G20 CULTURE
Shaping the Global Narrative for Inclusive Growth

वैश्विक कुटुंबकम्
ONE EARTH • ONE FAMILY • ONE FUTURE

2023
G20 CULTURE
Shaping the Global Narrative for Inclusive Growth
G20 Culture: Shaping the Global Narrative for Inclusive Growth
prepared by Team G20 – Ministry of Culture, Government of India, in collaboration with UNESCO as Knowledge Partner

Team G20 - Culture Working Group (CWG) of India’s G20 Presidency:
Mr. Govind Mohan, Chair CWG and Secretary, Ministry of Culture (MoC), Government of India (GoI)
Ms. Lily Pandeya, Co-chair CWG and Joint Secretary, MoC, GoI
Mr. Vivek Gupta, Director (G20), MoC, GoI
Mr. Yash Veer Singh, Director (ICR, Vigilance), MoC, GoI
Ms. Anuradha Sood, Under Secretary (ICR, G20), MoC, GoI

UNESCO:
Ms. Paola Leoncini Bartoli, Director, Cultural Policies and Development, Culture Sector
Ms. Emmanuelle Robert, Programme Specialist
Ms. Yiline Zhao, Associate Programme Specialist
Ms. Alhanouf Almogbil, Junior Professional Officer

Consultants:
Dr. Yatharth Kachiar, Substantive
Dr. Prateek Kukreja, Substantive
Ms. Hennashka Israni, Substantive
Mr. Aayush Mohanty, Substantive
Ms. Megha Mehta, Logistics
Ms. Ayushi Khurana, Logistics
Ms. Kanupriya Bhattar, Creative
Ms. Supriya Lahoti, Creative
Ms. Charukesha Mathur, Creative
Ms. Sony Sachdeva, Creative
Ms. Pratiti Joshi, UNESCO-MoC
Mr. Anand Hari, UNESCO-MoC
Ms. Tanya Goswami, UNESCO-MoC
Mr. Aman Gupta, Media
Mr. Dharmender Singh, Media
Ms. Radhika Boruah, Media
Mr. Mohammed Azmil, Media
Ms. Vishupriya Rajgarhia, Media

Support Staff:
Mr. T. S. Chauhan, PS, MoC
Ms. Mokshada Tiwari, Assistant Section Officer, MoC
Mr. Vishesh, Consultant, MoC
Mr. Raunaq Singh, Consultant, MoC
Mr. Kartik Kashyap, Office Staff
Mr. Jitender Singh, Office Staff
Mr. Ajay Kumar, Office Staff
Mr. Raju Dhanka, Office Staff
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Foreword
by Mr. Amitabh Kant
G20 Sherpa, India

It is with immense pleasure that I present this compendious publication documenting the proceedings of the Global Thematic Webinars organised by the G20 Culture Working Group under India’s Presidency, in collaboration with UNESCO, as the esteemed Knowledge Partner.

A nation’s rapport with the international community is significantly influenced by its civilizational and cultural legacy. At the core of India’s G20 Presidency lies the profound ancient philosophy of ‘VasudhaivaKutumbakam’ which is deeply ingrained in the long-standing Indian ethos of inclusivity, sustainability and interconnectedness. The series of Global Thematic Webinars on the four priority areas articulated by India’s G20 Presidency embodied and promoted this idea on a global scale, by advancing a dialogue of cooperation and understanding among nations and cultures.

The recent incorporation of the Culture Working Group within the G20 Sherpa track represents a landmark achievement and milestone in the global policy agenda. This heralds a new era where the overarching role of culture as a catalyst for sustainable and socio-economic development is being duly acknowledged and valued. The inclusion of the Culture workstream, therefore, opens doors to diverse perspectives and knowledge that can inspire innovative and creative solutions to address the most pressing global issues including climate change, health, economic growth and more. It offers an opportunity to reinforce multilateral efforts towards positioning culture as a Stand-Alone Goal in the Post-2030 Agenda.

The objective of each webinar was to engage in a collaborative process aimed at identifying existing gaps and exchanging best practices to achieve concrete, action-oriented outcomes. Throughout this initiative, the G20 Culture Working Group has set a commendable benchmark for future deliberations surrounding culture. This methodology exemplifies a knowledge-building and sharing process that is expert-driven and inclusive, fostering an environment where diverse perspectives are presented and heard. By bringing together experts and stakeholders from multiple backgrounds under one roof, it is my firm belief that the outcomes of these webinars and the collective wisdom will guide us in all our forthcoming endeavours with greater efficiency and effectiveness.

This report stands as a testimony to the importance of collaborative initiatives, where diverse perspectives converge to overcome common challenges, highlighting our shared commitment towards our ‘one earth, one family, one future.’
Acknowledgements

This comprehensive publication on the Global Thematic Webinars, conceived and organized by the Team Culture Working Group (CWG) under India’s G20 Presidency, Ministry of Culture, Government of India, in collaboration with UNESCO as Knowledge Partner is a testament to the concerted efforts and invaluable contributions of the many people whose support, time and commitment is acknowledged:

Mr. Amitabh Kant, Sherpa, India’s G20 Presidency for his belief and encouragement to the CWG team, Ministry of Culture.

Mr. Govind Mohan, Secretary, MoC, for guidance and direction.

Dr. Bibek Debroy, Chairman of the Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister, India; Dr. Jyotindra Jain, former Director of the National Crafts Museum & Professor at School of Arts & Aesthetics, JNU; Ms. V. Vidyavathi, Secretary, Ministry of Tourism (then DG–ASI); Dr. Ritu Sethi, Founder–Trustee, Craft Revival Trust, India; Ms. Jaya Jaitly, President, Dastkari Haat Samiti, India; Dr. Poonam Munjal, Professor at National Council of Applied Economic Research, India; Mr. Anand Mahindra, Chairman of the Mahindra Group, India; Ms. Debjani Ghosh, President of the National Association of Software & Services Companies, India – sincere gratitude for enriching the discourse and aiding the global reflection on the priorities articulated by the Indian presidency through their sharp insights and unique perspectives.

Mr. Nagraj Naidu Kakanur, Joint Secretary and Mr. Vipul Bawa, Under Secretary, G20, from Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India for their valuable advice and cooperation.

Mr. Ernesto Ottone R., Assistant Director–General for Culture, representing the UNESCO Director–General, and in particular, Ms. Paola Leoncini Bartoli, Director for Cultural Policies and Development in the Culture Sector and her team comprising Ms. Emmanuelle Robert, Programme Specialist, Ms. Yiline Zhao, Associate Programme Specialist, and Ms. Alhanouf Almogbil, Junior Professional Officer, for their thorough professionalism, exceptional expertise and organizational facilitation throughout the process.

Facilitators from International Organizations who skilfully moderated the webinar sessions ensuring a smooth and effective dialogue:

For Priority 1: Ms. Marina Schneider, Principal Legal Officer & Treaty Depositary, UNIDROIT; Ms. Sunna Altnoder, Chief of Unit, Movable Heritage and Museums, UNESCO; and, Mr. Gonzalo Giordano, Criminal Intelligence Officer, Acting Coordinator of the Works of Art Unit, INTERPOL.
For Priority 2: Ms. Lindsey Hook, Head of Culture, World Food Forum, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO); Mr. Nils Fietje, Technical Officer, Behavioural and Cultural Insights Unit, World Health Organization (WHO); and, Ms. Fumiko Ohinata, Head of Programme Management Unit, Secretariat of the UNESCO 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.

For Priority 3: Ms. Margherita Licata, Technical Specialist Private Services, Sectoral Policies Department, International Labour Organization (ILO); Ms. Marisa Henderson, Chief of the Creative Economy and Development Programme, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD); and Mr. Dimiter Gantchev, Deputy Director, Information and Digital Outreach Division, World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO).

For Priority 4: Dr. Michelle Degruchy, Analyst – Archaeology & Cultural Heritage, United Nations Satellite Centre (UNOSAT); Mr. Gai Jorajev, President of the ICOMOS International Scientific Committee on Aerospace Heritage International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS); and Ms. Sophie Delepierre, Head of Heritage Protection Department, International Council of Museums (ICOM).

