the lead-up to the Conference.

The IFCCD welcomed the Declaration and hopes it will give positive momentum to the discussions that will take place at the 10th session of the Conference of Parties.

3- IFCCD's Statement at the 18th Session of the Intergovernmental Committee of the 2005 Convention, February 11–14, 2025

On December 16, 2024, the IFCCD welcomed with great interest the report of the Reflection Group. While reaffirming the undeniable relevance of the 2005 Convention and the enduring value of its principles in the digital environment, the experts emphasized the urgency of enhancing its effectiveness. To address this imperative, they formulated eleven concrete recommendations, organized around four areas of action:

- Normative action;
- Information and good practices sharing;
- Awareness-raising and advocacy;
- Capacity building.

In January 2025, the IFCCD published its [official position](#) on these recommendations. While reiterating the relevance of the 2005 Convention, the experts stressed the need to rapidly implement a series of actions to strengthen its impact. **In this regard, the IFCCD expressed its support for all the recommendations made by the Reflection Group, and especially for Recommendation 1: *Adopt an additional protocol to the Convention for the digital environment.***

Furthermore, **the IFCCD called on the Parties to work closely with civil society in order to accelerate the implementation of the recommendations and ensure their effectiveness.** To share its position and foster dialogue among all stakeholders regarding the Reflection Group's recommendations, the IFCCD and the CDCE, with support from the CCUNESCO and the UNESCO Chair in Communication and Technologies for Development, organized a [side event](#) at UNESCO Headquarters on the margins of the 18th session of the Intergovernmental Committee of the Convention. Ernesto Ottone R., UNESCO Assistant Director-General for Culture, opened the event and participated in the discussions. Representatives of organizations from Canada, France, and Colombia shared the perspectives and concerns of their respective cultural sectors regarding the challenges of the digital environment. Additionally, one expert woman and one expert man from the Reflection Group presented the foundations of their work and the guiding principles behind the recommendations issued.

4- FICDC Position on the Recommendations on the Digital Environment Ahead of the 10th Session of the Conference of Parties (Items 8.a and 8.b)

The IFCCD welcomes the adoption of recommendations 2 to 11 by the Intergovernmental Committee in February 2025 ([Decision 18.IGC 7](#)) and supports the implementation plan presented by the Secretariat in document [DCE/25/10.CP/8.a](#). The IFCCD also emphasizes the importance for Parties to provide the Secretariat with the necessary human and financial resources to successfully carry out this action plan.

Regarding the comparative analysis of the effectiveness of the various legal options examined by the Reflection Group (document [DCE/25/10.CP/8.b](#)), the IFCCD wishes to reiterate its confidence in the work carried out, which has already led to the conclusion that an additional protocol to the Convention is the preferred path forward.

In light of the comparative analysis conducted for the Conference of Parties, **the IFCCD remains convinced that normative action is necessary** “to complement, reinforce and enrich the principles, rights and obligations set out in this treaty [the 2005 Convention], in order to better achieve its objectives in the digital environment, particularly in the face of growing challenges posed by artificial intelligence (AI) systems.”

Impact of AI on the Diversity of Cultural Expressions

The IFCCD acknowledges from the outset that generative AI systems have the potential to bridge the diversity of cultural expressions with technological progress. However, their rapid and currently unregulated development raises serious concerns.

Generative AI is “a type of artificial intelligence that creates new content by modeling characteristics of data drawn from large datasets used to train the model. While traditional AI systems can recognize patterns or classify existing content, generative AI can create new content in various forms, such as text, images, audio files or software code. Large Language Models (LLMs) are a category of generative AI that have seen significant improvements in recent years”¹.

From this definition, it is clear that generative AI requires not only large quantities of data, but also high-quality data to generate content. These high-quality datasets often constitute the raw material of cultural expressions. They are also a critical source of value enabling artists to earn a living from their work. Furthermore, these datasets are then used by generative AI companies to create unfair competition with the works of artists and rights holders.

Several key issues, crucial to the diversity of cultural expressions, are interlinked: professions are threatened, value chains are weakened, the transparency of how works are used is called into question, artists’ socio-economic conditions are deteriorating, and homogenizing dynamics are being reinforced. As highlighted by experts from the Reflection Group, the uniqueness of human creativity is under threat and must be protected. The principles of transparency and fair

¹ Government of Canada, Canadian Centre for Cyber Security, “Generative artificial intelligence (AI) - ITSAP.00.041W”, online : <https://www.cyber.gc.ca/fr/orientation/lintelligence-artificielle-generative-itsap00041>.

remuneration to ensure decent socio-economic conditions for artists and the professionals who support them must be clearly affirmed and backed by concrete commitments.

Digital Divide: A Two-Speed Global Cultural Sector

Culture shapes our identities, fosters a more inclusive and sustainable future, and encourages dialogue among peoples. As a pillar of democracy and an engine of development, it accounts for 3.1% of global GDP and 6.2% of employment, according to UNESCO's 2022 report *Re|Shaping Policies for Creativity*.

