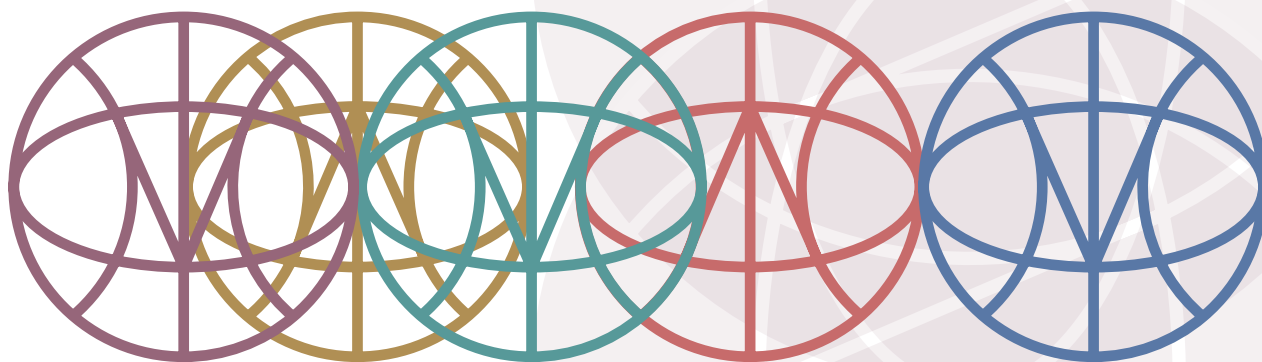


**UCLG CULTURE SUMMIT  
BARCELONA 2025**



**CULTURE IS ALWAYS  
IN THE ANSWER**

**DECLARATION**

# On the eve of Mondiacult 2025, United Cities and Local Governments invites UNESCO, the UN system, and national governments to make clear commitments

Humanity faces critical challenges. They range from the climate crisis and its multiple and differentiated impacts, to social exclusion and the loss of shared values. From limited access to basic services and human rights for many citizens, to severe inequalities between and within countries, regions and people, and armed conflicts. There are disruptions and unprecedented transformations generated by technology, and by political debates that incite polarisation. This context generates uncertainty, fear and distrust.

Still, across the world, local communities also demonstrate energy, creativity and commitment to imagine and build a more just, caring and sustainable future for all generations. It is in cities, towns and other human settlements where communities and local and regional governments act to tackle today's challenges and bring about a systemic transformation.

A transformation that bridges local actions and global trends, cares for people and the planet, and guarantees equal rights and opportunities for all.

A transformation driven by well-informed, critical and empowered communities.

A transformation based on human rights and solidarity.

A transformation that puts culture in the answer to our challenges as one humanity.

Because Culture is Always in the Answer.

Can anyone imagine human life without the aspects that belong to heritage, creativity, diversity and knowledge? Can development be achieved if citizens are not allowed to make meaning of the places they inhabit? Culture is, thus, an indispensable element of cities and communities

Culture also allows us to question ourselves, to discover what is common to humanity, find meaning in stories and ways of being that are different from our own, be inspired and express emotion, affect and care, and learn from others. Through culture, we can recognise one another as equals. Can humanity survive if the diverse ways of life, knowledge and aspirations existing around the world, which imply diverse paths towards sustainability, are not properly acknowledged?

Culture is a common good, which requires protection and sharing. Cultural diversity goes hand in hand with Universal human rights and fundamental freedoms. Culture can only enable sustainable development if every person can fully exercise their human rights, free from discrimination, and leaving no one and no place behind.

These are the values that have guided the Global Municipal Movement for over one hundred years, and continue to inspire its practice, as reflected in the Pact for the Future of Humanity, adopted by United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) in 2022. UCLG is committed to the strength of collective action, empowerment, co-creation, and international cooperation and solidarity: the very cornerstones of harmonious, thriving and sustainable societies, highlighting the importance of collaboration beyond borders and the generation of networks as essential ways to enrich our proposals and project our voices. It places care at the heart of its Pact for the Future: care for the human rights of all people and generations, care for the integrity and safeguard of our planet, and care for our collective governance systems. UCLG has worked since 2004 to fully integrate culture in approaches to sustainable development and has become the most influential global platform on this issue. UCLG places culture at the centre, considers access to and participation in cultural life as a basic service, and embeds creativity, diversity, heritage, knowledge and cultural rights as key priorities for the present and the future.

The 6th UCLG Culture Summit is held in Barcelona on 26, 27 and 28 September 2025, in the frame of the Civic Agora, a large event of debates and contributions from civil society organisations and local, regional and national governments, held in the frame of the Mondiacult 2025 conference on cultural policies organised by UNESCO. The Summit has witnessed great projects, programmes and policies developed by local and regional governments, and their associations, all around the world. Many of these projects, programmes and policies express why cultural rights need to be the foundation of policies for the Climate and Ecological Transitions, for Equality and Gender Mainstreaming, for Health and Wellbeing, for Public Spaces, for Education, among others; in instances that consider culture as an enabler of development. Also, many of the projects are born to consolidate spaces and processes related to heritage, creativity, diversity and knowledge, the heart of human dignity, in very solid, well-structured and resourced cultural policies, fully aligned with cultural rights and fully empowering the cultural actors of the place.

Across the world local communities have the energy, the creativity and the commitment to imagine and build a more just, caring and sustainable future.

Cities, towns and human settlements, with their local and regional governments act to tackle today's challenges and bring about a systemic transformation.

In Barcelona, on 27 September 2025, on the eve of Mondiacult 2025, we, Mayors and local authorities, need national governments and the UN system as a whole to support this systemic transformation. We need a global governance architecture with solid and bold cultural policies. Because Culture is Always in the Answer.

We call on all actors involved in Mondiacult 2025 to be ambitious and bold, and Care for People and the Planet.

We need the promises announced three years ago, in Mondiacult 2022, to become a reality in Mondiacult 2025, especially in two areas:

- The national cultural policies. They should be seen as “an enabling environment conducive to the respect and exercise of all human rights, in particular cultural rights”, focusing on the six priority areas identified in Mondiacult 2022: full participation in cultural life for all; economic and social rights of artists; artistic freedom and freedom of expression; linguistic and cultural diversity; rights of peoples and communities to their cultural identity and heritage, including the expressions of the cultures of indigenous peoples; and protection, return, and restitution of cultural property. Our plea is clear. These priorities can and should be unfolded in transparent, well-resourced, and multi-level policies, with a set of indicators to measure their impact on cultural rights and sustainability, co-created with local and regional governments, civil society and all the relevant and necessary key development stakeholders.
- The Culture Goal. There is a widespread and shared claim for a dedicated Culture Goal in the UN post-2030 Agenda. Based on the leadership of many, including cities and nations from all corners of the world, organised civil society and UNESCO, the Culture 2030 Goal campaign released the first-ever proposal of a stand-alone Goal for Culture, with targets and indicators. This is not only a feasible and credible proposal, and essential to localize all the agendas. Our plea is clear. Make this stand-alone Goal a reality. Share this proposal with ministers of Foreign Affairs and ambassadors in New York. Engage in the conversation. Make sure that this proposal is obvious to all in 2027, when the High-Level Political Forum begins discussions for the UN post-2030 Agenda.

On the eve of Mondiacult 2025, we, Mayors and local authorities of Cities and Local Governments all around the world, invite UNESCO, the UN system, and national governments to take clear commitments and to work every day to ensure that *Culture is Always in the Answer*.

#CultureSummit

[www.agenda21culture.net/summit](http://www.agenda21culture.net/summit)

## UCLG Culture Summit 2025

### Info

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