Ms. Junhi Han, Sector Chief, Culture Sector, UNESCO New Delhi and Mr. Ankush Seth, programme Officer, Culture Sector, UNESCO for organizing national level seminars on the four CWG priorities of India’s G20 presidency.

Mr. Gurmeet Chawla, Joint Secretary & ADG, Archaeological Survey of India (ASI); Mr. Anil Tiwari, Director (Antiquity), ASI; and, Dr. Manvi Seth, Prof. and Head of Department of Museology, National Museum Institute, India – for their continued engagement and support.

Mr. Rohit Agarwal, Partner EYLLP and team for their contribution in the preparation of the background papers on the four priorities, and in this publication.

A big shout out to the entire Team G20, and the friends and well-wishers of CWG of India’s G20 presidency, Ministry of Culture.

Lily Pandeya
Joint Secretary, G20
Ministry of Culture,
Government of India
Message
from Ms Audrey Azoulay
Director-General of UNESCO

Worsening international conflicts, climate disruption and its consequences, the ongoing digital revolution and the global challenge of education are all issues that require us to rethink the role of culture and creativity in our societies.

Firstly, this means protecting culture and creativity better. As recent conflicts and the COVID-19 pandemic have shown, cultural assets, cultural institutions and cultural professionals are vulnerable to crises, which are multiplying. World Heritage sites are increasingly threatened by climate disruption.

Secondly, this also means better galvanizing the power of culture and creativity – for the economic role they play, the values of peace and dialogue they convey, and the sustainable lifestyles they can help to forge. Indeed, culture and creativity are pillars on which we can build the future of our societies.

In response to this double imperative, the 150 Member States gathered at the MONDIACULT Conference organized by UNESCO in Mexico last September declared that culture was a "global public good". They also committed to protecting it as such, and to placing it at the heart of sustainable development in their countries.

To defend this public good and respond collectively to global challenges, the G20 is a crucial platform for discussion, both because of the economic importance of its members and because of the "North-South" dialogue that it fosters.

We therefore welcome the movement, initiated in 2020 by Saudi Arabia, through which the G20 has recognized the importance of culture for development, and fully incorporated it into the G20’s work.

In line with the declarations made in Rome in 2021 and Bali in 2022, the Indian Presidency of the G20 has emphasized the role of culture in all the multilateral objectives set out in the G20 agenda throughout 2023.

UNESCO is delighted to have been able to contribute to the Culture Working Group as a knowledge partner, focusing on the four priorities of India’s Presidency, which are also at the heart of our mandate: the protection and restitution of cultural property, the role of living heritage for a sustainable future, the promotion of cultural and creative industries and the creative economy, and the potential of digital technologies in protecting and promoting culture.

To protect the diversity of culture and creativity and to make them pillars of development for all societies, we must also place them at the heart of multilateralism. This is the ambition of UNESCO, which supports the inclusion of culture as a goal in its own right in the post-2030 agenda. This is also the goal to which the G20, under the Indian Presidency, is contributing.

UNESCO pledges to stand by the G20 and its upcoming presidencies to fully develop the potential of culture and creativity – and to nurture a more inclusive and sustainable future.
I am pleased to present this comprehensive publication, which is a culmination of thoughtful insights and reflections drawn from the series of Global Thematic Webinars organised from late March to mid-April by the Culture Working Group under India’s G20 Presidency. These webinars have played an instrumental role in advancing our collective understanding and facilitating an inclusive dialogue on the four priority areas articulated by the Indian Presidency.

The webinars brought together an esteemed panel of 159 experts from G20 Members, guest nations, international organizations, and other stakeholders. Their depth of knowledge and willingness to share best practices added significant value to our discussions and, ultimately, to the conclusions drawn in this report.

These webinars have set a benchmark for future G20 dialogues on culture, demonstrating that a systematic, inclusive, and expert-driven approach can generate significant knowledge and actionable insights. They have shown that culture, in all its diversity, can unite us in our common pursuit of sustainable development. Furthermore, they have established a roadmap for making culture a standing mechanism of the G20, thus speaking to the core mandate of this premier forum for international cooperation. This report, therefore, is indeed a defining contribution of India’s G20 Presidency, that will serve as a guide for future presidencies and development strategies worldwide.

The report will undoubtedly serve as an invaluable resource. It will guide us in fortifying our collective efforts and fostering an environment that values the exchange of ideas and collaborative learning. It underscores the transformative power of culture and our mutual responsibility towards the safeguarding and development of our cultural landscape. It also celebrates the spirit of unity in diversity, of shared learning in a multi-faceted world.

I am confident that the report will play a significant role in our collective knowledge-building process, highlighting diverse perspectives and enable us to map a comprehensive cultural landscape that will guide future policy-making.

I wish to extend heartfelt gratitude to all the participants from G20 Members, guest nations and various international organizations as well as other stakeholders. Their inputs, expertise, and engagement have been instrumental in enriching our knowledge base, shaping the ministerial Declaration, and informing the Sherpa Track.

I would also like to thank UNESCO, our esteemed knowledge partner, for their exemplary commitment and operational excellence that underpinned the seamless execution of these webinars. Their support has been invaluable to the successful realization of our objectives.

As we step forward into new phases of our journey, let us do so with the understanding that our collective effort is crucial in shaping the narrative of our cultural policies. This consolidated publication is a testament to our unwavering commitment and steadfast resolve to continue contributing towards the preservation and enhancement of our shared cultural heritage. The report signifies our aspiration for a future where the confluence of cultures strengthens our collective identity, as well as our resolve for a more connected, inclusive and culturally rich world.
Message

from Ms. Lily Pandeya
Co-Chair, Culture Working Group

It is my privilege to present this publication as a comprehensive report on the series of Global Thematic Webinars organised by the Culture Working Group (CWG) under India’s G20 Presidency. This pioneering initiative, a veritable exercise in knowledge building, is topical and timely, given the growing global recognition of the culture sector in shaping societies and economies.

Within the pages of the publication, you will find the essence of discussions that transpired and the vital insights that emerged during these webinars on the four priority areas articulated by India’s G20 Presidency. Each segment reflects the wealth of knowledge and perspectives by national and international experts across G20 Members, Guest Nations and International Organizations who came together to focus and steer a robust conversation on some of the most important issues concerning the culture sector globally.

Spread over four days covering each of the four priority areas and moderated by the relevant international organizations, the Global Thematic Webinars saw a vigorous participation of 159 experts from across the globe. The deliberations hinged on sharing good practices, identifying gaps, and devising action-oriented recommendations to fully harness the potential of culture as a global public good. These expert-driven thematic webinars played a pivotal role in informing the course of the culture workstream and the broader consultation process. The strategies and recommendations were compiled into a matrix which was shared with the G20 Membership to aid reflection on the core priority areas and inform formulation of the Ministerial declaration and outcome document.

This effort goes beyond being a mere reportage of the thematic webinars. It stands as a testament to our transformative and collective endeavour mapping the path for future ventures. It is symbolic of constructive engagement, collaboration, and shared aspirations that define the essence of India’s G20 Presidency. It is our earnest hope that such mechanisms gain further impetus in the forthcoming presidencies, ensuring a sustained evidence-based and inclusive working approach.

Throughout this journey, we collaborated closely with UNESCO, our knowledge partner who graciously hosted these online meetings and provided unwavering support in convening them under the aegis of India’s G20 Presidency. I extend my deep appreciation to all the participants, particularly to the moderators of the sessions, for facilitating meaningful and productive exchanges.

We proudly present this tangible outcome of our collective efforts and reflections in the form of this publication, with the belief that it will serve as a guiding light and inspiration, as we persist in our mission to forge a more inclusive, informed, and culturally rich global community.
In the framework of the Culture Working Group (CWG), under India’s G20 Presidency, a series of four Global Thematic Webinars were organized between March and April 2023 to foster an inclusive dialogue and facilitate an in-depth discussion from an expert driven perspective on the four priority areas articulated by the G20 CWG – Protection and Restitution of Cultural Property; Harnessing Living Heritage for a Sustainable Future; Promotion of Cultural and Creative Industries and Creative Economy; and, Leveraging Digital Technologies for the Protection and Promotion of Culture. The Global Thematic Webinars were intended to inform the proceedings of the CWG with a view to shape the action-oriented outcomes of the Culture workstream across four meetings. Organised by the Ministry of Culture, Government of India, the webinars were hosted and facilitated by UNESCO, as a knowledge partner of G20 CWG.

