



**culture 21**

Agenda 21 for culture  
Agenda 21 de la culture  
Agenda 21 de la cultura

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## Rio+20 and culture

Advocating for Culture as a  
Pillar of Sustainability



United Cities and Local Governments  
Cités et Gouvernements Locaux Unis  
Ciudades y Gobiernos Locales Unidos



Ajuntament  
de Barcelona

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## **Rio+20 and culture**

### Advocating for Culture as a Pillar of Sustainability

An initiative by the Committee on culture of  
United Cities and Local Governments - UCLG

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# Presentation

This document is a summary of the strategy that the Committee on culture of United Cities and Local Governments has developed in recent years on culture and sustainability and which was aiming to influence the process towards the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) which took place in Rio de Janeiro on 20-22 June 2012.

The document summarises the conceptual basis of our strategy, and its main outcomes. Our strategy is based on Agenda 21 for culture (approved in Barcelona in May 2004, the founding document of our Committee, a worldwide declaration of cities and local governments for the role of culture in our societies) and the Policy Statement “Culture, Fourth Pillar of Sustainable Development”, unanimously adopted by United Cities and Local Governments (in Mexico in November 2010).

As in other dimensions of sustainable development, the strategy to influence Rio+20 obtained very scarce success. There is not yet a critical mass of actors (in the UN System, at a national level, in the civil society) that explicitly advocate for the role of culture in sustainable development. Sadly, there still is a gap between the wide development frameworks and the role of culture.

We are optimistic. We feel the gap is becoming narrower, that the struggle in Rio+20 was worthwhile, that more actors are connected, and that the international community has created other opportunities to continue the discussion: the post-2015 Agenda and Habitat III.

Let’s understand this document as a stone in this process, but also as a soft stone, as a “working document”. If you have comments, indications or suggestions, please, contact us. We will sincerely appreciate your inputs to this document.

I wish you pleasant reading, and encourage you to collaborate with UCLG in the promotion, the dissemination and the implementation of the Agenda 21 for culture, as well as to achieve a better coordination of those actors that fight for culture as a pillar or dimension of sustainability.

**Catherine Cullen**

Councillor for Culture, Lille

President of UCLG’s Committee on culture

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## Rio+20 and culture

### Advocating for Culture as a Pillar of Sustainability

Paper prepared by Jordi Pascual as coordinator of the Committee on Culture of United Cities and Local Governments.

## 1. The understanding of development has evolved

This is a summary of the ideas that emerged during almost 10 years of discussions on the relation between culture, local policies and sustainable development. These discussions are quite new for the cultural sector. Discussions have mainly taken place in cities, promoted by NGOs, associations, civil society and local governments.

Today development is not understood in the same way as it was in 1972, 1987 or 1992. The concept has evolved.

Amartya Sen, Arjun Appadurai, Edgar Morin or Martha Nussbaum (to name but a few) wrote their main contributions to what development means today after 1992.

The evolution of the concept “**development**” can be summarised as follows. Today, development means freedom, widening the choices, putting human beings -children, men and women- at the centre of the future.

Most of human beings have the capacities but do not have some of the essential tools, skills or capabilities to understand the world and to transform it so that it becomes really sustainable. These capabilities are literacy, creativity, critical knowledge, sense of place, empathy, trust, risk, respect, recognition... These capabilities can be understood as the **cultural component of sustainability**.

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These skills and tools are not included in any of the current three pillars of sustainability. Of course, culture has an economic dimension (it generates income and employment), but it cannot be reduced to an instrument for economic growth. Also, culture has a social dimension (fight against poverty, participation, equality of rights) but it cannot be reduced to an instrument to create social inclusion or provide cohesion to a society, it is much more than that. Culture has an environmental dimension but it cannot be reduced to an instrument for raising awareness on environmental responsibility. The paradigm of sustainability needs an explicit cultural component. Therefore, transforming the three pillar model into a square, in which culture becomes the fourth pillar (or the first!), needs serious consideration by the international community.

A first attempt to discuss the cultural component of sustainability was made in the 2002 Johannesburg Summit, when France, Mozambique, UNESCO and UNEP organized a round table on cultural diversity and biodiversity. It is not an accident that UCLG began the process of elaboration of Agenda 21 for culture in 2002. Previously, UNESCO had approved the Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity in 2001, Jon Hawkes had written the pioneering and fundamental book “The Fourth Pillar of Sustainability: culture's essential role in public planning” in Victoria (Australia) also in 2001, and the Tützing Manifesto (in Germany) was launched, also in 2001. Some precedents on culture as a component of sustainability can be traced back to the World Decade on Culture and Development (1987-1996).

The three pillar model seems to be based on a (narrow) Western view. This model does not explicitly include **essential values** for each person in our world, such as well-being, happiness, balance, harmony and identity, which are always explicit and fully integrated in the conception of development that many traditional and indigenous people have, and which appear in many new visions on sustainable development. These values are also influencing the current understanding of development in the Western countries that face the most severe crisis they have ever faced. Surveys and research in France, the United Kingdom or Canada that aimed to measure “the components of a meaningful life” offer very similar conclusions.

Moreover, the deep meaning of development is only understood at a **local level**. Global models cannot be implemented locally unless there is a “door”, a local governance in which people and places are not threatened by globalization but, instead, invited and empowered to become actors of globalization, that is, to generate new meaning without losing the identity. This is a cultural process, not a social, not an economic, nor an environmental process. Acknowledging diversity reinforces sustainability. Recognizing the plurality of knowledge systems is critical for sustainable societies. Local governments and civil society are the best instruments to achieve these goals.

These threads were the basis of our strategy to influence the process of Rio+20.

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## 2. Preparing the road to Rio+20

Rio+20 had been an explicit target of the Committee on culture of UCLG at least since 2008, although it must be acknowledged that the relation between culture and sustainability is at the foundations of **Agenda 21 for culture**.<sup>1</sup>

Our advocacy was aware that there were scarce possibilities that Rio+20 would pay much importance to culture, but we were also convinced that the fight to reinforce this relation would greatly benefit the cultural spheres as well as the key stakeholders of sustainability. It was a necessary fight.

Culture had been totally absent in “Rio-minus-20” (Stockholm 1972), often forgotten, but this conference was the institutional beginning of sustainability as a paradigm for the well-being and the progress of humanity. Culture had appeared in the Earth Summit of Rio in 1992: the final documents mainly associate culture to indigenous peoples; Agenda 21 of Rio in 1992 had a full chapter (26) dedicated to indigenous peoples, in which the cultural considerations take on importance. Chapter 28 dedicated to local authorities does not mention culture at all. In Rio+10 (Johannesburg, 2002), a Round table on biodiversity and cultural diversity was convened by France, Mozambique, UNESCO and UNEP, but culture had a marginal role in the official Final Documents, and very few actors felt concerned by the relation between culture and sustainable development.

The process that has led to Rio+20 has witnessed a multiplication of those actors.

In UCLG, the advocacy for the role of culture in sustainable development had been identified as a priority in the Programme 2008-2010<sup>2</sup> of the Committee on culture.

