

Conclusions of the Chatham-house dialogue on “Cultural Diversity 2030“

16 June 2009, 16:30 – 18:00, UNESCO, Paris

in the context of the U40-World Forum “Cultural Diversity 2030”

12-14 June 2009, Paris

After the official closing of the 2nd session of the Conference of Parties to the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and the Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions the participants of the U40-World Forum organized a discussion panel, composed of three U-40-fellows, two representatives of States Parties and one representative of civil society.

The panelists congratulated the work of the U-40 Forum, considered as being “the right way to make things work”. It was observed that the U-40 Forum has focused on the same important questions treated by the Intergovernmental Committee and the Conference of Parties, but in a much more daring and innovative way. The interest of seeing what young generations think about the Convention was highlighted.

Main points of interest raised during the panelists’ presentations

1. For Member States and the Secretariat of UNESCO, the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions is a new subject, very different from previous works of this organization. **The negotiation of the Convention and of the Operational Guidelines has been a very difficult process.**
2. **The Convention cannot work without civil society** and its implementation will thus depend on its strong involvement. More partnerships should be developed within civil society and between governments and civil society.
3. The **Operational guidelines** are far from being perfect and the implementation of the Convention will show their aptitude to function and the problems they raise. It is expected that the next Conferences of Parties will not be able to advance so quickly and easily.
4. **The Convention still faces a few challenges:**
 - **Fundraising:**
 - contrary to other Conventions signed within UNESCO, the 2005 Convention envisages exclusively voluntary contributions, even if they are supposed to be made regularly;
 - innovative ways of fundraising will largely depend on civil society, even if governments intend to do everything they are able to do in this sense;
 - other dangers exist with “tied-funds” and “funds in trust” (tendency observed in UNESCO with contributions made in the framework of other Conventions), as well as funding made outside the Convention (*e.g.* EC present policy). However, these modalities of contribution can also be perceived as a good experience;
 - since one of the objectives of the Convention is to integrate culture in development and in the fight against poverty, a potential path would be to have recourse to official development assistance mechanisms already existing.
 - A huge **confusion** may be observed in round tables and seminars organized on the 2005 Convention, especially **regarding its scope**. The Convention does not cover cultural diversity in the large sense of the Declaration on cultural diversity, nor traditional knowledge and cultural expressions which are not conveyed by cultural industries. Actions on visibility and education should clarify those questions.
5. The structure of the Convention may be separated between a protection and a promotion components. The first one appears in provisions establishing a right to develop and implement national cultural policies, which should not be limited by other multilateral rules. The promotion part will be the most difficult to develop and, since cultural traditions and cultural policies have an important local or national nature, **cultural diversity depends on everyone working together.**

6. Important concrete issues to work on are:

- incentivize national bodies to engage and work within national borders and at the international level
- information-sharing programs and gathering of statistics and information on policies of national members
- support to cultural networks and cooperation, as well as capacity-building
- international methods of supporting cultural works, since new media becomes more and more international
- organization of summits and development of a knowledge basis on the Convention
- new ways to communicate with young people to make this subject-matter more relevant to them

Key points raised during the Q & A session

There continues to exist some **confusion** between the scope of the convention on intangible heritage (2003) and that on the diversity of cultural expressions (2005), but this is likely to be clarified as the 2005 Convention and its core messages gain greater visibility.

The **relationship between trade and cultural policy** is not a *a priori* contradiction as both aim to promote the well-being of the citizens of our societies. Trade policies, working through markets, do not call for active political measures, whereas cultural policy demands active measures for protection and preservation of cultural goods and services. Hence, the culture vs. trade debate is both a philosophical and practical one.

The veritable threat to culture from **trade liberalisation** has not vanished. Still, there appears to be silence on this issue beyond the affirmation of political resolve through the Convention. What should and could be done to address this?

That **Articles 6, 20 and 21** were not raised in the 2nd COP debates does not mean that work will not be undertaken around them. Negotiations over these articles having taken time, it is likely that engagement over these articles will commence once the Convention “settles down”. It was observed that the Convention is still fairly new and would require some time to settle down.

Every single state that ratifies the Convention should **contribute to the Fund**. No matter how small, all states should be stakeholders in the Fund. Contributions should, therefore, not be linked to a state’s capacity to give. Instead, all state parties should be encouraged to contribute.

The Convention has envisaged an **important role for civil society** and the success of the Convention will depend on the initiative and dynamism of civil society.

The potential for the **U-40** to emerge as a bridge between civil society and government was put forth by one of the U40 panelists. This potential emerges from the fact that group consists of young people representing both. It was suggested that the U40 group could bring their “creative resources” to the efforts to make visible the convention and its messages. The importance of maintaining the U40 network was highlighted as was the need to put culture on the agenda and prepare the next generation by inviting them to discuss complex issues surrounding cultural policy.

Paris, Singapore, Vienna, Bonn, July 2009