The main objectives of the Global Thematic Webinars were primarily focused on fostering an inclusive dialogue and knowledge sharing on each priority of the G20 CWG under the Indian Presidency from an expert-driven perspective. The webinars aimed at capitalizing on best practices and experiences at a global level as well as identifying gaps, needs, and priorities to help shape action-oriented recommendations by the G20 CWG, with a careful consideration to avoid duplication with existing mechanisms and policy instruments. Additionally, the webinars served as a platform to inform the reflection of the G20 Membership towards formulating possible action-oriented outcomes of the G20 CWG. By building on the outcomes of the webinars, the G20 CWG under the Indian Presidency became better equipped to engage in the preparation of the Ministerial Declaration considered by G20 Ministers of Culture at the ministerial meeting in Varanasi.

The Global Thematic Webinars saw the participation of over 150 representatives and designated experts from a variety of constituencies. These included G20 Members, Invitee nations, international organizations and other stakeholder. The distribution of countries and participants across the speaking segments was strategically arranged based on their respective time zones and alphabetical order, spanning from Asia and the Pacific to Arab States, Africa, Europe, North America, and Latin America and the Caribbean.

Each of the four webinars were held for a duration of approximately 8 hours and structured around three speaking segments, which were facilitated successively by representatives of international organizations. The speaking segments were constructed to address action-oriented areas: i) knowledge sharing and exchange of good practices, ii) identification of gaps and priorities, and iii) the formulation of recommendations to the G20 CWG. There were about 10 to 15 speakers assigned to each of the three speaking segments, where each speaker was invited to address one or more of the aforementioned action-oriented areas during his/her intervention. Following each speaking segment, there was an open discussion for 20 to 30 minutes. The facilitator of each speaking segment concluded the session with a five-minute presentation of salient points, which were based on the principal points of the interventions.
The outcomes and follow-up actions from the Global Thematic Webinars were designed to be tangible and efficient. Each of the webinars played a key role in shaping action-oriented recommendations that guided the work of the G20 CWG in formulating action-oriented outcomes for each of the priorities. These recommendations were built on existing mechanisms at the global level to build on synergies and avoid duplications. The recommendations were also action-oriented while exploring a possible mechanism to monitor progress achieved over time. The Indian Presidency shared four thematic background papers with the G20 Membership ahead of the webinars in preparation for the discussion. The background papers also reflected the insights shared by the Membership during the first meeting of the G20 CWG held on 23-24 February 2023.

As a significant outcome of the Global Thematic Webinars, this consolidated report was meticulously prepared under the guidance of the Indian Presidency. It encapsulates the knowledge and insights derived from all four webinars, serving as a testament to the collaborative efforts involved. The report was envisaged not only as a legacy of the joint work of the G20 Membership but also as an instrument to foster continued knowledge-building over time. To aid the compilation of this report, all speakers were requested to provide their written statements post the webinars to the Indian Presidency.

The methodology of the consolidated report was designed to capture the diversity of ideas and insights garnered from the Global Thematic Webinars. The core of the report is divided into four major thematic sections that aligned with the primary areas of discussion during the webinars.

Each section incorporates an overview of the priority, expert views, and key highlights. The overview offers background information, key challenges, and prospects, while expert voices lend deeper insights into the theme. Key highlights and way forward serve as the crux, merging all conclusions and interventions into one comprehensive narrative.

This report is interspersed with case studies, quotations, facts, and figures, along with policy examples to bring practical relevance to the discussions. It concludes with a list of participants, ensuring recognition of all contributors. The report is finalized with great detail to maintain the context and integrity of the original discussions.
Parrot Lady
10th-11th Century C.E.
Khajuraho, Madhya Pradesh
Stone
Repatriated from Canada in 2015
Government of India
PRIORITY I

Protection and Restitution of Cultural Property
Overview & Rationale

Cultural heritage is the invaluable and irreplaceable inheritance of countries and all of humanity. Encompassing tangible and intangible assets, it reflects the unique identity, history, and diversity of a country or community and is an important source of resilience and cultural continuity. Tangible and intangible cultural heritage are deeply interweaved. Overall, cultural heritage provides a foundation for societies to reclaim their cultural histories, shape contemporary identities and future civilizational ethos.

Several countries have lost a significant part of their cultural heritage across history due to various reasons, including natural hazards or armed conflicts – which have notably spurred looting, illicit trafficking or intentional destruction – but also historical and contemporary phenomena marked by colonialism and imperialism, as well as the impact of ill-adapted infrastructure or development projects. The loss of cultural heritage impoverishes the collective memory of people and communities, weakens their sense of identity and undermines the exercise of their fundamental rights to culture and development.

Illicit trafficking of cultural property is a longstanding issue that has affected many cultures and countries throughout history. Over the last decades, it has become increasingly globalized, under the combined effect of increased mobility and the digital transformation. In recent years, it has gained particular attention, in view of its linkages with organized crime and its broader impact on peace and security. Protracted conflicts and disasters have also contributed to a growth in illicit trafficking of cultural property. Likewise, the COVID-19 pandemic has spurred a significant upsurge in illegal trade, also affecting the monitoring of archaeological sites and the storage of artefacts, besides hampering the efforts of competent authorities to check the flow of goods.

Overall, trade in cultural property, including art and archaeological objects, is an important and expanding international business. After experiencing a significant downturn in 2020, the global art market recovered strongly in 2021, with the combined sales of art and antiques by both dealers and auction houses reaching an estimated $65.1 billion, representing a 29% increase from the previous year (McAndrew, 2022). Due to its exceptionally lucrative nature, the art market attracts investors in search of investment opportunities as well as unscrupulous actors.

Criminal and terrorist organisations are increasingly involved in the illicit trafficking of cultural property as a means of money laundering and financing their activities. Various methods are used to acquire cultural property, including looting archaeological sites, stealing from museums and private collections or commissioning forgeries. Concerned objects may then be exported directly or indirectly to high demand countries, notably major art markets gathering collectors, dealers, and museums. Criminals also use various methods to smuggle objects out of countries of origin, such as falsifying documents, using intermediaries or hiding the objects in shipments of goods that are not subject to export restrictions. Objects may then be sold through underground channels, at private
sales, or even at legitimate art fairs and auctions. Criminals can also create fake or altered export certificates, which allow them to falsely claim that the items of cultural property were legally exported from the country of origin when in fact, they may have been stolen, looted or illicitly exported.

The market for cultural property is therefore often described as a “grey market”, with insufficient transparency in the chain of ownership and the provenance of many cultural objects. This makes it difficult to distinguish between objects that have been legally acquired and those that may have been stolen, looted, or illegally exported. It is also difficult to establish the provenance of many cultural objects that have been in circulation for a long time. As a result, “illicit objects” can sometimes be mixed with objects with an established and proven provenance. This can have a negative impact on the legal art trade as it can harm the reputation of the market and create uncertainty among buyers and sellers.

Due to its clandestine nature, it is also difficult to estimate the scope of the illicit trafficking of cultural property, even in the case of ordinary organised crime in relatively stable environments. Such difficulties increase considerably in a conflict situation. Despite lack of accurate data, it is commonly believed that illegal trade in cultural goods is the third-largest global criminal activity, after drugs and arms trafficking. Its connection with money laundering, in particular, is increasingly documented.

The issue of return and restitution of stolen or looted artefacts has also gained increased attention and raises complex ethical and legal issues. Many countries, particularly those in the Global South, have called for the return and restitution of cultural property taken during colonial times or as a result of war and conflict, since the illegal removal of cultural property not only has led to dissociation and decontextualisation of cultural objects exhibited in museums, art institutions and private collections around the world, but also impacted the identity and rights of peoples and communities. The restitution of cultural property is often addressed as a way to redress historical wrongs, promote resilience and reconciliation. The legal and moral ownership of such objects is particularly debated, with some arguing that they were obtained through legitimate means, and others stating that they were looted, stolen or obtained through forceful means, including instances of war. Another area of discussion concerns the available means, knowledge and infrastructure to ensure the conservation of returned cultural property within recipient countries.