In January 2009 the Committee on culture of United Cities and Local Governments – UCLG was commissioned by the Division of Cultural Policies and Intercultural Dialogue of UNESCO to contribute to the “new cultural policy profile” process. Jordi Pascual, as coordinator of the Committee, wrote the report “Culture and sustainable development: examples of institutional innovation and proposal of a new cultural policy profile”.<sup>3</sup> The report:

- suggests the new role of culture in sustainable development is about including a cultural perspective in all public policies.
- suggests that a new cultural policy profile could be based on the argument of culture as the fourth pillar of sustainable development.
- suggests that an effort is made by hegemonic Western cultures to discuss the meaning of the relation between culture and sustainable development.
- warns about the limits of institutionality and requests an articulation with civil society
- suggests that any new cultural policy profile should rely on the competences and the capacities of cities and local governments

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1 See [http://www.agenda21culture.net/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=44&Itemid=58&lang=en](http://www.agenda21culture.net/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=44&Itemid=58&lang=en)

2 This original Programme, as well as its Final report, can be consulted at: [http://www.agenda21culture.net/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=46&Itemid=63&lang=en](http://www.agenda21culture.net/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=46&Itemid=63&lang=en)

3 The report is available here: [http://www.agenda21culture.net/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=87:rapport-4-culture-et-developpement-durable--des-exemples-dinnovation-institutionnelle-et-une-proposition-pour-un-nouveau-modele-de-politique-culturelle-&catid=58&Itemid=58&lang=en](http://www.agenda21culture.net/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=87:rapport-4-culture-et-developpement-durable--des-exemples-dinnovation-institutionnelle-et-une-proposition-pour-un-nouveau-modele-de-politique-culturelle-&catid=58&Itemid=58&lang=en)

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- offers several examples of institutional innovation in the relation between culture and sustainable development
  - gives ten reasons to support that the new cultural policy profile is based on the argument of the fourth pillar

In autumn 2010 the Committee asked the World Secretariat of UCLG to better institutionalise the position of the organisation on the debate on culture and sustainability. The Committee collaboratively wrote a draft document, with the participation of a large number of members of UCLG as well as partners and allies. The document was submitted to the Executive Bureau of UCLG and was adopted by the World Congress of UCLG (Mexico, November 2010) as the **Policy Statement of UCLG “Culture, Fourth Pillar of Sustainable Development”**<sup>4</sup>.

The Policy Statement “Culture, Fourth Pillar of Sustainable Development” states that the three-dimensional vision of sustainable development (economic growth, social inclusion and environmental balance) is not enough to understand the world. It affirms that creativity, knowledge and diversity are unavoidable bases for dialogue for peace and progress, as these values that are intrinsically connected to human development and freedoms. This document points to the relation between culture and sustainable development through a dual approach: developing a solid cultural policy and advocating a cultural dimension in all public policies. The Policy Statement recommends to cities, nations and the international organisations to explicitly integrate this vision into local, national and international programmes on sustainable development.

The early adoption of the Policy Statement (November 2010) allowed **the World Secretariat of UCLG** to include these arguments in the initial negotiations on the contents of Rio+20, which began in 2011. The following steps can be highlighted:

- In March 2011 UCLG’s World Secretariat announced (circular 4 on Briefing for Rio+20) that the key messages to be put forward by UCLG would be (1) Making Culture a fourth pillar of sustainable development; (2) Tackling climate change; (3) Contributing to international governance in sustainable development field; (4) Making cities resilient.<sup>5</sup>
- In July 2011, the Committee on culture drafted the document “Lobbying for Culture as the Fourth Pillar of Sustainable Development in the Process of the Rio+20 Summit”, also known as “**Ideas for Rio+20**”,<sup>6</sup> offering arguments to be considered by cultural activists, networks and stakeholders preparing a submission to the Secretariat of the Rio+20 Conference. As an example, we wrote: “The Final Declaration of Rio+20 could also suggest the creation of the Sustainability Goals. If so, culture must be included, and explicit targets related to the arts and culture must be adopted”.
- The **activism** of members of the Committee on culture of UCLG in local, national and regional fora on sustainability, presenting the vision of culture as the fourth pillar of sustainable development was very extensive.
- In November 2011, the **submission document** sent by UCLG to the Secretariat of Rio+20 as a contribution for the “zero-draft” of the Final Outcome Document included the 4 key messages mentioned above. UCLG gave special attention to not limiting the

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4 You can read the Policy Statement at:  
[http://www.agenda21culture.net/index.php?option=com\\_docman&task=doc\\_download&gid=393&Itemid=86&lang=en](http://www.agenda21culture.net/index.php?option=com_docman&task=doc_download&gid=393&Itemid=86&lang=en)

5 More details on this Circular can be found at: [http://www.cities-localgovernments.org/upload/docs/docs\\_en\\_telechargements/Circ\\_4\\_2011\\_ENG\\_UCLG\\_Briefing\\_Rio+20.pdf](http://www.cities-localgovernments.org/upload/docs/docs_en_telechargements/Circ_4_2011_ENG_UCLG_Briefing_Rio+20.pdf)

6 This document can be downloaded at: [http://www.agenda21culture.net/docs\\_circulars/Ideas%20for%20Rio+20%20-%20ENG.pdf](http://www.agenda21culture.net/docs_circulars/Ideas%20for%20Rio+20%20-%20ENG.pdf)

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debate to environmental or economical matters and to re-humanise the sustainable development policies.<sup>7</sup> Other submission documents (such as Brazil's or UNESCO's) also included the cultural dimension of sustainable development.<sup>8</sup>

- The Secretariat of Rio+20 structured the stakeholders in the process through Major Groups, which gathered the main “civil society” actors in the process of Rio+20. There were 8 Major Groups: (1) Business and Industry, (2) Children and Youth, (3) Farmers, (4) Indigenous Peoples, (5) Local Authorities, (6) NGOs, (7) Scientific and Technological Community, and (8) Women. UCLG was a member of the LAMG (Local Authorities Major Group), which also included ORU-FOGAR (generalist organisation of subnational authorities) as well as specialised organisations such as ICLEI or NRG4SD.<sup>9</sup>
- In December 2011 more than 700 local and regional leaders came together in Florence for UCLG World Council and agreed that local and regional governance is crucial to the debate on sustainability; the final declaration of the World Council was named “Culture, Ethics and Sustainability” to reflect the importance of our arguments to all members of UCLG.<sup>10</sup>

### 3. The zero-draft and the negotiations in 2012

The **zero draft** was released by the Secretariat of Rio+20 in January 2012.<sup>11</sup> Several states and other stakeholders had mentioned cultural considerations in their submission documents and the Secretariat of Rio+20 analyzed possible places of culture in Rio+20. But... the zero draft was disappointing: it only provided a minimum acknowledgement of the role that culture plays in sustainable development, with one paragraph (PAR 16) in the “declarative” part of the zero-draft, and very marginal mentions of culture in the rest of the document.

Once the zero-draft was released, the **negotiations** focused on two themes: (a) a green economy in the context of sustainable development and the eradication of poverty; and (b) the institutional framework for sustainable development. A small space was given to emerging issues.

