

[Working Group on Culture]



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Culture has become an indispensable dimension for the development of cities and local governments. Nowadays, culture lies at the heart of urban strategies, not just due to its intrinsic vocation of promoting human rights, shaping the knowledge society and improving quality of life for all, but also on account of its role in the creation of employment, urban regeneration and social inclusion. Furthermore, culture also constitutes one of the major hopes of today's globalisation. Inter-cultural dialogue and promoting cultural diversity are some of humankind's greatest challenges. As a result, international cooperation and development programmes offer increased attention to heritage, the arts and creative industries.

The Agenda 21 for culture is the first document with worldwide mission that advocates establishing the groundwork of an undertaking by cities and local governments for cultural development. On 7 October 2004 the Executive Bureau of UCLG, meeting in Sao Paulo, adopted the Agenda 21 for culture as a reference document for its programmes on culture. During the period October 2004 – June 2005 the representatives of local governments and national associations have shaped the Programme 2005-2007 of UCLG's Working Group on Culture. The Programme has been prepared in close cooperation with UCLG's World Secretariat.

Nowadays, cities and local governments assume a significant role as relevant actors on the international stage. This is why we invite cities and local governments from all over the world to consider the document and associate with us to promote culture, now, more than ever.

The Working Group on Culture aims to become the meeting point for cities and local governments that place culture at the heart of their development processes. The activities of the Working Group will have to allow the cooperation of local governments in the field of culture to be strengthened.

The Programme 2005-2007 of the Working Group on Culture aims "To promote the role of culture as a central dimension of local policies through the dissemination and implementation of the Agenda 21 for culture", and unfolds as four sub-objectives: (1) To develop the institutional framework of cities and local governments, (2) To guide the development and implementation of services to cities, (3) To develop institutional partnerships in culture, and (4) To promote research and development in culture.