An increasing number of countries are engaged in such processes of return and restitution, further positioning this topic as a lever for cultural diplomacy, supporting dialogue and reconciliation. Some countries have developed specific policy mechanisms to enable such process at the national level. Overall, restitution can be a delicate and emotionally charged process, raising issues of moral responsibility. There has been a growing consensus to view the return and restitution of cultural property not only through the perspective of international law and legal obligations, but also as an ethical imperative through the lens of transitional justice. Expanded dialogue at both bilateral and multilateral levels will be needed in the coming years to advance this issue.

**A GROWING AREA OF DISCUSSION OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY, INCLUDING WITHIN THE G20**

In recent years, the international community has increasingly put the question of fighting against illicit trafficking
of cultural property on the global agenda. Through Resolutions 2199 (2015), 2253 (2015) and 2347 (2017), the United Nations Security Council has recognised the nexus between illicit trafficking of cultural property and the financing of criminal activities, including terrorism, and acknowledged that the illicit trafficking of cultural property and the destruction of cultural heritage pose a danger to global peace and security, impede the ability of individuals to exercise their rights to enjoy cultural heritage and international sustainable development prospects.

The fight against illicit trafficking of cultural property has also been an important area of discussion of the G20 Culture since its inception. In 2021, the Rome Ministerial Declaration on Culture stated that the destruction and illegal trafficking of cultural property constitute serious crimes, while calling upon the global community to ratify the relevant international agreements, facilitate better cooperation among law enforcement agencies and create targeted tools in their national jurisdictions for better investigation and prosecution. In 2022, the Bali Leaders Declaration called for the “safeguarding of cultural heritage as well as fighting illicit trafficking of cultural property and promoting restitution to its rightful owner/countries of origin, in accordance with the relevant UNESCO Conventions and national laws.”

Likewise, the Declaration of the UNESCO World Conference on Cultural Policies – MONDIACULT 2022 reinvigorated the international community’s commitment to fight against the illicit trafficking of cultural property. Adopted unanimously by 150 States in September 2022, the Declaration requested UNESCO to scale up its response at the global level, highlighting areas of commitment regarding advocacy on the impact of illicit trafficking, the introduction of penal or administrative sanctions in national legislations, enhanced capacity building measures, increased cooperation with art market actors, the prevention of the acquisition and unprovenanced objects, and broader multi-stakeholder engagement, including through digital technologies and online platforms, taking into account the recent spur in online trafficking of cultural property.

“We call for] an open and inclusive international dialogue for the return and restitution of cultural property, including illegally exported property, to countries of origin under UNESCO’s aegis, as well as those outside the scope of the UNESCO 1970 Convention, as an ethical imperative [...]”

MONDIACULT DECLARATION 2022

The MONDIACULT Declaration also explicitly addressed the return and restitution of cultural property, calling for “an open and inclusive international dialogue for the return and restitution of cultural property, including illegally exported property, to countries of origin under UNESCO’s aegis, as well as those
outside the scope of the UNESCO 1970 Convention, as an ethical imperative to foster the right of peoples and communities to the enjoyment of their cultural heritage, and in light of the increasing claims from the countries concerned, with a view to strengthen social cohesion and intergenerational transmission of cultural heritage” and encouraged more effective implementation of existing legal frameworks or policies in that regard.

HARNESSING INTERNATIONAL FRAMEWORKS AND POLICY INSTRUMENTS: A CRITICAL ENDEAVOUR

Since 1945, various international legislative instruments have been adopted at the multilateral and national levels to ensure the protection of movable and immovable cultural heritage, and notably to fight against illicit trafficking and encourage the return and restitution of cultural property. These include the 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict and its two protocols (1954 and 1999), the 1970 UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property and the 1995 UNIDROIT Convention on Stolen or Illegally Exported Cultural Objects. These normative instruments have engendered a deeper understanding of the concerns and challenges at stake. At the same time, they have also defined concepts and provided operational tools and assistance to countries to prevent illicit trafficking of cultural property.

The limited ratification of key conventions remains a major challenge in the fight against illicit trafficking of cultural property. As of 2023, the 1954 Hague Convention has been ratified by 133 countries, while 110 countries have ratified its First Protocol, and 86 countries have ratified the Second Protocol. By the end of 2022, 143 countries had ratified the 1970 UNESCO Convention while only 54 countries had ratified the 1995 UNIDROIT Convention. Among the G20 Members, almost all countries have ratified the 1970 Convention, while only six G20 Members have ratified the 1995 UNIDROIT Convention. Despite the limited ratification, the conventions are still widely recognised as critical instruments in the fight against illicit trafficking of cultural property, and many countries follow their principles and provisions even if they may not have ratified them. However, universal ratification of these legal instruments is crucial to ensure their legal and practical application at the national, regional and international levels, and their effectiveness in combatting the illicit trafficking of cultural property.

With regard to requests for the return and restitution of cultural property, in particular that originating in a colonial context, there has been an international mechanism for mediation between States on this issue since 1978. It deals with cultural objects lost as a result of foreign or colonial occupation or following a previous theft – committed before the entry into force of the UNESCO 1970 Convention by the States concerned. Established within UNESCO, the Intergovernmental Committee for Promoting the Return of Cultural Property to its Countries of Origin or its Restitution in case of Illicit Appropriation (ICPRCP), is a permanent body, independent from the 1970 Convention. The ICPRCP’s mandate is to facilitate bilateral discussions, mediation, and conciliation for the return and restitution of cultural property in case the source and destination countries are keen to settle a dispute. In addition, although the 1970 Convention does not encompass the return and restitution of colonial-era cultural property – under the principle in international law of non-retroactivity of treaties as put forward in Article 4 of the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties – Article 15 of the 1970 Convention, however, opens the possibility for States parties to conclude agreements regarding the restitution of cultural property removed before the entry into force of the Convention.
Countries have also developed alternate procedures and mechanisms to frame the return and restitution of cultural property by examining such requests at a bilateral level. Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) mechanisms such as mediation, arbitration and negotiation can provide a more efficient, cost-effective and amicable way to resolve disputes over the restitution of cultural property while respecting the rights and interests of all parties involved. Countries may resort to various solutions, including innovative ones, such as the conclusion of agreements through diplomatic channels, the return of assets based on bilateral consensus and reciprocal concessions to facilitate the return and restitution of cultural property. These flexible, non-judicial solutions make it possible to factor in historical sensitivities and ethical arguments associated with a particular case. It also allows for innovative, win-win solutions like dividing ownership and possession rights between countries, solving access issues through long-term loans, exchanges, and travelling exhibitions, restitution accompanied by artistic and scientific cooperation between the parties, or memoranda of understanding between states and private parties or with the negotiation of the cultural authorities of the states concerned.

STRENGTHENING THE FIGHT AGAINST ILLICIT TRAFFICKING: GAPS AND AREAS OF POLICY ENGAGEMENT

The disparity in national legal regimes is an important obstacle which should be addressed. Different countries may have different laws and regulations related to cultural property, making it difficult to coordinate efforts to detect, investigate, and prosecute cases of illicit trafficking of cultural property. Additionally, different legal regimes may have different standards for proving that an object has been looted, stolen, or illegally obtained. The lack of harmonization of laws and regulations can also make it more difficult for individuals and organisations to comply with the law, as they may need to navigate different legal regimes when buying, selling, or transporting cultural property. This can create confusion and uncertainty and make it more difficult to detect and prosecute cases of illicit trafficking of cultural property. This is why UNESCO is elaborating draft Model Provisions on the prevention and fight against illicit trafficking of cultural property, which could serve as a basis for States wishing to fill legal voids at the national level and to strengthen their national legislation concerning the protection and the fight against the illicit trafficking of cultural property. Likewise, the implementation of the 1995 UNIDROIT Convention, as a uniform legal instrument with immediate application, can help to address this discrepancy. The difficulty in identifying applicable laws also hampers efforts towards the return and restitution of cultural property, with the understanding that the burden of proof to establish ownership is often on the claimant instead of the current possessor of a cultural artefact. In that context, a number of countries have engaged in the development of framework laws or policies on the return and restitution of cultural property.