UCLG and its members campaigned for a more human-centred discussion where governance, cohesion among territories, inclusion, service provision and the fourth pillar, culture, would be put on an agenda that would recognize the new urban reality.

- Following to the invitation of the Rio+20 Secretariat, UCLG wrote in January 2012 a document commenting on the zero-draft. This document explicitly asked for an improvement in the understanding of the cultural dimension of sustainability, and provided the wording of a whole new section in the Final Document to be dedicated to this issue.<sup>12</sup>

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7 The submission document of UCLG can be downloaded at: [http://www.cities-localgovernments.org/upload/docs/finances/rio\\_en.pdf](http://www.cities-localgovernments.org/upload/docs/finances/rio_en.pdf)

8 The submission documents of Member states, the UN System and Major Groups can be consulted in these websites:

- <http://www.uncsd2012.org/memberstates.html>
- <http://www.uncsd2012.org/unsystem.html>
- <http://www.uncsd2012.org/majorgroups.html>

9 More information on the background and the activities of LAMG can be found at: <http://www.uncsd2012.org/index.php?menu=101#>

10 The results of the UCLG World Council of Florence can be downloaded at: <http://www.cities-localgovernments.org/news.asp?ldNews=39888deb173fa5030529dc54ed4a5e9d652bd2fde6b70fbb20126f2f2ac77369&Page=13&Src=#Culture%20Ethics%20and%20Sustainability>

11 The zero-draft is available at:

[http://www.uncsd2012.org/content/documents/370The%20Future%20We%20Want%2010Jan%20clean%20\\_no%20brackets.pdf](http://www.uncsd2012.org/content/documents/370The%20Future%20We%20Want%2010Jan%20clean%20_no%20brackets.pdf)

12 This document can be downloaded at: [www.cities-localgovernments.org/upload/docs/docs\\_en\\_telechargements/C\\_2\\_2012\\_The\\_future\\_we\\_want\\_Zerodraft\\_UCLG\\_Inputs.doc](http://www.cities-localgovernments.org/upload/docs/docs_en_telechargements/C_2_2012_The_future_we_want_Zerodraft_UCLG_Inputs.doc)

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- The Local Authorities Major Group (LAMG) endorsed these arguments in a document released in February 2012.<sup>13</sup>
  - And, most importantly, on 23 April, the “**Joint Local and Regional Governments Messages**” was presented to the UN Secretary General, Mr Ban Ki-Moon in New York. This document included 8 recommendations, all geared in the direction of a more human-centred discussion on sustainability.<sup>14</sup> Recommendation 4 was “Culture should be acknowledged as an important dimension of sustainable development”. This document, “Joint Local and Regional Governments Messages” was the key document of local governments in the 2012 negotiations for Rio+20.
  - Negotiations continued in May, and a last attempt was made by the LAMG to include culture in substantial paragraphs of the draft declaration.<sup>15</sup>

Other stakeholders in the process towards Rio+20 were also advocating for the role of culture in sustainable development:

- The **Major Group “Indigenous Peoples”** has reflected on the role of culture in sustainability and, in its documents, explicitly mentioned that “the cultural pillar should be included as the 4th pillar of sustainable development”.<sup>16</sup>
- The **Francophonie** organised several preparatory meetings and fora, and the relation between culture and sustainable development was one of the key messages of this organisation.<sup>17</sup>
- The **Declaration of Sao Paulo** was approved on 14 April 2012, at the meeting of the highest representatives of Ministries for culture of South America. This Declaration considered cultural rights are an integral part of human rights and mentioned that cultural citizenship (the active participation of people in the cultural life of cities and nations) is, per se, intrinsically, a contribution to sustainability (because it relates parts, present and future, innovation and tradition, identity and diversity). The Declaration asked “the authorities that are negotiating the Final Outcome Document of Rio+20 to recognise culture as a key dimension in the construction of sustainability”.
- The **Rio+20 Dialogues** were organised in April-June 2012 by the Government of Brazil as an online participatory platform to discuss the contents of the Rio+20 Conference. The proposal put forward by our Committee “Culture, creativity and diversity must be at the core of Sustainable Cities” was selected among the 100 proposals that reached the final phase, but was not selected among the 10 “winning” proposals.<sup>18</sup>

In the process towards Rio+20, **UNESCO** provided its input on all the Rio+20 key themes and documented a wealth of concrete examples for each theme.<sup>19</sup>

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13 This document can be found at:

<http://www.uncsd2012.org/content/documents/469LAMG%20suggestions%20for%20the%20Rio%202020%20Zero%20Draft-1.pdf>

14 This document can be downloaded at: [http://www.uncsd2012.org/content/documents/567ENG\\_Full\\_Report\\_23\\_April%5B1%5D.pdf](http://www.uncsd2012.org/content/documents/567ENG_Full_Report_23_April%5B1%5D.pdf)

15 In Circular 12 of UCLG (30 May 2012) on “Last round of negotiations”, the World Secretariat of UCLG pledged members to act for culture to be mentioned in the Paragraphs dedicated to the Sustainable Development Goals.” We also recognize that the goals should address and be focused on priority areas for the achievement of sustainable development including, inter alia, energy, water, food security, oceans and sustainable consumption and production as well as cross-cutting issues like equity and social inclusion, rule of law and good governance, [cultural diversity,] gender equality and women’s empowerment.<sup>16</sup> All the inputs of the Major Group Indigenous Peoples can be found at: <http://www.uncsd2012.org/index.php?menu=100>

17 The documents can be found in [www.francophonie.org](http://www.francophonie.org)

18 The Rio+20 Dialogues can be accessed at: <http://www.riodialogues.org>

19 All the documents can be accessed at:

<http://www.unesco.org/new/en/culture/themes/culture-and-development/the-future-we-want-the-role-of-culture/culture-for-sustainable-development/>

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## 4. What debates on culture and sustainable development actually took place in Rio+20?

The UN Conference on Sustainable Development took place in Rio de Janeiro on 20-22 June 2012. There was no single official event on the relation between culture and sustainable development. The official programme did not include this topic. We do not have any evidence that any official delegation to the Conference advocated for the role of culture in the Final Declaration. This is a (very sad) reality.

Parallel to the conference, hundreds of side-events were organized by the UN system, the Member States and the Major Groups. Some of these side-events explicitly addressed the relation between culture and sustainable development.

