

CULTURE SUMMIT OF UCLG


CULTURE AND
SUSTAINABLE CITIES

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From Agenda 21 for culture to Culture 21: Actions Ms. **Catherine Cullen**

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As the opening session reaches its end, it is my turn to summarise the main steps in the development of the Agenda 21 for culture and the **Committee on Culture**'s work over the past 10 years. 10 years only, I'd like to stress – and yet, what progress made and how many partners involved globally.

The Agenda 21 for culture, the first world document to address the role of culture in sustainable development, was approved in Barcelona on 8 May 2004, in the context of the 4th Forum of Porto Alegre and the setting-up, only a few weeks earlier in Paris, of **United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG)**.

It could be argued that, in just ten years, the Agenda 21 for culture has moved from being a document on paper, based on the experience and intuition of cultural decision-makers, researchers and artists, to becoming real – as shown by the 596 cities, local governments and organisations which explicitly work with the Agenda 21 for culture today. The document has been translated into 21 languages.

In the first few years, the Committee on Culture focused on the dissemination and implementation of the Agenda 21 for culture. Indeed, it was necessary to convince and support cities and regions which little by little came to adopt it, and to coordinate the exchanges and reflection which went hand-in-hand with this new way of approaching and doing culture, with keywords that included transversality, participation, sharing, eco-organisation, cultural diversity, and governance.


This coordinating role was enhanced through 6 important reports. To start with, as early as 2006, we responded to a request from **UNESCO**, which had recently adopted the **Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions** – an essential document, I would like to stress, for a non-hegemonic, non completely-commercial culture (and cultures) to have a future in this world. That UNESCO Convention in 2005 (I would like to say hello to Danielle Cliche, the Secretary of the Convention at UNESCO) and the Declaration on Cultural Rights adopted by the Fribourg Group in 2007 (I would also like to say hello to Patrice Meyer-Bisch, a great thinker and defender of cultural rights) developed alongside and interacted with the Agenda 21 for culture, adopted in 2004. These are complementary movements and initiatives, which developed over the same period – certainly not by chance.

» **SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT WAS TO BE DEFINED AS THE COMBINATION OF ECONOMIC FEASIBILITY, SOCIAL EQUALITY, ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSIBILITY AND CULTURAL VITALITY.**

In 2012, the Committee on Culture published its 6th report, **Rio+20 and culture. Advocating for Culture as a Pillar of Sustainability**, which, as you may imagine, was not kind to the final conclusions of the Rio+20 conference.

And that was because in 2010 we had witnessed a key turnaround for culture and sustainable development. In the context of UCLG's 3rd World Congress, held in Mexico, the UCLG Executive Bureau unanimously adopted the Policy Statement **Culture: Fourth Pillar of Sustainable Development**. This document affirms that successful local policies are based on the understanding that culture lies at the heart of sustainable development, and involves two complementary strategies – culture as a driver and culture as an enabler of sustainable development.

2010 was a point of no return for the Agenda 21 for culture. From then on, sustainable development was to be defined as the combination of economic feasibility, social equality, environmental



responsibility AND cultural vitality. Today there are endless discussions on the 4 pillars – whether they make up a square, a circle, whatever should be on top, or at the bottom, etc. That doesn't matter to us – what we want is to be there, recognised as a major player, and to take part fully in the global reflection on sustainable development.

