



**High-level interactive dialogue on Culture and Sustainable Development
“Culture as a global public good: Filling SDG implementation gaps beyond 2030”**

5 July 2023, 10.00 a.m.

Conference Room 4, United Nations Headquarters, New York

CONCEPT NOTE

Background

Culture and cultural diversity are sources of enrichment for humankind and provide an important contribution to the sustainable development of cities, human settlements, and citizens, empowering them to play an active role in development initiatives.

Culture is also a driver of sustainable development, contributing to fostering social inclusion and a strong economic sector. It generates income, creating decent jobs and addressing both the economic and social dimensions of poverty. Through cultural heritage, including its protection and preservation, it provides innovative and effective solutions to cross-cutting issues, such as education, health, gender equality and women’s empowerment, technology and the environment.

Progressively, culture’s role as a driver and enabler of sustainable development has been demonstrated by its contribution to implementing the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, including SDG11.

Despite recognizing culture’s important contribution to the three dimensions of sustainable development, the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, and the achievement of national development objectives, there are still gaps in its integration into development frameworks.

Economies can benefit by supporting and expanding the cultural sector through the promotion of cultural tourism and the cultural and creative industries. According to the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), cultural industries contribute approximately to 3% of the global GDP, employing 30 million people worldwide. By recognizing and investing in the cultural sectors, countries can increase economic growth and create sustainable and decent job opportunities.

Within the framework of SDG 11, countries have pledged to “make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.” Specifically, Target 11.4 aims to “strengthen efforts to protect and safeguard the world’s cultural and natural heritage.” By safeguarding and promoting cultural heritage, we ensure the continuity of rich cultural traditions, knowledge, and practices that contribute to the well-being of societies. When individuals feel connected to their cultural heritage, it strengthens their commitment to the sustainable development of their cities and communities.

Furthermore, the COVID-19 pandemic had severe consequences on the culture sector, causing significant disruption and challenges as well as exposing and exacerbating vulnerabilities. Many venue-based sectors such as museums, cultural sites, and cinemas were forced to close, and income generated from tourism shrank significantly, with estimates suggesting a decline of up to 70% in the creative economy’s global revenue. According to UNESCO, approximately 10 million jobs were lost in the cultural sector in 2020 alone, and revenue losses were estimated to range from 20 to 40 percent.

To address these challenges, Member States, the United Nations system, non-governmental organizations, and all other relevant stakeholders are encouraged to give due consideration to the contribution of culture to the achievement of sustainable development goals in the formulation of national, regional, and international development policies and international cooperation instruments.



A renewed global investment in the cultural and creative sectors can unlock its transformative potential to accelerate the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Objective

In accordance with General Assembly resolution 76/214, the President of the General Assembly will convene a one-day high-level interactive dialogue on Culture and Sustainable Development in partnership with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

Its overall theme, “Culture as a global public good: Filling SDG implementation gaps beyond 2030”, will provide an opportunity for Member States to share experiences and measures to support the crosscutting impact of culture for sustainable development, identifying implementation gaps and solutions through culture and calling for strengthening strategic cross-sectoral partnerships.

The objectives of the high-level dialogue on Culture and Sustainable Development are:

- Promoting the mainstreaming of culture across SDG implementation plans within the UN system and at national and regional levels, including within COVID-19 recovery strategies, in order to accelerate the attainment of the SDGs’ social, economic, and environmental objectives.
- Supporting innovative national policies and best practices to advance the role of culture for sustainable development by identifying bottlenecks to progress and showcasing solutions.
- Enhancing partnerships and synergies among Member States and relevant stakeholders to promote the protection and preservation of cultural heritage and the promotion of cultural diversity.

Guiding questions

- How can we harness culture as driver of behavioral change in support of SDG implementation at the community and national levels?
- How can we improve data collection, monitoring, and evaluation mechanisms to measure progress in integrating culture into the SDG implementation process?
- How can we strengthen international collaboration and maximize coherence of efforts to harness culture’s contribution to sustainable development?

Format

The interactive dialogue will take place from 10:00 am to 1:00 pm and 3:00 pm to 6:00 pm in Conference Room 4 and include an opening segment, a plenary segment, and two panels.

The list of speakers will open on the e-deleGATE portal on Monday, 19 June 2023, at 10:00 a.m. and close on Friday, 30 June 2023 at 6:00 p.m. The time limit for national statements will be three minutes and five minutes for statements made on behalf of a Group of States.

In view of the limited time available for the high-level segment, the texts of statements submitted by speakers inscribed on the list which are not delivered by the end of the meeting will be posted on “eStatements” in the Journal of the United Nations. In this regard, delegations are encouraged to send their statements to estatements@un.org so as to facilitate interpretation and for posting on “eStatements.”

Participants

The meeting is open to Member States and Observers of the UN General Assembly, United Nations entities, and non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).