- The **Urban Summit**, organized by UCLG, UN-Habitat and the City Council of Rio de Janeiro, on 18 June 2012.<sup>20</sup> UCLG explained the “Joint Local and Regional Governments Messages” that had been presented to the UN Secretary General in New York on 23 April 2012. Several speakers (Kadir Topbas, Joan Clos, Khalifa Sall, Vitor Ortiz, Paúl Carrasco...) explained why culture should be acknowledged as an important dimension of sustainable development”.<sup>21</sup>
- **UCLG** and the **Government of Brazil** organised an international seminar on culture and sustainability on 19 June 2012, as the unique occasion for direct dialogue between actors concerned by this issue.<sup>22</sup> The seminar took place in the Galpão da Cidadania and was chaired by the President of UCLG, Dr Kadir Topbas and the Minister for culture of Brazil, Mr Vitor Ortiz. The final report of this seminar is in annex 1.
- This seminar, in fact, was included in the vast range of activities on **Cultura e sustentabilidade** (seminars, concerts, exhibitions, cinema) organised by the Government of Brazil in Rio de Janeiro (13-22 June 2012).<sup>23</sup>
- The U40 network organized a side event on “Culture: the 4th pillar of sustainability” on 16 June 2012.<sup>24</sup>

On 20 June 2012, during the Opening Plenary of the UN Conference on Sustainable Development, Rio+20 Summit, Local Authorities Major Group “delivered a **key statement** and called for a multi-level governance to achieve the MDGs and Sustainable Development Goals, recognize local and sub-national governments as important stakeholders, create additional national and international financial mechanisms for sustainability and enhance access to these from local and sub-national regional authorities”.<sup>25</sup>

- This Statement did not build on the consensus achieved on 23 April 2012 and sadly, surprisingly, did not mention the relation between culture and sustainable development.

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20 The programme of the Urban Summit: [http://www.cities-localgovernments.org/upload/docs/docs\\_en\\_telechargements/C\\_20\\_2012\\_ENG\\_Urban\\_Summit\\_Program.pdf](http://www.cities-localgovernments.org/upload/docs/docs_en_telechargements/C_20_2012_ENG_Urban_Summit_Program.pdf)

21 The key messages of UCLG were edited in these documents:

- ENG: [http://www.uclg.org/sites/default/files/ENG\\_Key\\_Messages\\_Rio%2B20.pdf](http://www.uclg.org/sites/default/files/ENG_Key_Messages_Rio%2B20.pdf)
- FRA: [http://www.uclg.org/sites/default/files/FR\\_contribution\\_Rio%2B20.pdf](http://www.uclg.org/sites/default/files/FR_contribution_Rio%2B20.pdf)
- SPA [http://www.uclg.org/sites/default/files/SP\\_contribution\\_Rio%2B20.pdf](http://www.uclg.org/sites/default/files/SP_contribution_Rio%2B20.pdf)

22 The final programme of the seminar can be downloaded at:

[http://www.agenda21culture.net/index.php?option=com\\_docman&task=doc\\_download&gid=449&Itemid=86&lang=en](http://www.agenda21culture.net/index.php?option=com_docman&task=doc_download&gid=449&Itemid=86&lang=en)

23 The whole programme can be consulted at: <http://cultura.gov.br/riomais20>

24 On this side event, see: <http://www.uncsd2012.org/index.php?page=view&type=1000&nr=506&menu=126>

25 This statement can be read at: [http://www.cities-localgovernments.org/upload/docs/nyc/message\\_local\\_authorities\\_major\\_group.pdf](http://www.cities-localgovernments.org/upload/docs/nyc/message_local_authorities_major_group.pdf)

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## 5. The final outcome document of Rio+20

The following paragraphs provide an analysis of the content related to culture of the Final Outcome Document.<sup>26</sup>

“The Future We Want” is the Final Outcome (political) document of Rio+20. It is structured around these six sections. (I) Our Common Vision, paragraphs 1 – 13; (II) Renewing Political Commitment, paragraphs 14 – 55; (III) Green Economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication, paragraphs 56 – 74; (IV) Institutional framework for sustainable development, paragraphs 75 – 103; (V) Framework for action and follow-up, paragraphs 104-251, with two large sections on “Thematic areas and cross-sector issues” and “Sustainable Development Goals”, and (VI) Means of implementation, paragraphs 252-283.

The outcome document itself mentions culture in a number of paragraphs. Here we identify them and provide comments.

### *SECTIONS I AND II: OUR COMMON VISION (PAR 1 – 13) AND RENEWING POLITICAL COMMITMENT (PAR 14 – 55).*

- In recognising that “people are at the centre of sustainable development” (article 6) and that there is a need for “holistic and integrated approaches to sustainable development” (40), focus is put on human development. (The source of this comment is UNESCO.<sup>27</sup>)
- The very recognition “that there are different approaches, visions, models and tools available to each country” (56) represents positive steps being taken towards a more humanistic, flexible approach to development and helps to pave the way for the recognition of culture as an important factor in creating appropriate, and therefore effective, development programmes. (The source of this comment is also from UNESCO.)
- In recognising that “many people, especially the poor, depend directly on ecosystems for their livelihoods, their economic, social and physical well-being, and their cultural heritage” (30), the document acknowledges the importance of cultural heritage, but focuses the “special” attention to those that are poor and therefore narrows the crucial importance that cultural heritage has for all human beings.
- The most significant reference to culture is in support of the importance of cultural diversity; “We acknowledge the natural and cultural diversity of the world and recognize that all cultures and civilizations can contribute to sustainable development” (41). This paragraph seems to have been written to satisfy emerging nations and states. It implicitly assumes that the current paradigm of sustainability is “western-based” and that cultures are rather static. It does not reflect the learning on development, diversity and culture that had been one of the key issues for humankind at least since the beginning of the 21st century.

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<sup>26</sup> The final outcome document can be downloaded here, in the six official languages of UN: <http://www.uncsd2012.org/thefuturewewant.html>

<sup>27</sup> See <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/culture/themes/culture-and-development/the-future-we-want-the-role-of-culture/>

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These two sections can be seen as the “declarative” part of the Final Outcome Document. These sections fail to recognise culture as the fourth pillar of sustainability, lack a holistic, clear, solid consideration of culture in sustainable development and do not state something obvious for the scientific community and the development experts: the communities / cities / nations that include an explicit consideration of culture as a dimension in sustainable development are more successful, and the citizens are more free and have more well-being.

**SECTION III. GREEN ECONOMY IN THE CONTEXT OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND POVERTY ERADICATION (PAR 56 – 74)**

- There is a paragraph that refers to indigenous peoples (58j), in affirming that the “green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication” should “enhance the welfare of indigenous peoples and their communities, other local and traditional communities, and ethnic minorities, recognizing and supporting their identity, culture and interests and avoid endangering their cultural heritage and traditional knowledge”.
- In addition Rio+20 recognized that “indigenous peoples and local communities, have developed sustainable uses of...resources” (211,109,197).

This section III only partially recognises the essential relation between indigenous peoples, culture, sustainable development and the green economy. This section III totally ignores the progress achieved by cultural actors during (at least) the last two decades, as one of the most important sectors of the (green) economy and a as key policy for poverty eradication.

**SECTION IV. INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (PAR 75 – 103)**

- Culture is not mentioned in this section, neither in “A. Strengthening the three dimensions of sustainable development”, nor in B “Strengthening intergovernmental arrangements for sustainable development”.

**SECTION V. FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION AND FOLLOW-UP. A: THEMATIC AREAS AND CROSS-SECTOR ISSUES (PAR 104-244)**

- This section develops up to 26 Thematic areas and cross-sector issues, as follows: “Poverty Eradication, Food; Water; Energy; Sustainable Tourism; Sustainable Transport; Sustainable cities and human settlements; Health; Jobs; Oceans and Seas; Small island developing States (SIDS); Least developed countries; Landlocked least developed countries; Africa; Regional efforts; Disaster risk reduction; Climate Change; Forests; Biodiversity; Desertification, land degradation and drought; Mountains; Chemicals and waste; Sustainable Consumption and Production; Mining; Education; Gender equality and women’s empowerment.”
- It is very sad to notice that “culture” did not deserve to have its own chapter. We cannot find any convincing conceptual reason not to have “culture” as a thematic area when the list has up to 26 topics.
- A paragraph in the thematic area “Sustainable cities and human settlements” mentions “the need for conservation as appropriate of the natural and cultural heritage of human settlements, the revitalization of historic districts, and the rehabilitation of city centres” (134).