Expanding the inventoring of cultural property is another key priority to enable effective fight against illicit trafficking. The lack of inventories and databases makes it difficult to track stolen objects and ensure proper preservation and protection of heritage sites and collections. Many countries still lack complete and thorough records of their cultural property, making it challenging to locate and recover stolen cultural property and safeguard cultural heritage for future generations. In this regard, the use of Object identification (Object ID), an internationally recognised documentation standard to identify and record cultural goods, is a good example to follow. By following the Object ID standard, museums can easily record detailed information about their collection that can be used to protect cultural property and recover it in case of
theft. This information can be checked against other databases, such as the INTERPOL database of Stolen Works of Art, to aid in the identification of stolen items. Object ID is a practical and internationally recognised tool to make an inventory, which is an essential step in the recovery of stolen cultural goods.

**Strengthening due diligence is equally critical to prevent illicit trafficking and to facilitate the return and restitution of cultural property** as it helps ensure that museums do not unknowingly acquire objects that have been stolen, looted, or otherwise illegally acquired. This not only prevents museums from being complicit in the illegal trade of cultural property but also sends a strong message to the public about the museum’s commitment to ethical practices. In that regard, the UNESCO 2015 Recommendation concerning the Protection and Promotion of Museums and Collections, their Diversity and their Role in Society underlines the key role of museums in preventing and fighting illicit trafficking of cultural property. Likewise, the International Council of Museums (ICOM) Code of Ethics for ensure that the objects in their collections have been acquired legally and ethically through due diligence, and that they should not acquire objects that have been looted or stolen. It further recommends that museums conduct thorough research on the provenance of an object before acquiring it and make efforts to research the provenance of objects in their collections. Equally, the Red List of Stolen Objects by ICOM provides a powerful instrument to promote awareness and advocacy on the fight against the illicit trafficking of cultural property.

**Enabling effective dialogue and cooperation with the art market is also a crucial endeavour in order to foster better acquisition property and ethical rules.** In that context, UNESCO developed in 1999 the International Code of Ethics for Dealers in Cultural Property with a view to give visibility to the dealers who adopt the International Code and help the public and collectors identify the dealers that adhere to the highest principles of ethics in ascertaining the origin of the concerned objects. The Code is currently being revised to clarify the principles that should govern the art market and the obligations of professionals in terms of provenance research. The 1995 UNIDROIT Convention also provides practical instruments to supplement the provisions of the UNESCO 1970 Convention by guaranteeing the rules of private international law and international procedure through a set of instruments, such as the international due diligence standard for the acquisition of cultural objects, which contribute to evolve the conduct of the actors in the art market and of all buyers. Looking forward, the 2022 MONDIACULT Declaration notably calls for reinforcing the codification of the certificate of origin of cultural property and preventing the acquisition of objects without proven provenance.

**Strengthening the regulation of online trade of cultural property is another critical challenge.** The rise of online marketplaces has created new opportunities for the illicit trafficking of cultural property. The anonymity and ease of access afforded by the internet have made it an attractive platform for such illegal trade. The lack of regulation and oversight of digital platforms makes it easier for traffickers to list and sell illegal items without being detected. Given the high volume of items offered for sale and the variety of digital platforms and social media that allow the trade of cultural objects, most countries do not have the means to review or to investigate all offers of a suspicious nature, underscoring the need for stronger international collaboration and policy development. In the Basic Actions concerning Cultural Objects being offered for Sale over the Internet, UNESCO, INTERPOL and ICOM encouraged internet sales platforms to post a disclaimer on all their
cultural objects sales pages, advising buyers to verify the provenance of the object and the seller’s legal right to sell it. However, this suggestion is rarely followed by the online platforms and more systemic policy developments are needed at both national and international levels to regulate online trade. The G20 Members have a unique opportunity to tackle the challenge posed by illicit trafficking of cultural property since its members also account for a massive share of the global art market.

**Engaging in awareness raising remains an important step towards preventing illicit trafficking of cultural property.** Educating the public about the issue makes people more vigilant when buying or selling cultural property and more aware of the signs of illegal activity, including lack of provenance. This can make it harder for traffickers to operate and help reduce the demand for stolen cultural property. When people are aware of what cultural property is and where it comes from, they are more likely to recognise items that have been stolen and to report them to the authorities. Additionally, when people understand the importance of cultural heritage and the consequences of its loss, they are more likely to support measures that protect it.

**Likewise, sustained capacity building among a wide range of stakeholders is needed to fight against illicit trafficking.** Concerned stakeholders include government agencies, law enforcement, customs, museum professionals, art dealers, auction houses, and the general public. Capacity-building measures can include training on recognising and identifying stolen cultural property, understanding relevant laws and international conventions, and building partnerships with other countries and organisations to share information and resources. Capacity building needs to be an ongoing process as illicit trade in cultural property is constantly evolving and stakeholders need to continuously update their knowledge and skills to be able to address the issue effectively.

**Finally, leveraging digital technologies to support more effective and cohesive fight against illicit trafficking at the global level is essential.** By providing tools to identify and track stolen and illegally obtained cultural property, technology makes it more difficult for traffickers to profit from their crimes. Digital databases and online platforms that track and document stolen or looted cultural property can be used by law enforcement, museums, and collectors to verify the provenance of a piece. Similarly, imaging and analysis techniques such as x-ray fluorescence and infrared imaging also allow experts to identify and authenticate artefacts by analysing their composition and uncovering hidden details. Geographic information systems (GIS) can map and track looting sites, smuggling routes, and illicit trade networks, providing valuable intelligence for law enforcement and customs officials. Moreover, 3D scanning and printing can help document and preserve cultural heritage sites and artefacts and can be used to identify fakes and replicas. In addition, advances in digital forensics and blockchain technology may prove beneficial in tracking and tracing cultural property. Digital forensic tools can be used to examine digital devices and online platforms used by traffickers to identify and track them. Blockchain technology allows for a secure, tamper-proof, and transparent way to record and track the movement of cultural property. This technology can be used to create a digital record of ownership that is difficult for traffickers to falsify or manipulate, making it more difficult for them to move and sell stolen items. Harnessing the potential of these technologies requires bold engagement in international cooperation and investment in research, including through strengthened synergies with academia and the private sector.
Stele of Varaha
Eastern India
Stone
Repatriated from USA in 2021
Government of India
Protection and Restitution of Cultural Property

by Dr. Jyotindra Jain
Professor of Arts & Aesthetics, Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) and Member Secretary of the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts

The issue of protection, and especially that of restitution of India’s cultural property taken abroad directly relates to its enormous trafficking during colonial times as well as its large-scale smuggling during the post-Independence era. This is despite Indian as well as numerous international legislations, such as the Indian Antiquities Law and the Hague or UNESCO Conventions, and such other.

Apart from various impediments in the path of restitution of Indian cultural heritage abroad, such as the lack of their comprehensive inventories, there is a kind of deadlock over the key issue of restitution of objects taken before 1970, the year of the UNESCO Convention, which leaves out the crucial issue of restitution of colonial era or pre-1970 heritage property – an issue that affects India (as well as other previously colonized societies) enormously, because a huge bulk of art from here made its way to Europe, especially during the long periods of colonial subjugation.

Various de-colonizing strategies, such as long-term loans, digital sharing, etc., may be welcome, but not while diluting the restitution objective.

Provenance Research

The rise of the current debate on the restitution of cultural heritage removed from the former colonies is an outcome of the postcolonial emergence of a discursive space within both the previously colonised societies as well as those of the colonisers with regard to the range of injustices caused to the former on account of colonial power relations. Considering the sudden shift in provenance research from mere identification of an object’s place of origin to the documentation of its often tedious and unethical journey ending in a museum via certain rites of passage including colonial pillage and loot, unauthorized removal and smuggling, the subject is increasingly in need of evolving an independent academic discipline, on par with art history, cultural studies and new museology.
In order to achieve these objectives in an honest and meaningful way, centres for provenance research need to be established in Western countries that work in close partnership with the post-colonial societies whose objects the museums are aspiring to conduct the said research on. The object’s entire cultural and historical context lies in the country of its origin. In fact, it would be most appropriate for the provenance research centres situated at Western museums to support former colonies to set up partner centres, which would put together exhaustive inventories of their cultural objects lying in museums abroad to serve the dual goal of academic and provenance research. This would be a major step in the direction of sincere decolonisation of collections.