However, for cultures to connect, they must first be able to express themselves. This requires strong policies that promote cultural and linguistic diversity, protect creative freedom, and ensure decent working conditions for artists. Yet, the digital transition, despite its promises, is exacerbating inequalities: creators face increased precarity, large platforms dominate the landscape, and minority cultures are rendered invisible.

The online cultural landscape is saturated with content from a limited number of countries. A significant gap remains between mere access and actual discoverability: what becomes visible is too often dictated by market logic; minority cultures are overlooked, and inequalities in the trade of cultural goods and services are perpetuated. In many countries, the issue goes beyond imbalance, there is a true digital divide. In 2023, only 27% of people in low-income countries had internet access, compared to 93% in high-income countries, according to the International Telecommunication Union. According to the *Re|Shaping Policies* report, African creative content accounts for less than 3% of all cultural works available online.

The digital divide goes beyond connectivity. It also involves skills, funding, infrastructure, and regulation. It creates a two-speed world, where some are visible and represented, while others remain excluded from the fundamental right to participate in cultural life.

The Importance of a Tool to Foster Discoverability

The imbalance in the trade of cultural goods and services, exacerbated by digital disruptions, promotes the visibility of content from a handful of dominant markets. In this context, discoverability is a vital lever for encouraging greater diversity in the cultural works available online.

Paragraph 16 of the [Operational Guidelines on the implementation of the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions in the Digital Environment](#) clearly states that measures adopted by Parties, at the distribution and dissemination stage, should strive to ensure the discoverability of national and local cultural content. This paragraph underscores the key role that Parties can play in ensuring that local and national works are not overshadowed in the global cultural offering.

Several jurisdictions have implemented measures to strengthen the discoverability of local cultural content on digital platforms. In Europe, the Audiovisual Media Services Directive ([AVMS Directive](#)) requires Member States to promote European works. In Canada, the [Online Streaming Act](#) (Bill C-11) empowers the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) to mandate the promotion of Canadian content. In Québec, a [bill](#) introduced in May 2025 seeks to

ensure the visibility, availability, and promotion of Francophone cultural works on digital platforms. In Benin, the digital initiative [I am your clownon](#) has been working since 2018 to increase the visibility of Beninese languages by promoting local culture and creating high-quality content. In Australia, the national public broadcaster offers a platform for Indigenous audiovisual expressions through [its National Indigenous Television channel](#).

However, the implementation of these initiatives faces significant challenges. Major streaming platforms are opposing such measures, citing technical, legal or economic constraints. The publication of a memorandum by the United States government in February targeting national legislation affecting online platforms caused much concern, reinforcing the need for coordinated and normative international action.

Persistent Gaps in Recent International Processes on Digital and AI

At the conclusion of the Summit of the Future held in New York on September 22–23, 2024, heads of state and government adopted the [Pact for the Future](#) and its annexes, including the Global Digital Compact, with the ambition to revitalize multilateralism and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

The Pact for the Future invites signatories to “ensure that culture [...] can [...] contribute to more effective, inclusive, equitable, and sustainable development, and integrate culture into economic, social, and environmental development policies and strategies, and ensure adequate public investment in the protection and the promotion of culture” (PPA, Ch. I, M11, para. 30, a)). Meanwhile, the Global Digital Compact acknowledges the importance of international cooperation to “support linguistic and cultural diversity in the digital space.” While these declarations are encouraging, they remain insufficient to ensure coordinated state action.

The [Council of Europe Framework Convention on Artificial Intelligence, Human Rights, Democracy, and the Rule of Law](#), which was opened for signature in September 2024, recalls that fundamental international law applicable to the legal framework for the AI lifecycle is rooted in human rights. However, it makes no explicit reference to cultural rights.

Similarly, the [Statement on Inclusive and Sustainable Artificial Intelligence for People and the Planet](#), adopted in February 2025 at the Summit for AI Action, highlights emphasizes “the need for a global reflection integrating inter alia questions of [...] respect of international laws including [...] linguistic diversity, protection of consumers and of intellectual property rights”, but fails to clearly address the challenges to the diversity of cultural expressions.

Finally, it is worth mentioning that the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) is also an international forum where issues related to copyright and AI may be addressed. Nevertheless, while copyright issues are critical, the challenges posed by generative AI go far beyond them, and the 2005 Convention is an essential complementary tool to address these broader issues holistically.

Toward a Binding International Instrument in Support of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions

At this pivotal moment in the development of AI, it is essential to adopt an unequivocal normative approach to ensure that the evolution of dissemination platforms and artificial intelligence serves human creativity. The orderly development of an inclusive, open, safe, and secure digital space that respects, protects, and promotes human rights must be an international priority. The Reflection Group's recommendation to add a protocol to the Convention is therefore ambitious in both its scope and effectiveness, particularly due to its binding nature.