- A paragraph mentions the importance of investing in cultural tourism (130 and 131).
- A generic paragraph affirms the important relationship between culture and biodiversity (197).

The whole Local Authorities Major Group, in its document of 22 February 2012, commenting on the zero-draft, had asked the Secretariat of Rio+20 to include a section on “Culture” as topic 27, with these three articles: [98. We underline the importance of the right to participate in cultural life as a human right that is essential for the full enjoyment of life and all human rights. We highlight the critical importance of cultural diversity for sustainable development. 99. We recognize the importance to include culture in all national and local integrated long-term planning for sustainable development. Culture provides the soul of a sustainable development which is meaningful to all peoples and to humanity. 100. We acknowledge the need to an in-depth analysis on the relation between sustainability and culture during the next years through a “UN Decade on Culture for Sustainable Development”.]<sup>28</sup> This proposal was not taken into consideration.

*SECTION V. FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION AND FOLLOW-UP. B: SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (PAR 245-251)*

- Culture is totally excluded in the section dedicated to Sustainable Development Goals.

The whole Local Authorities Major Group, in its document of 22 February 2012, commenting on the zero-draft, had asked the Secretariat of Rio+20 to include culture and education in this paragraph on Sustainable Development Goals: “Accelerating and measuring progress. PAR 107. We propose that the Sustainable Development Goals could include sustainable consumption and production patterns as well as priority areas such as oceans; food security and sustainable agriculture; sustainable energy for all; water access and efficiency; sustainable cities; green jobs, decent work and social inclusion [culture, education and] disaster risk reduction and resilience.”

This proposal was not taken into consideration. We should point out, however, that the Final Outcome Document did not list priority areas for the Sustainable Development Goals, but “should be action oriented, concise and easy to communicate, limited in number, aspirational, global in nature and universally applicable to all countries, while taking into account different national realities, capacities and levels of development and respecting national policies and priorities” (...) and “be focused on priority areas for the achievement of sustainable development, being guided by the present outcome document.”

*SECTION VI. MEANS OF IMPLEMENTATION (PAR 252-283)*

Culture is (again) totally excluded in this section. The concept “intercultural dialogue” is totally absent, as well as the word “creativity”. These two concepts have been at the core of international debate (and have numerous examples of regional, sub-regional, national, sub-national and local implementation) at least since the beginning of the century. This section does not suggest that an in-depth analysis on the relation between sustainability and culture takes place during the next few years; for example, through a “UN Decade on Culture for Sustainable Development”.

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<sup>28</sup> This document can be found at:  
<http://www.uncsd2012.org/content/documents/469LAMG%20suggestions%20for%20the%20Rio%202020%20Zero%20Draft-1.pdf>

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UCLG has highlighted the main areas of interest of the Final Outcome Document of Rio+20 for local and regional authorities;<sup>29</sup> this analysis deplores “the very few references to culture as a crucial pillar for development”. Besides, UCLG and ORU-FOGAR, as generalist political representative organizations, wrote a Joint Statement on the results of Rio+20 which “regrets that the outcome document does not recognize culture as the 4th pillar of Sustainable Development. This is inconsistent with the most innovative practices in all regions of the world”.<sup>30</sup>

## 6. The next steps

There is still much work to be done on fully integrating culture into the international development policies. The process to Rio+20 has been an important step. The Final Outcome Document is deceiving, but probably the connections generated between actors will intensify over the next few months and years. We cannot lose much time regretting that Rio+20 did not give suitable recognition to the relation between culture and sustainable development. We have to be aware of our weaknesses and work on finding new allies and influence the wider debates.

The key messages of the cultural spheres are convergent, and the actors are becoming interconnected. We need to build on the connections created and the progress to ensure culture’s ability to support truly sustainable development is fully harnessed by all actors. Our struggle will be that culture is a key part of the post-2015 Agenda and Habitat III. A brief overview of some ongoing processes follows:

Following on from the outcome of the 2010 High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly on the Millennium Development Goals, the United Nations Secretary-General established the **UN System Task Team** in September 2011 to support UN system-wide preparations for the post-2015 UN development agenda, in consultation with all the stakeholders. The Task Team is led by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the United Nations Development Programme and brings together senior experts from over 50 UN entities and international organizations to provide system-wide support to the post-2015 consultation process, including analytical input, expertise and outreach. What would be the role of culture?

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<sup>29</sup> The main areas are the following:

- The overall results of the Rio +20 Conference in terms of lacking multilateral agreements and commitments are discouraging.
- Rio +20 “acknowledges the important role that local and regional governments play (...) Seldom before has there been an international policy document which is as far-reaching in both the recognition of the role of local and sub-national governance and as comprehensive in the thematic areas described of influence for these spheres of governments.”
- “On the shortcomings, it is worth mentioning the very few references to culture as crucial pillar for development and the lack of clear inclusive governance mechanisms for future policy development.”
- At the procedural level of Rio +20, UCLG acknowledges the collaboration of UCLG as the widest political generalist organization of cities and local governments (with a wide representation through its sections: Metropolis, ASPAC, CEMR, FLACMA, MEWA, UCLGA, UCLG Noram and UCLG Eurasia) with ORU-FOGAR (political generalist organization of regions); UCLG “celebrates the great level of consensus achieved with the thematic networks, ICLEI, NRG4SD and C40, in order to put local and regional governments in their rightful place in the sustainability agenda”; finally, UCLG celebrates the close partnership with UN-Habitat, the support of Cities Alliance and the states members of the Group of Friends of Sustainable Cities and explains “this work will hopefully find continuation in the coming years towards Habitat III” in 2016.
- UCLG thanks “the City of Rio de Janeiro for their hospitality and the Brazilian membership in general for their engagement towards the Summit”.