The training for provenance researchers should include basic education in postcolonialism, orientalism and cultural studies, because provenance research and the issues of restitution are not merely linked to the physical mobility of objects and their material transactions, but pivots on an understanding of the processes of colonisation, for example, in terms of the colonial secularisation of religious places (“disinterred,unjungled,measured,photographed,reconstructed,fenced up,analysed and displayed”) and the subsequent relocation of their fragments to museums within the colony and the colonist state[1]. These perspectives will shift the emphasis in provenance studies from merely material and legal to ethical and discursive dimensions and also enlighten the curatorial practices.

**Ethical Criteria**

It would be an unfair and futile exercise to subject the previously colonized societies to a Kafkaesque charade of producing legal evidence for the clandestine removal of their cultural heritage by the colonisers, as it is well known that such evidence with legal validity was seldom created and, if in some rare cases it was, it would hardly have survived until today. Endeavours for reconstructing the national composite consciousness of societies damaged during colonial rule needs to be ethically dealt with, and not merely through bureaucratic and detective methods, as the latter were already instrumental in destroying their moral, cultural and social fabric to a large extent. In this situation, provenance research on colonially acquired objects needs to evolve other criteria and methodologies which are less legalistic and more culturally and morally contextualised.

**Aesthetics of Violence and Fragmentation**

The scores of stone sculptures and relief panels from the South and South-east Asian countries, and elsewhere, displayed in museums the world over, many were evidently detached from ancient monument. A sincere art-historically oriented provenance research would enable the identification of the exact monument and sometimes even the spot where these once belonged. Once the provenance of such estranged sculptural fragments is

[1] For more on this, see: Benedict Anderson, Imagined Communities (London/New York, reprint 2003), 179.
established, does it not become a moral duty of the art collectors and museums to restore
the fragment to the offcuts left behind from which these came, especially when the museums
claim to be institutions dedicated to the high ideals of the protection, restoration and
universalist conception of cultural property instead of celebrating the aesthetics of
fragments, which regularly serve as a canon for writing art histories?

The bizarre sight of a head of the Buddha or a Hindu deity severed from a full stone figure in
situ, now mounted on a pedestal, often with a rod inserted into the neck to hold it in position,
has become a common occurrence in the museums and galleries of Asian art. We have got so
accustomed to the self-contained aesthetics of these reconfigured tableaux of violence and
fragmentation originating from the cosy and charmingly lit museum displays that we forget
that more often than not this museum convention of cryptic quotes from another context
has roots in wide-spread and inordinate colonial and neo-colonial collecting practices.

Proposals for Decolonization of Museums as Conciliatory Measures

Let me end with a note on the recently proposed notion of decolonization of museums, and
the related arguments in favour of the idea of universal museums, and such other temporary
measures of conciliation. Acceptance of these soft measures by the source societies will
amount to relinquishing their legitimate claim to ownership of their objects and future
endeavour for repatriation of their cultural property.[2]

It would be hard to discuss the concept of universal museums as promulgated in the
Declaration on the importance and value of universal museums[3] within the framework of
decolonization of collections, as, right at the outset, it rules out any discussion on repatriation
on the ground that “Over time, objects so acquired – whether by purchase, gift, or partage –
have become part of the museums that have cared for them, and by extension part of the
heritage of the nations which house them.”[4] A possible counter argument to this could be
that when caring for and housing cultural objects “over time”, which were simply taken over
from the colonised societies under the conditions of power imbalance, are prioritised over
the centuries-old genesis, care and social usage and this is made to appear outright meagre
and inadequate, there would be little scope left for any dialogue within the apparently liberal
objective of decolonization.

Moreover, the Declaration accentuates the new context that the museum provides to the
objects displaced from their original cultural context: “Today we are especially sensitive to
the subject of a work’s original context, but we should not lose sight of the fact that

[2] Digital sharing of the complete inventories of the colonial acquisitions with the former colonial
societies would be just the first legitimate and credible step towards the decolonization of art
treasures and a true beginning of fair provenance research.
[4] Ibid.
museums too provide a valid and valuable context for objects that were long ago displaced from the original source."[5] The “valid and valuable context” also may be seen, in its essence, as based fully on Western terms, which cannot be better summarised than in the words of Alfred Gell: ‘The project of ‘indigenous aesthetics’ is essentially geared to refining and expanding the aesthetic sensitivities of the Western art public by providing a cultural context within which non-Western art objects can be assimilated to the categories of Western aesthetic art-appreciation.’[6] Clearly the emphatic stance of the Declaration would need to be more dialogical to provide space for deliberation on the related issues of provenance research/restitution in the conceivably open framework of decolonization. The concept and methodology of decolonization itself would need to be a central issue for discussion under the rubric of provenance research and not an alternative to it.

[5] Ibid.

Nandikesa
Chola, 12th Century C.E.
Tamil Nadu
Metal
Repatriated from USA in 2021
Government of India
Moderators

Protection and Restitution of Cultural Property

Ms. Marina Schneider
Principal Legal Officer and Treaty Depositary, UNIDROIT

Ms. Sunna Altnoder
Chief of the Movable Heritage and Museums Unit in the Culture Sector, UNESCO

Mr. Gonzalo Giordano
Criminal Intelligence Officer in the General Secretariat, INTERPOL
Key highlights & ways forward

The Global Thematic Webinar on the ‘Protection and Restitution of Cultural Property’ was organized on 28 March 2023. The webinar brought together 40 experts from 28 countries including G20 Members and guest nations, as well as 12 international organisations. The three speaking segments were successively moderated by representatives from UNIDROIT, UNESCO, and INTERPOL.

The G20 Membership brings together source, transit and destination countries

The webinar addressed the protection and restitution of cultural property from a very broad perspective, bringing together insights from source, transit and destination countries which are part of the G20 Membership. Experience and recommendations shared by participants reflected a diversity of approaches, while also outlining areas of convergence and shared values. While the fight against illicit trafficking and the return and restitution of cultural property were recalled as distinct endeavours, some speakers underlined that these are complementary pillars that should be addressed in a comprehensive way.

All Member countries and Invitee nations reiterated their commitment to the fight against illicit trafficking, as well as enabling dialogue towards the return and restitution of cultural property. Interventions addressed a broad range of topics, from the strengthening of national legal and policy frameworks to broader engagement in international and regional cooperation. The necessary investment in capacity building and awareness raising was also unequivocally underlined, while the need to harness digital technologies was equally outlined across the board.

An unequivocal commitment to join hands to protect our shared legacy and our children’s future

Discussions testified to long-standing awareness and early policy development in that area, dating back to the beginning of the last century in some cases. In particular, some countries endowed with a
rich archaeological heritage reported a historical policy engagement in that area, with legislations intended to prohibit export and trade of archaeological heritage enacted as early as 1913. Other countries voiced an unequivocal ethical engagement in the fight against illicit trafficking, formulating a plea to protect “the soul of humanity” and shape a shared future.

The devastating impact of illicit trafficking on the world’s cultural heritage was unanimously echoed. As underlined by most speakers, such activities erode societies’ collective memory, identity and continuity across time, hampering the ability of countries and communities to fully enjoy their cultural heritage and transmit it to future generations, thus weakening the respect and exercise of their cultural rights. Some participants particularly highlighted their disruptive impact on peace and security. Against this backdrop, the fight against this illegal trade has become a critical concern, calling for focused efforts and a unified international response to curb such plaque that threatens the rich tapestry of global cultural heritage.

The growing importance within multilateral policy fora of issues related with the fight against illicit trafficking and the return and restitution of cultural property was made particularly prominent across the discussions. Welcoming the initiative of the Indian Presidency to anchor these topics as core priorities of the G20 Culture workstream – in continuity with previous presidencies of the G20 Culture, notably Saudi Arabia, Italy and Indonesia – some speakers also commended the contribution of this process to the implementation of the Declaration of the UNESCO MONDIACULT Conference, which calls for enhanced engagement towards the fight against illicit trafficking and strengthened dialogue on the return and restitution of cultural property.