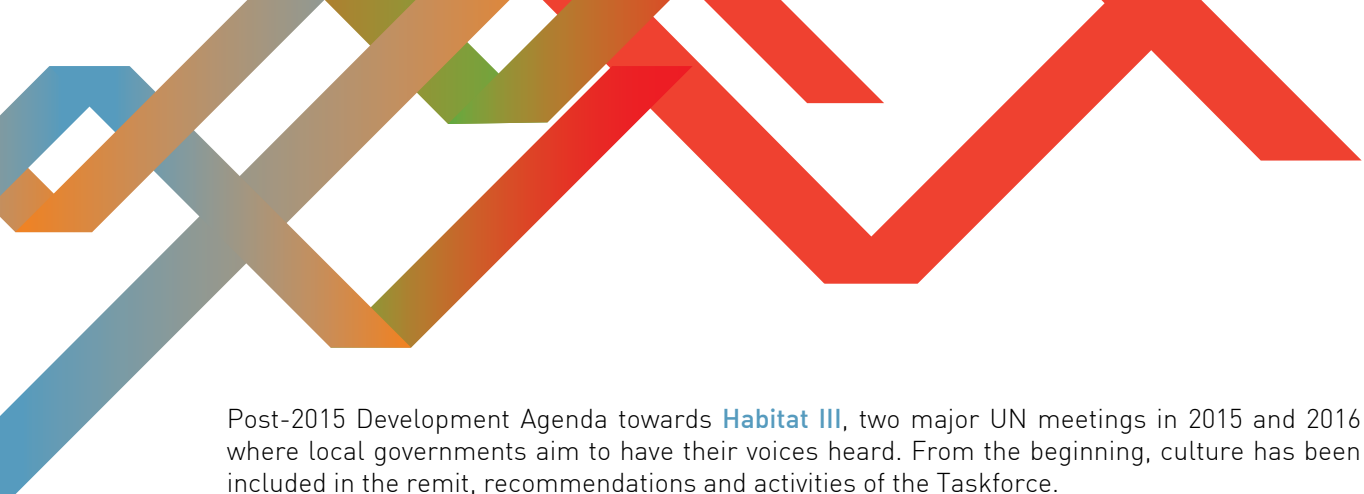
After Rio+20, and the need felt by many cultural actors to 'make noise' for culture around the world, the Committee on Culture became strongly involved in a range of lobbying initiatives to place culture on the world map, within the Goals of the new Post-2015 Agenda, etc. – in short, to make culture exist as an inescapable issue.

Therefore, we intensified our resolution and energy and, alongside 8 cultural partners, including some global federations, most of which are here today, we launched a **lobbying campaign** to have culture rightfully recognised in the UN system. I would like to mention all of our partners in this process – it is not always easy to work globally when each of these federations represents tens and tens of associations and bodies. They include the Arterial network (the largest cultural network in Africa), Culture Action Europe (likewise), IFACCA (the world network of Arts Councils and Ministries of Culture), IFCCD (the global gathering of Coalitions for Cultural Diversity), ICOMOS (the large global network for heritage), IFLA (world network of libraries), IMC (International Music Council – including all forms of music) and the large Latin American Network for the Arts and Social Inclusion. And not to be forgotten, our Committee on Culture and UNESCO, which has often accompanied and facilitated our work.

Results of this process became quickly visible: in 2013, the statement **Culture as a Goal in the Post-2015 Development Agenda** was disseminated around the world by this global network of networks. Other documents ensued in 2014 and 2015, leading to the **#culture2015goal campaign**.

At the same time and in parallel to this, the UCLG World Secretariat has been actively involved in the last few years in coordinating the **Global Taskforce** of Local and Regional Governments for





Post-2015 Development Agenda towards **Habitat III**, two major UN meetings in 2015 and 2016 where local governments aim to have their voices heard. From the beginning, culture has been included in the remit, recommendations and activities of the Taskforce.

Josep Roig and the team of the World Secretariat have worked ceaselessly to strengthen cities and local governments' plea at the UN and vis-à-vis major UN agencies, and thanks to this it should come as no surprise that today one of the Goals (nº11) focuses on sustainable cities, and there, as we all know, culture plays such an important role. So far so good, as we say in French – it's not over, let's continue to work together.