You may consult in full the analysis of UCLG at,

in ENG [http://cities-localgovernments.org/upload/docs/docs\\_en\\_telechargements/C.22.2012\\_EN\\_Rio\\_Outcome\\_Document.pdf](http://cities-localgovernments.org/upload/docs/docs_en_telechargements/C.22.2012_EN_Rio_Outcome_Document.pdf);

in FRA: [http://cities-localgovernments.org/upload/docs/docs\\_en\\_telechargements/C.22.2012\\_FR\\_Rio\\_Outcome\\_Document.pdf](http://cities-localgovernments.org/upload/docs/docs_en_telechargements/C.22.2012_FR_Rio_Outcome_Document.pdf)

and in SPA [http://cities-localgovernments.org/upload/docs/docs\\_en\\_telechargements/C.22.2012\\_SP\\_Rio\\_Outcome\\_Document.pdf](http://cities-localgovernments.org/upload/docs/docs_en_telechargements/C.22.2012_SP_Rio_Outcome_Document.pdf)

<sup>30</sup> This Statement can be read in full at: [http://www.cities-](http://www.cities-localgovernments.org/news.asp?IdNews=80376129a873472f5d435a64f8b1e4d6de5c65a79cc7faebde299891aa51ae66&Page=2&Src=#Rio+20%20-%20UCLG-ORU%20FOGAR%20Joint%20statement)

[localgovernments.org/news.asp?IdNews=80376129a873472f5d435a64f8b1e4d6de5c65a79cc7faebde299891aa51ae66&Page=2&Src=#Rio+20%20-%20UCLG-ORU%20FOGAR%20Joint%20statement](http://www.cities-localgovernments.org/news.asp?IdNews=80376129a873472f5d435a64f8b1e4d6de5c65a79cc7faebde299891aa51ae66&Page=2&Src=#Rio+20%20-%20UCLG-ORU%20FOGAR%20Joint%20statement)

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It is important to note that the Outcome Document of the 2010 MDG Summit<sup>31</sup> published ten years after the Millennium Declaration, emphasized the importance of culture for development and its contribution to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. These crucial messages were reiterated in two consecutive “Culture and Development” **UNGA Resolutions in 2010 and 2011**, which called for the mainstreaming of culture into development policies and strategies, and highlighted culture’s intrinsic contribution to sustainable development.

The forthcoming (2013) **ECOSOC Annual Ministerial Review** on “Science, technology and innovation, and the potential of culture, for promoting sustainable development and achieving the Millennium Development Goals” will be an opportunity to address the direct nexus between culture and the achievement of the MDGs. The post-2015 agenda should take into account the critical lessons learned on the ways in which culture fosters sustainable development: as a driver and as an enabler.

**UNESCO** promotes a new agenda for development that integrates consideration for culture. It is important to take ownership of the “thematic think piece” produced by Unesco (May 2012) on “Culture: a Driver as an Enabler of Sustainable Development”.<sup>32</sup> The conference on Culture and Development that UNESCO will be organising in China on 14-17 May 2013 will be a crucial gathering of those fighting for the role of culture in Post-2015 Agenda. More detailed information on UNESCO’s stance on culture and sustainable development is also available.<sup>33</sup>

The leadership of **UCLG** on the message “culture as an essential pillar of sustainability” is widely recognised. UCLG is the most important generalist organisation of cities, local and regional governments, and its capacity to broadcast this message is high. Our advocacy on culture and sustainable development relies on citizens, on the real possibilities and freedoms of children, men and women. UCLG is committed to contributing to the post-2015 agenda and to Habitat III:

- Local and regional authorities, which have been identified as crucial actors for the Rio+20 implementation and achievement of the original MDGs, will need to play an important role in the definition of the new post-2015 agenda, to include urban and local issues. In this respect, the President of UCLG, Kadir Topbaş has been invited by Ban Ki-moon, the UN Secretary General; to participate in the High Level Panel of Personalities on the Post-2015 Agenda. As the only representatives of local and regional governments in this panel this is an important opportunity for our organization to make the voices and priorities of UCLG be heard.
- The Third United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development – Habitat III will be taking place in 2016; its content and outcomes will be of great importance for shaping the work of local governments internationally, and UCLG is therefore closely involved in this process. Culture is one of the key issues that UCLG will put forward in the preparation of Habitat III.<sup>34</sup>

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31 United Nations General Assembly, Outcome Document of the 2010 Millennium Summit, Keeping the promise: united to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, A/65/L.1 (New York, 2010)

32 The list of all thematic think pieces produced by the UN System Task Team on some of the key issues of the post-2015 development agenda can be found at the following link: <http://post2015.org/2012/08/21/un-thematic-think-pieces-on-post-2015/>

33 For more information, see <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/culture/themes/culture-and-development/the-future-we-want-the-role-of-culture/the-way-forward/>

34 UCLG has produced a document on the process towards Habitat III:

[http://issuu.com/uclgclg/docs/uclg\\_rio\\_20\\_outcomes?mode=window&backgroundcolor=%23222222](http://issuu.com/uclgclg/docs/uclg_rio_20_outcomes?mode=window&backgroundcolor=%23222222)

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- The Committee on culture of UCLG will analyze the local, national and international impact of Agenda 21 for culture and probably elaborate a new version of this document in 2014. The main aim of the Committee on culture of UCLG is: “To promote culture as the fourth pillar of sustainable development through the international dissemination and the local implementation of Agenda 21 for culture”.

There are seeds of a **global civil society for culture**. The work of the International Federation of Coalitions for Cultural Diversity (IFCCD), Culture Action Europe, ENCATC, U-40, Traditions pour Demain and many others is now being connected. Moreover, the “cultural messages” are not only being broadcasted by these organizations (which mainly work in the areas of diversity, intercultural dialogue, mobility, the arts and the heritage), but also by civil society actors that work with media, freedom of speech, social inclusion, migrants or the environment.

All in all, can these actors (institutional and civil) agree on a common strategy to advocate for the role of culture in sustainable development? Are these organizations strong enough to challenge the UN system and suggest that cultural actors would boycott any post-2015 agenda that does not explicitly recognize the role of culture in development?

You can become part of the answer.

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# Annex 1

## Culture and Sustainability in Rio+20

### FINAL REPORT

The preparation of the Rio+20 Conference enabled the expression of many messages that coincide on the need for sustainability to explicitly include a cultural component. These messages had been issued by national governments, international organisations, civil society and local governments.

The government of Brazil and the world organisation of United Cities and Local Governments organised the international seminar “Culture and sustainability in Rio+20”, in Rio de Janeiro, on 19 June 2012. This seminar was a unique occasion for direct dialogue between all actors concerned by this issue.

The seminar discussed how the Rio+20 Final Declaration, in the declarative part and in the operative part, could embrace the cultural elements in local, national and international strategies for sustainable development. The organisers were convinced that the definition of sustainable development (as the “development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own”) needs to be read from a 21st century perspective. The organisers are committed to act so that culture is seen as a key dimension of sustainability.