Over the past decades, deliberate attacks on culture have increased, alongside the illicit trafficking depriving populations and countries of their history and culture, fuelling money laundering, tax evasion and financing terrorist activities. This scourge has accelerated with the expansion of the Internet, and online platforms making this traffic increasingly complex. […] Establishing a constructive dialogue with the art market, strengthening and clarifying the ethical principles of the art market, and the due diligence and provenance research obligations for professionals remain critical.

KRISTA PIKKAT
DIRECTOR OF THE CULTURE AND EMERGENCIES ENTITY, UNESCO

Participating countries and international organizations stressed the importance of ratifying and effectively implementing international conventions, underlining their significance to shape national legal and policy frameworks and the need to utilize them more effectively and systematically to prompt international cooperation and response. The 1970 UNESCO Convention and the 1995 UNIDROIT Convention were particularly referred to. Some speakers explicitly echoed the principle enshrined in the 1970 Convention that “the protection of cultural heritage can be effective only if organized both nationally and internationally among States working in close cooperation”.

These normative instruments provide a conceptual framework and practical tools to support the fight against illicit trafficking, offering mechanisms and procedures to address some of the gaps reported, including disparities between legislations. The impact of such normative instruments on the prevention of illicit trafficking of cultural property was particularly underlined, notably by framing due diligence and provenance check. Some speakers also highlighted the importance of strengthening more specifically national or international legal and policy frameworks to address the restitution of cultural property illegally exported before 1970, notably those stemming from the colonial era.

Participants also pointed at the relevance of specific policy mechanisms made available under international frameworks such as the ICOM Object identification standard (Object ID) or the INTERPOL Database of Stolen Works of Art among others. The complementarity of these instruments in enabling the identification of stolen items was highlighted. Fostering the effective implementation and enforcement of these international instruments at the national level and enabling their domestication with national legislative frameworks was recalled as critical.

NETHERLANDS
The national legislation builds on the implementation of the UNESCO 1970 Convention, ratified by the country, while also incorporating elements of the 1995 UNIDROIT Convention pertaining to due diligence and implementation in private law.

JAPAN
Operational Guidelines for the implementation of the 1970 UNESCO Convention at national level were prepared to address notably cross-border issues concerning cultural property restitution.

REPUBLIC OF KOREA
The country is working to refine its legislation by including more detailed criteria for due diligence in assessing bona-fide purchasers, with reference to the 1995 UNIDROIT Convention.

ICOM
Object ID is an internationally recognised documentation standard to identify and record cultural goods, allowing museums to record detailed information about their collection that can be used to protect cultural property and recover it in case of theft.

UNODC
The Co-action against trafficking in cultural heritage (CATCH) initiative was launched in 2023 in the Mediterranean sub-region, in cooperation with UNESCO and Interpol, to strengthen crime prevention and criminal justice response, focusing on research and advocacy, institutional capacity building and international cooperation.
Source, transit and destination countries shared examples of national policies, strategies and measures which testify to a growing commitment to fight illicit trafficking of cultural property, in the face of mounting threats, notably linked to the accelerated digital transformation, but also protracted conflicts. Countries shared examples of legislations aimed at protecting cultural heritage and fighting against illicit trafficking; while some have enacted a framework law on cultural heritage across its different components, others report a set of dedicated sub-sectoral measures on specific aspects of cultural heritage.

INDIA
The 1958 Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act frames the preservation of monuments and archaeological sites, the regulation of archaeological excavations and the protection of sculptures, carvings and other cultural objects. The 1972 Antiquities and Art Treasure Act 1972 further regulates the export and trade of antiquities and art treasures.

CANADA
The Cultural Property Export and Import Act came into force in 1977 to operationalize the 1970 Convention and aspects of the Hague Convention. The policy includes export controls to prevent cultural property loss, import controls to facilitate the return of illicitly trafficked cultural property, as well as criminal and administrative penalties for non-compliance.

ITALY
A Law regarding the Provisions on criminal offences against cultural heritage was enacted in March 2022. The law introduced and strengthened criminal provisions intended to punish offences against cultural and landscape heritage.

GERMANY
The 2016 Act on the Protection of Cultural Property (Kulturgutschutzgesetz) provides for import and export regulations, due diligence requirements for trading in cultural goods, return regulations, and criminal sanctions.

REPUBLIC OF KOREA
The 1962 Cultural Heritage Protection Act encompasses measures to introduce export certificates, to prohibit the import of stolen cultural property and to impose penalties or administrative sanctions in case of infringements.

SOUTH AFRICA
The 1999 National Heritage Resources Act is intended to protect national cultural resources. It frames the export of nationally significant heritage objects and the import of cultural property illegally exported from other countries.

OMAN
The 1980 National Heritage Protection Law was complemented in 2019 by the Cultural Heritage Law to address fast-evolving challenges.

MAURITIUS

The 2003 National Heritage Act prohibits the export of cultural property without a permit and establishes a National Heritage Fund to support the preservation and conservation of cultural property.

BANGLADESH


NETHERLANDS

The Delta programme for the preservation of cultural heritage is intended to ensure proper registration of museum collections, leading to a significant proportion of registration of national objects, which are now accessible through a digital national portal.

RUSSIA

The Electronic Registration and Search Automated System (ERPAS) contains information on more than 22,000 stolen artefacts.

GERMANY

A Competence Network is currently being developed with a view to providing direct access to scientific expertise towards the identification of archaeological cultural property. Such collaborative platform expands investigative capabilities and enhances the speed and accuracy of response to potential illicit trafficking cases.

UNITED KINGDOM

The Metropolitan Police Service has a specialised art and antiques unit dedicated to investigating and combatting crimes involving property. Heritage Crime Liaison officers have been placed in every police service in the country.

The importance to document and register cultural property, while also investing in knowledge building more broadly, was also recalled as a critical step to support the prevention of illicit trafficking and sustain recovery efforts. Several national initiatives aimed at strengthening the documentation and inventory of cultural property, including through enhanced provenance research or the creation of independent committees, were outlined.

Investing in the operationalization of regulatory frameworks through dedicated instruments and mechanisms was underlined as critical. Some countries shared examples of strengthened national mechanisms and legislation aimed at controlling the export and import of cultural property or supporting investigation and prosecution, including through the establishment of specialized police units or dedicated registers, among other examples. Some countries reported operational projects designed to specifically tackle the challenges confronted by cultural and investigative authorities.
FRANCE
A central office to fight against the trafficking of cultural property was created as an investigation service of the central directorate of the judicial police. Staffed with specialized police officers, the office fosters cooperation with all relevant stakeholders, particularly in the art market.

ITALY
The Italian task force “Blue helmets for culture” was created by Italy in 2016, in cooperation with UNESCO. Staffed with the specialized police unit “carabinieri”, it is tasked with securing cultural heritage and countering illegal trafficking.

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CHINA
China has concluded bilateral agreements with 24 countries with a view to strengthening the fight against illicit trafficking of cultural property.

ARGENTINA
Bilateral agreements for the protection of cultural heritage were signed with Peru, Colombia, China, Ecuador, while other agreements with Türkiye, Greece and Egypt are currently being worked on.

INDONESIA AND NETHERLANDS
Both countries signed return agreements as early as the 1970s to frame the repatriation process, formalizing direct engagement between both governments.

SPAIN
Numerous bilateral cooperation agreements were developed to promote the exploration and preservation of underwater heritage, enabling collaboration, knowledge sharing and the development of alternative methodologies to address legal disparities.

MEXICO
The country has 10 bilateral treaties focused on combating illicit trafficking of cultural property, and 34 treaties on educational and cultural cooperation which include measures to combat illicit trafficking of cultural property.

