

[Committee on Culture]  
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### *Introduction*

The **Agenda 21 for culture** is the first worldwide document establishing an undertaking by cities and local governments for cultural development. 280 cities, local governments and organisations from all over the world were linked to Agenda 21 for culture in June 2008.

**United Cities and Local Governments – UCLG** adopted Agenda 21 for culture as reference document in October 2004 (Executive Bureau of Sao Paulo). Following to the successful endeavour of the Working Group on Culture (2005-2007) the Committee on culture was created in October 2007 (World Congress of Jeju).

The **mission** of the Committee on culture for 2008-2010 is *to promote the role of culture as a central dimension of local policies, fostering the relation between culture and sustainable development and the processes of intercultural dialogue, through the international dissemination and local implementation of Agenda 21 for culture.*

The Committee is chaired by Jordi Martí, Councillor for culture in Barcelona City Council, and vice-chaired by Hernán Lombardi (Buenos Aires), Catherine Cullen (Lille) and Madeleine Sjöstedt (Stockholm).

### *Why an Agenda 21 for culture?*

Culture is becoming one of the crucial elements of **globalisation**. Intergovernmental organisations are recognising it: UNESCO Convention on Cultural Diversity (2005), plans for an Alliance of Civilisations (2006), European Year for Intercultural Dialogue (2008)... Agenda 21 for culture has become **the main (original and multilateral) contribution of cities to global cultural governance**. In its programme 2008-2010, UCLG improves its capacity to convey the messages of cities on global cultural issues: advocacy and policy development.

Local policies for development are usually based on the virtuous triangle of sustainability: economic growth, social inclusion, environmental balance. Today, this triangle is not sufficient. Culture is becoming **the fourth pillar of sustainable development** at a local level. Cultural policies, based on the intrinsic values of culture (creativity, critical knowledge, diversity, memory, rituality...) are becoming more important for democracy and citizenship. Cities wish to exchange experiences and improve mutual learning. In its programme 2008-2010, UCLG reinforces its capacity to become a global meeting point on cultural issues: governance, networking and project development.

UCLG's Committee on culture is **a unique meeting point with high added value**: there is not another structure at a global level that gathers together cities, organisations and networks that foster the relation between local cultural policies and sustainable development.

### *UCLG's Committee on culture*

The programme 2008-2010 has five sub-objectives. The following paragraphs report the progress achieved during the last months.

- 1. Governance.** *A committee with active members with shared responsibilities and dynamic within UCLG.*
  - The governance of the Committee has been reinforced with a third vice-Chair, the city of Lille (March 2008)
  - An invitation has been issued to specific cities to join the Committee on culture and become active members (April 2008)
  - Cooperation with the Social Inclusion Committee. Contribution to the Charter "Building inclusive cities from local action" (April – October 2008)
  - Cooperation with the Metropolitan section. Design and coordination of a session on "culture and local development" in the World Congress of Sydney (October 2008).
- 2. Development of projects.** *UCLG and its Committee on culture are locally, nationally and internationally well-known, and develop specific projects in the field of exchanging experiences and good practices on the local implementation of Agenda 21 for culture.*

- The website <http://www.agenda21culture.net> is being upgraded, based on an open-source software. It will allow easier uploading and downloading of documents.
- The number of translations of Agenda 21 for culture has increased in two: Japanese and Arabic. Both have been realized in partnership with local organizations: respectively Mitsubishi UFJ Research and Consulting and UCLG Office Lebanon, Syria and Jordan. Specific pages in the website in these languages have been created.
- Translations of Agenda 21 for culture to Serbian and Bulgarian are ready to be uploaded before the end of 2008.
- Two seminars have been organized in 2008. Both seminars disseminated the Agenda 21 for culture regionally (Andean and West Africa). Conclusions are uploaded in the website.
  - o Seminar "Urban policies and cultural development: planning as a strategy ", Quito (Ecuador), 31 March – 3 April 2008. In partnership with Quito Metropolitan Council, Interlocal Network of Iberoamerican Cities for culture and AECID – Spanish Agency for International Cooperation.
  - o Seminar "Culture and strategies for local development", Dakar (Senegall), 7-8-9 July 2008. In partnership with the Commission of the Economic and Monetary Union of West Africa – UEMOA, the City of Dakar, the Ministry for Culture of Senegal and AECID – Spanish Agency for International Cooperation.
- AECID has granted the Committee on culture to support the local implementation of Agenda 21 for culture in 3 cities (September 2008).
- Exploration of a joint celebration by cities each 21 May, Day for Cultural Diversity is undergoing.

**3. Policy development.** *Research and development as the engine of key documents on local cultural policies that are widely disseminated.*

- The Committee on culture has support the research of the Observatoire des Politiques Culturelles (Grenoble) on the implementation of the Agenda 21 for culture in France (September 2008). The research was signed by Christelle Blouët. The report highlights the need for a more structured involvement of cities to principles and recommendations suggested by the Agenda 21 for culture.
- The Committee will publish a report on the implementation of Agenda 21 for culture in large cities in March 2009.
- The Committee on culture will issue two reports before March 2009: on the role of local governments in the Convention for Cultural Diversity and on the relation between Agenda 21 for culture and Millennium Development Goals.

**4. Development of alliances and partnerships.** *Networking and advocacy that establish the basis of shared projects, allowing cities an active presence in the international debates on culture and sustainable development.*

- Unesco. The Committee is assessing the programme "Network of Creative Cities" (Eva Schöld, City of Stockholm).
- European Union. Support to the European Year for Intercultural Dialogue and participation in the opening and closing events (Ljubljana and Paris, January and November 2008, respectively).
- Council of Europe. The Committee has supported the Intercultural Cities programme and cooperated in the organisation of two seminars: Liverpool (May 2008) and Barcelona (October 2008).
- Platform for an Intercultural Europe. The Committee has supported the elaboration of the Rainbow Paper.
- Regional networks. The Committee has attended meetings of regional networks in Dortmund, Ottawa, Montreal, Lyon and Escazú.

**5. Resources.** *Funds to support the implementation of specific projects and allow the long-term sustainability of the Committee.*

- A proposal was approved by the Spanish Agency for Development (AECID) in March 2008.
- Two other funding proposals will be elaborated during the next months: AECID and EuropeAid.

**Contact**

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