### 19 JUNE 2012, GALPÃO DA CIDADANIA, RIO DE JANEIRO

Rua Barão de Tefé 75, Gamboa, Rio de Janeiro

### PROGRAMME

#### 9.30 – 10.00 OPENING AND INSTITUTIONAL SPEECHES

- Mr Emilio Kalil, Councillor for Culture of the City of Rio de Janeiro
- Dr Kadir Topbas, President of UCLG, President of UNACLA, Mayor of Istanbul
- Mr Hans D'Orville, Deputy Director-General for Strategic Planning, UNESCO
- Mr Vitor Ortiz, Minister of Culture (interim) of Brazil

#### 10.00 – 11.30 - CULTURE AND SUSTAINABILITY: IT IS ALREADY HAPPENING

- Chair: Mr Vitor Ortiz, Minister of Culture (interim) of Brazil
- Mr Ticio Escobar, Minister of Culture of Paraguay
- Mr Gerald Tremblay, Vice President of UCLG for North America, Vice President of Metropolis, Mayor of Montreal (video message)
- Mr Anders Knape, President of Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SALAR), Councillor of Karlstad
- Mr Emilio Kalil, Councillor for Culture of the City of Rio de Janeiro

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*12.00 – 13.30 - THE CONTENTS OF THE RELATION BETWEEN CULTURE AND SUSTAINABILITY*

- Chair: Mr Jordi Pascual, Agenda 21 for culture
- Mr Luis Fernando de Almeida, President of IPHAN
- Mr Charles Vallerand, Secretary General of IFCCD
- Ms Katelijn Verstraette, Deputy Director Cultural Exchange of Asia Europe Foundation (ASEF)
- Mr Ferdinand Richard, President of AML
- Mr Olaf Gerlach Hansen, Director of Culture Futures

*15.00 – 16.30 - RIO+20 AND CULTURE: THE KEY MESSAGES, NOW*

- Chair: Mr Hamilton Pereira, Councillor for Culture of Brasília DF and Chair of the Brazilian Forum of Local Councillors and State Councillors for Culture
- Lic. Nina A. Serratos, Councillor for Culture of Mexico DF
- Mr Keith Nurse, Director of the Shridath Ramphal Centre for International Trade Law, Policy and Services, at the University of the West Indies (Barbados)
- Ms Eliana Bogéa, Coordinator, Ananindeua City Council (Pará, Brazil)

*16.30 – 17.15 – THE FUTURE WE WANT NEEDS CULTURE*

- Mr Josep Roig , Secretary General of UCLG
- Mr Vitor Ortiz, Minister of Culture (interim) of Brazil
- Ms Ideli Salvatti, Minister of the Secretary of Institutional Relations, Presidency of the Republic of Brazil

SOCIAL NETWORKS

@agenda21culture / @uclg\_org / @CulturaGovBr

#rio20culture / #futurewewant / #citieswewant



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## REPORT

### *I. OPENING AND INSTITUTIONAL SPEECHES*

**Dr Kadir Topbas**, President of UCLG, President of UNACLA and Mayor of Istanbul, officially opened the seminar and welcomed all participants. He started his speech claiming that cities, “as places of different layers of history, are places where unity meets diversity, where tradition meets innovation. Cities are multicultural places; they do not assimilate cultures.” UCLG’s Policy Statement on Culture as the Fourth Pillar of sustainability “suggests a human approach to sustainable development”. In this regard, the President of UCLG urged local governments to promote a model of development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Mr Topbas finished his address emphasizing that “today, more than ever, in the face of growing and intricate global challenges, we need to draw on the power of culture to fortify sustainable development.” **Mr Hans D’Orville**, Deputy Director-General for Strategic Planning of UNESCO, argued that culture is the most renewable resource of sustainable development. UNESCO is convinced that culture has the potential to transform existing development approaches, by helping to make sustainable development much more relevant to the needs of the people. In spite of the difficulty to convince some economists of these arguments, Mr D’Orville observed that culture and the creative sector are one of the fastest growing industries in the global economy. The Rio+20 draft Outcome Document was analyzed by several speakers during the seminar and Mr D’Orville denounced that the working document did not give culture the due recognition it deserves and requires. “We affirm the important contribution of culture as an enabler and a driver of sustainable development that fosters inclusive economic growth, social equity and environmental sustainability”, he concluded. Yet why is culture not yet overwhelmingly recognized by all stakeholders in the international agenda as the fourth pillar of sustainable development?<sup>35</sup> **Mr Vitor Ortiz**, interim Minister of Culture of Brazil, sustained that both in developed and developing countries, this is not an issue of resources or financing. It is a matter of clear and comprehensive goals. “A political effort must be made to convince society that our future cannot do without widespread cultural policies, just like it cannot do without health care or education.” Regarding this, Mr Ortiz defended that safeguards to ensure cultural rights are key, “as cultural rights are an integral part of basic human rights.” On this matter, the right to cultural expression is a fundamental issue, according to the Minister, as this right helps to guarantee social inclusion. “Culture is a huge transforming force,” proclaimed Mr Ortiz, “capable of improving societies to make them more just, more caring and more human, enabling them to convey the best values humankind has written so far.”

### *II. CULTURE AND SUSTAINABILITY: IT IS ALREADY HAPPENING*

**Mr Vitor Ortiz**, interim Minister of Culture of Brazil, opened the session underlining the main structural measures undertaken by the present and previous administrations of Brazil towards the institutionalization of culture. **Mr Ticio Escobar**, Minister of Culture of Paraguay, reflected on the intricate relation between cultural policies and sustainable development. “Sustainability is an implicitly cultural paradigm, but we have to make it explicit. We must show how culture organizes society, cutting across all other areas of development. It generates

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<sup>35</sup> The full speech of Mr Hans d’Orville is available at the website of UNESCO devoted to Rio+20: <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/culture/themes/culture-and-development/the-future-we-want-the-role-of-culture/unesco-advocated-for-a-stronger-role-for-culture-in-sustainable-development-at-uclgs-and-the-brazilian-ministry-of-cultures-seminar-on-culture-and-sustainability-at-rio-20/>

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social integration, environmental concern and more sustainable economies driven by creative industries.” **Mr Anders Knapé**, President of Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SALAR), and Councillor of Karlstad (Sweden), warned against the dangers of inaction and called for local and regional responsibility. “It would be a huge mistake not to recognize the importance of culture at the local and regional level, and to just wait for the national governments and the international community to decide for us what to do next. We can do a lot ourselves. We already have the necessary tools. We just need to refine them and make them more sustainable.” **Mr Gerald Tremblay**, Vice President of UCLG for North America, Vice President of Metropolis and Mayor of Montreal, concluded the session in a video message address. Montreal was the first city to adopt UCLG’s Policy Statement “Culture, Fourth Pillar of Sustainable Development”. Since then, many other local governments have adopted similar commitments. With the legitimacy of Montreal’s leadership in the field of cultural policies, Mr Tremblay demanded: “Culture needs to be fully recognized in Rio+20.” After all, culture plays a crucial role in responsible human development “in order to preserve identity and diversity, both locally and globally.”<sup>36</sup>

### *III. THE CONTENTS OF THE RELATION BETWEEN CULTURE AND SUSTAINABILITY*

**Mr Charles Vallerand**, Secretary General of the International Federation of Coalitions for Cultural Diversity (IFCCD), introduced a socio-political framework for the session, sustaining that we are witnessing a shift towards political decentralization and active civil society participation. But more resources and commitments are necessary to satisfy this trend. Local initiatives need institutional capacity and loyal support at the national and international level. In this regard, “we are now implementing UNESCO’s Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (2005). Yet, as any other international tool, this process has its own challenges,” underlined Mr Vallerand. It is clear that so far civil society has played a very active role and is a key player in its implementation.<sup>37</sup> **Ms Katelijn Verstraette**, Deputy Director of Cultural Exchange of Asia Europe Foundation (ASEF), elaborated on this issue admitting that culture has local engagement but scarce capacity to influence in the global process of sustainability. Civil society recommendations must reach national governments and the international community. “Culture is not only a set of values emanating from traditional knowledge, nor is the sum of its cultural products,” argued Ms Verstraette. “It is a process to be nurtured. And the spiritual connection with culture has to be much more respected within this dialogue.” **Mr Luis Fernando de Almeida**, President of the National Institute of Historic and Artistic Heritage of Brazil (IPHAN), advocated for a break with the idea of culture as something still in the tradition of the 19th century. “We must work with the idea of culture and heritage as part of a process of re-establishing humankind’s relationship with its own environment.” According to Mr de Almeida, it is absolutely essential to reconcile the preservation of the past with the construction of a sustainable future. This model lies within any sustainable development project. **Mr Olaf Gerlach Hansen**, Director of Culture Futures, assured that eco transition towards a low carbon energy system by 2050 can only rely on an alliance between measurable cultural and environmental goals. “There is a gap between the political agenda and the technology we already have to make all this possible. The U.N. Climate Change Conference 2009 in Copenhagen was a disaster, and the Final Outcome Document of Rio+20 will have its own problems if politicians do not help.