Undeniably recognizing the human nature of creativity and enabling States to demand transparency throughout all stages of the AI lifecycle is essential. Promoting creative freedom and enabling a wide diversity of content to be created and discovered by people is a necessary condition for maintaining healthy social fabrics.

In this perspective, the adoption of an additional Protocol to the Convention in the digital environment, one that is adapted to the use of AI in the cultural sector to guide all strategic decisions by public and private actors, strengthen respect for human rights (including copyright), and implement the necessary tools for their enforcement to foster economic development in the cultural sector while stimulating innovation, emerges as a path to be taken.

The IFCCD is aware of the challenges, including political ones, posed by the creation and ratification of such an instrument. However, the mobilization of international civil society, in close collaboration with committed and visionary decision-makers at the turn of the millennium, enabled the establishment of a key international normative instrument: the 2005 Convention. This achievement attests to the power of collective action, and the IFCCD is convinced that harnessing these same forces today can enable us to take a decisive step that will effectively equip States to safeguard their cultural sovereignty over the long term.

Today, we are witnessing a similar mobilization. In May 2025, the joint declaration adopted at the close of the 5th Conference of Francophonie Ministers of Culture reflects this, calling for the strengthening of cultural and linguistic diversity on a global scale. The IFCCD sees in this declaration a hopeful sign, one of collective commitment that could inspire all States and governments to intensify their efforts toward better cultural representation online. Moreover, by calling for “a concerted position in international forums [...] notably at UNESCO,” the Francophonie invites coordinated action that could benefit all countries, particularly those whose cultures struggle to gain visibility in the globalized digital environment.

With two major milestones approaching, the Conference of Parties to the 2005 Convention in June and MONDIACULT 2025 in September, the IFCCD urges the Parties to the Convention to make this call a priority. Concrete steps are urgently needed to ensure that cultural diversity becomes a shared reality.

It is also worth noting that, during the 18th session of the Intergovernmental Committee, several major international organizations, including the International Confederation of Societies of Authors and Composers (CISAC), the International Affiliation of Writers Guilds (IAWG), the International

Authors Forum (IAF), in addition to the IFCCD, voiced their unequivocal support for the addition of a protocol to the Convention.

5- The IFCCD in Favour of a General Declaration in the Short Term

In the documentation presented by the UNESCO Secretariat, the scenario for adopting a protocol suggests that the ratification process would begin in 2029. Since February 2025, the IFCCD has stressed the importance of avoiding a situation where the adoption of such a protocol leads to uneven implementation across different regions of the world. In this regard, it is imperative to implement the other recommendations outlined in the report as quickly as possible.

For this reason, while awaiting the adoption of a first truly binding international instrument on the diversity of cultural expressions in the digital environment, **the IFCCD encourages the Conference of Parties to adopt a general declaration.** As 2025 marks the 20th anniversary of the 2005 Convention, such a declaration would be a powerful symbolic gesture: it would reaffirm the international consensus on the urgency of addressing the challenges posed by AI, while laying out clear principles and guidelines for the implementation of the Convention in this rapidly evolving context. It would also serve as a timely reminder that the Convention is grounded in a form of technological neutrality, making it relevant regardless of how technology evolves.

The IFCCD believes that the declaration should include the following elements:

- The principle of protecting and promoting the diversity of cultural expressions
- The principle of assessing the impact of algorithmic and editorial recommendations
- The principle of transparency regarding the use of data by generative AI systems
- The principle of the uniqueness of human creativity
- The principle of equitable and inclusive access
- The principle of the right to fair remuneration for creators and rights holders
- The principle of improving the socio-economic conditions of creators and ensuring the financial sustainability of local and independent cultural ecosystems

The IFCCD emphasizes the importance of concrete commitments to transparency and the financial sustainability of cultural ecosystems. These two dimensions are particularly critical in the current context, where increasing access to cultural content via the Internet has profoundly transformed the economic models of the cultural industries. Recent upheavals, both technological and related to public health, have further exposed the deep vulnerability of these ecosystems, as well as the persistent precarity faced by artists, creators, and cultural workers in non-dominant markets, a phenomenon that is even more acute for minority or marginalized groups.

6- Short- and Long-Term Action in the Digital Environment: Essential Collaboration with Civil Society

The 2005 Convention provides for a central role for civil society. As the digital environment has been evolving for over 20 years with little regard for the rights and working conditions of creators and the businesses that support them, it is essential to ensure effective collaboration with civil society in the continuation of work on this issue.

In this regard, the IFCCD advocates for the integration of civil society consultation mechanisms, in accordance with Articles 11 and 23.7 of the Convention, at every stage of the process. It also reaffirms its commitment to remaining actively engaged in order to foster the widest possible support for such an initiative within the international civil society community.