» **SUPPORT CITIES AND REGIONS (...) AND TO COORDINATE THE EXCHANGES AND REFLECTION WHICH WENT HAND-IN-HAND WITH THIS NEW WAY OF APPROACHING AND DOING CULTURE, WITH KEYWORDS THAT INCLUDED TRANSVERSALITY, PARTICIPATION, SHARING, ECO-ORGANISATION, CULTURAL DIVERSITY, AND GOVERNANCE.**


Last November, we visited Mexico City to attend the award ceremony of the first edition of the International **Award UCLG – Mexico City – Culture 21**. The award was given to the city of **Belo Horizonte**, thanks to its 'Arena da Cultura' project, which focuses on cultural and artistic education – so I will take the opportunity to congratulate again its Secretary for Culture, Leonidas José de Oliveira, as well as the cities of Hannover and Ouagadougou, which obtained a special mention. The Jury decided that the 'Individual Award' be shared by sociologist **Manuel Castells** and the UN Special Rapporteur on Cultural Rights, **Farida Shaheed**, the latter of whom we are honoured to have among us today. We received 56 applications from cities everywhere in the world and were able to understand to what extent initiatives bringing together culture and sustainable development were integrated in cultural policy, in many diverse ways. 30 of these examples can now be downloaded from our website.

Our thanks are due, to start with, to Eduardo Vázquez, the Deputy Mayor for Culture in Mexico, as well as the City of Mexico, for launching this initiative and organising this Award, which we are pleased to announce will be held again in 2016.

So here we are, in Bilbao, to present the 'restyled', the new life of, Agenda 21 for culture. After 10 years of development and practices, after the efforts for culture to be recognised as the 4th pillar of sustainable development, and the granting of the 1st Mexico Award on Culture and Sustainable Development, the Committee on Culture decided that it was time to draft a new document which was to update the Agenda 21 for culture, making it more practical and accessible, easier to implement and which, whilst retaining its principles, should also provide specific tools for implementation.

It was said and done: in late 2013, articles by researchers and experts were commissioned, an online questionnaire was sent to our networks and to other friendly networks, in order to collect comments and recommendations and to discuss the new version of the Agenda 21 for culture, and a new text was shaped, **Culture 21: Actions**.

Between 2013 and 2014, drafts of "Culture 21: Actions" were discussed in approximately 30 cities around the world, and the annual meeting of the Committee on Culture in Buenos Aires was devoted to completing the document, through collaborative, open work, with a very relevant contribution by policymakers, cultural networks and civil society actors from across Latin America. I would like to thank particularly Maria Victoria Alcaraz, Vice Minister of Culture of the City of Buenos Aires, for the excellent organisation of that fundamental event in our joint work.



On the other hand, the **Pilot Cities** programme, meant to illustrate a possible future for the Agenda 21 for culture, was implemented in 2014 in **8 cities** which volunteered to take part: Belo Horizonte, Bogotá, Concepción, Gabrovo, the island of Jeju, Mexico City, Talca and Vaudreuil-Dorion. This was such a positive process, providing lessons learned and many practical examples, that we will undoubtedly launch it again in the coming years. Other cities have already volunteered to take part.

Tomorrow, the Committee on Culture will officially approve, or so I hope, Culture 21: Actions and we will then have a clear routemap for the 10 coming years.

But I cannot finish this overview of the past 10 years without expressing my gratitude and paying tribute to the excellent work of the Committee on Culture. I would like to pay tribute in particular to Jordi Martí, the former Delegate for Culture of the City of Barcelona, and Vitor Ortiz, the former Secretary for Culture of Porto Alegre, who were effectively in charge of putting the Agenda 21 for culture into orbit.

In 2012, the **governance** of the Committee was revised, and responsibilities and tasks were distributed more equally. I would like to recognise the work of my fellow Committee members – my dear co-presidents in the cities of Buenos Aires, Montreal and Mexico, and my equally dear vice-presidents in the cities of Angers, Barcelona and Milan. Not to forget the approximately 20 cities which closely follow and actively support the Committee on Culture.

Before I finish, I would also like to thank the ‘bedrock’ of the Committee – Jordi Pascual. He is everywhere, aware of everything, he thinks, he stays cool, he communicates with everyone – even his own team – AND he is always in a good mood! The Agenda 21 for culture, UCLG’s Committee on Culture, the strength of our lobbying networks for culture in the world owe much to him. Thank you Jordi, and let’s go for the next 10 years!

And finally, thanks again, Mr Mayor, for your warm welcome in this nice city, always so cultural and committed to the Agenda 21 for culture since day one. For us, holding this first UCLG Culture Summit in the city of **Bilbao** makes real sense.

Thank you.



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