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<sup>36</sup> The video-message of Mayor Gérald Tremblay is available at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z0BzXtZTw2k>. More information on Montreal’s initiatives on culture as fourth pillar of sustainable development is at [ville.montreal.qc.ca/culture/agenda21culture](http://ville.montreal.qc.ca/culture/agenda21culture).

<sup>37</sup> The powerpoint that Mr Charles Vallerand is available in English, French and Portuguese, here: [http://ficdc.org/spip.php?page=mot&id\\_mot=94&connect=cdc&id\\_rubrique=146&lang=fr](http://ficdc.org/spip.php?page=mot&id_mot=94&connect=cdc&id_rubrique=146&lang=fr)

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This is not about more political speeches and more conferences. It is about commitment. We have to act now,” he urged all stakeholders. **Mr Ferdinand Richard**, President of Aide aux Musiques Innovatrices (AMI), discussed a wide range of topics, including the relation between cultural policies and social cohesion. Culture plays a key role in the resolution of international conflicts. But local conflicts are generated by a lack of cultural understanding as well. This is why “cultural actors have a fundamental responsibility to foster social inclusion. Adopting the Agenda 21 for Culture, for example, is a great tool to guarantee and reinforce cultural rights,” recommended Mr Richard. Along these lines, he moved on to examine the example of France, his native country. Culture has often been thought at the national level as a top-down process. “It has represented an important tool for the visibility of the home country and for international dialogue. But this model fails when local necessities are not met. There is a paradigm shift now. Culture is the main local engine for democracy and peace.”

#### *IV. RIO+20 AND CULTURE: THE KEY MESSAGES, NOW*

**Mr Josep Roig**, Secretary General of UCLG, opened the discussion of this session affirming that the relation between culture and sustainability is at the basis of the Agenda 21 for culture. “We will continue to support the Committee on culture of UCLG. We think it is doing a magnificent job” in advocating for the international recognition of culture as the fourth pillar of sustainable development. He predicted that in the future “we will have a largely cultural and creative economy. On that day economists will no longer rule the world and culture will rule society.” **Mr Hamilton Pereira**, Councillor for Culture of Brasilia DF and chair of the session, detailed a double perspective which has been essential in redefining Brazil’s public cultural policies during the last three decades: considering culture as an important part of the contemporary sustainable economy, while, at the same time, regarding culture as a basic social right of every citizen. **Lic. Nina A. Serratos**, Councillor for Culture of Mexico DF also endorsed the use of the Agenda 21 for culture. “We must not think of utopian solutions,” she argued, “we must take advantage of existing platforms. The Agenda 21 for culture provides an integral perspective and gives clear advice on key cultural governance issues for all the agents involved in sustainable development.” Culture widens the capacity that citizens need to make the world more sustainable. Ms Serratos asserted that it is key to propose and develop competencies and opportunities“ in order to reduce social inequalities and increase every citizen’s right to fulfil his or her own human potential in freedom.” **Ms Eliana Bogéa**, Head of Strategic Projects at the Department of Culture of Ananindeuá (Pará, Brazil) introduced a new interesting topic of debate. “It has often been said that cultural diversity is as important for humankind as biodiversity is for nature,” she reflected. “In fact, this separation between biodiversity and cultural diversity makes no sense in many areas of the world. There, the relationship between what is human, the cultural sphere, and the environment, takes a much more direct form.” **Mr Keith Nurse**, Director of the Shridath Ramphal Centre for International Trade Law, Policy and Services, at the University of the West Indies (Barbados), ended the discussion of this session encouraging all cultural actors to step up. “We should stop talking in silos and start being more proactive and pragmatic. We need to set a new strategy based on specific, realistic and measurable long-term goals.” Mr Nurse proclaimed that culture is not only the fourth pillar of sustainable development, but it is its main driving force. In order to demonstrate this, he stressed the need to lobby in wider agendas and to collaborate in other initiatives, such as, for example, innovation, climate change or sustainable production and consumption.

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#### V. THE FUTURE WE WANT NEEDS CULTURE

**Mr Jordi Pascual** reviewed the process leading to Rio+20. UCLG strongly advocated for the place of culture in the Final Outcome Document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development. “This has been our explicit target since 2008,” he revealed. The Policy Statement “Culture, Fourth Pillar of Sustainable Development”, adopted in November 2010 in Mexico DF, led UCLG to include this issue in the initial negotiations on the contents of Rio+20. “From then on, our efforts have been focused on trying to influence the elaboration of the Final Outcome Document. Aware that there was little chance of achieving our aim, we were also convinced that the fight to reinforce this relation greatly benefits the cultural spheres as well as the stakeholders in sustainability issues.” Mr Pascual also explained that we should not perceive Rio+20 Conference as the final chapter, but as part of a process that has to do with the global agenda. “And we have the obligation to influence its course, to set our own objectives, because cities are the basic agents in the definition of a safer, more prosperous and more sustainable planet.” **Mr Vitor Ortiz**, interim Minister of Culture of Brazil, detailed several examples of the important role that culture has been playing in the construction of sustainability. The protection of our cultural heritage is not only about buildings and historical sites. It is also about “recording and preserving our popular knowledge and ancestral techniques, so our societies can find solutions there, perhaps more intelligent and more sustainable than the ones we have been using until now.” Mr Ortiz finished his address congratulating all participants for successfully addressing the main objective of this international seminar: “to identify the core ideas, to unify our discourse and to find ways to awaken the international community to our message.” **Ms Ideli Salvatti**, Minister of the Secretary of Institutional Relations, Presidency of the Republic of Brazil, was the last speaker of the day. Hers was a compelling address that highlighted the main issues developed during the seminar. She underlined the collective responsibility of all agents present at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development. In conclusion, she summarized the central theme of the seminar in an eloquent manner. “The Final Outcome Document of Rio+20 Conference is obviously important, as it will explicitly state a set of commitments and goals. Yet, as important as the document itself is this movement, this sparkling debate among all the different actors and stakeholders around culture and sustainability. Because, has anything occurred, occurs or will occur in humanity without the role of culture? It is impossible to develop the economic, social and environmental pillars without having culture encompassing all spheres of sustainable development, by giving them a sense of identity, purpose and efficiency as well.”

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