In the same vein, bilateral cooperation was underlined as critical to advance the fight against illicit trafficking and the return and restitution of cultural property. A significant number of bilateral agreements were reported by countries, both within and beyond their respective regions. These agreements are intended notably to enable the sharing of information and good practices, to support investigative processes, but also to frame the return of cultural property. Speakers underlined the broader contribution of these mechanisms to cultural diplomacy, underlining the importance to precisely outline negotiation mechanisms before any such endeavours are undertaken.
The need to sustain and expand the collaboration with the art market was particularly put forward, as a foundation for effective prevention and self-regulation. As underlined by some speakers, by notifying buyers that certain objects are illegal to remove from their country of origin, future potential purchasers may exercise greater caution when engaging in transactions involving artefacts that originate from that particular area. The risks of money laundering and terrorist financing in the art and antiquities market were recalled as critical in a vast and particularly opaque art market. The need to enhance transparency in art market transactions and promote responsible collecting and trading of antiquities was particularly voiced. Strengthening the monitoring of illicit trade, and its broader connection with money laundering and terrorist financing, was equally put forward.

Several examples were presented in that regard by participating countries and organizations, some of which were implemented in cooperation with UNESCO and other international organizations. Some countries outlined more specifically the need to encompass a multifaceted spectrum of challenges associated with being concurrently source and market countries for cultural property.

**FRANCE**

A registry of second-hand movable property was created and is being operated by art market players. This registry plays a crucial role in aiding police investigations, ensuring the traceability of artworks, and improving the fight against illicit trafficking.

**EUROPEAN UNION–FATF**

A report on Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing in the Art and Antiquities Market was published in February 2023 by the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) in cooperation with the European Commission. The report shows that the market for art and antiquities, as a billion-dollar industry, has attracted criminals, organised crime groups and terrorists to generate and launder proceeds of crime and fund their activities. The report includes risk indicators aiming to help public and private sector entities identify suspicious activities and transactions in the market, as well as good practices that countries have taken to address the challenges they face. They include the establishment of specialised units, access to relevant databases and cooperation with experts and archaeologists to help identify, trace, investigate and repatriate cultural objects.

**AUSTRALIA**

Awareness raising activities are conducted by the National Gallery of Australia to educate private collectors about the realities of the art market and their obligations under the law and industry codes.
All museums and art market stakeholders are expected to ensure the lawful provenance of the objects they acquire, sell, import, export or handle, and to alert the relevant authorities to any objects which they believe have been unlawfully removed and illicitly traded.

**UNITED KINGDOM**

G20 Member States account for at least 90%—approximately $58 billion dollars—of the global art market.

Antiquities Coalition

Most countries – both source and destination countries – testified to increased commitment towards the return and restitution of cultural property. Overall, a growing aspiration in advancing the return and restitution of cultural property was voiced, as well as the engagement to expand dialogue in this area at the national, regional and international levels. The importance of such processes to allow countries and communities to reclaim their cultural identities and histories, including as regards indigenous communities, while fostering the continuity of societies across time and allowing them to shape their future, was particularly underlined.

**CANADA**

The country does not require separate bilateral agreements to return cultural property, and its legislation can be applied to both documented and undocumented heritage. Furthermore, the Canadian government proactively consults the concerned country and seeks a written request for the return of the object. It also bears most of the associated costs.

Beyond technical or legal matters, the ethical dimension of such commitment was particularly put to the fore. Return and restitution of cultural property was highlighted by some speakers as an ethical imperative, which supports the values of equity, solidarity and international justice, while also enhancing the recognition of cultural diversity and fostering intercultural understanding. The discussions underscored the profound significance of such processes and their transformative impact on societies and international relations. Notions of collaboration, reciprocity and mutual growth were put to the fore. Joint, collaborative processes engaging both source and destination countries were underlined, notably in the field of research, expertise and knowledge building, allowing to build a shared understanding of deeply intertwined histories and support the reconciliation of memories.

**NETHERLANDS**

An independent advisory committee was established to assess requests for the return of cultural property based on research and expert knowledge, in close cooperation with countries of origin.
Painting depicting Rasikapriya from the SamdehiRagini
Bikaner, Rajasthan
Paper
Repatriated from USA in 2021
Government of India
SOUTH AFRICA

The Draft National Policy on the Repatriation and Restitution of Human Remains and Heritage Objects is intended to provide a framework to manage ethical discovery, ethical curation, possible restitution and repatriation claims and the return of human remains and heritage objects.

INDONESIA

In February 2021, the Indonesian Minister of Education and Culture established a committee for the repatriation of Indonesian cultural objects. The committee is tasked with developing a mechanism for returning cultural objects from the Netherlands to Indonesia and initiating dialogue with the Dutch.

NETHERLANDS

Additional funds were allocated by national authorities for provenance research and to improve digital accessibility of collections that were looted, stolen, or lost during World War II and the colonial period.

Countries reported the evolution of national legislation intended to support such processes, while also underlining the importance of a structured dialogue between concerned countries. The discussions shed light on instances of successful return and restitution from different parts of the world, underlining their societal impact while further describing national mechanisms developed to underpin such processes. Some speakers shared specific good practices in that regard, including the creation of a dedicated national committee for the return and repatriation of cultural property, while others encouraged the creation of national institutes for provenance research – to help tracing the origins of artefacts and assisting in their repatriation. In some countries, the return and restitution was reported to be explicitly enshrined within national heritage policy priorities, while other countries promote a case-by-case approach to restitution. Some destination countries also reported the evolution of national legislation spurred by this upward process, while also commending the broader awareness of the general public in that regard. While cases of return and restitution often respond to expressed claims, some countries also reported on voluntary cases of repatriation of cultural property to its country of origin, notably conducted by cultural institutions and museums.

FRANCE

The elaboration of a “framework law” is underway, with the objective to facilitate the restitution of identified goods, while preserving the fundamental principle of inalienability of collections.

AUSTRALIA

A new provenance assessment framework was introduced in 2021 by the National Gallery that considers legal and ethical aspects of a work of art's history. If a work was stolen, illegally excavated, or unethically acquired, it will be removed from the collection and returned to its rightful owners.
The McKenzie Art Gallery in Regina, Canada made a significant gesture by voluntarily repatriating the Annapurna statue to its rightful place of origin in India in 2021. The artefact, taken from India over a century ago, holds immense historical and cultural significance. On that ground, the gallery acknowledged its deep connection to India’s cultural heritage and its importance for local communities. The repatriation was driven by ethical considerations and a sense of rightful cultural ownership rather than legal obligation, setting an important example for museums and cultural institutions worldwide. This action reflects Canada’s broader commitment to the preservation and rightful ownership of cultural heritage, in line with international agreements. The voluntary repatriation of the Annapurna statue serves as a testament to how such process can contribute to international cultural understanding, mutual respect, and addressing more broadly historical wrongs.

Specific recommendations were formulated with a view to enable processes of return and restitution in the future. The importance of enabling the exchange of knowledge and good practices, including through dedicated platforms as relevant was particularly underlined, with a view to monitor claims for return and restitution, but also document the impact and benefits of such processes, the difficulties encountered and related national policy developments. Such platforms would not only facilitate the sharing of best practices but also enhance international cooperation, a crucial aspect in the fight against illicit trafficking. Engaging UNESCO and the ICRPRCP in this endeavour was suggested by some speakers. Addressing the disparities in available resources for return and restitution was also underlined as critical. Likewise, exchange of good practices between requesting countries should be further promoted. Finally, regional mechanisms were outlined as important to support such processes; a few examples concerning the Africa region were shared.

An action-oriented way forward for India would be to set up a National Institute of Provenance Research pertaining to India’s cultural property outside the country. Such Institute would be entrusted with creating a visual archive of Indian heritage and a public discourse regarding restitution of Indian objects abroad, as well as preparing a blueprint for creating infrastructure to enable storage and conservation of the restituted objects and truly bring this back to the deprived community itself.

JYOTINDRA JAIN
PROFESSOR OF ARTS & AESTHETICS, JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY (JNU) AND MEMBER SECRETARY OF THE INDIRA GANDHI NATIONAL CENTRE FOR THE ARTS
The need to enable the return and restitution of indigenous cultural heritage was also pointed at, including as regards the repatriation of human remains. As underlined by some speakers, the ancestral remains and cultural belongings of indigenous peoples can still be found in museums around the world, many of which were taken during colonial times. The process of returning human remains was put forward as contributing to the cultural revitalization of concerned communities in a spirit of social justice and dignity.

SOUTH AFRICA
Restoring Human Dignity through the Restitution of Human Remains

South Africa has been actively engaged in supporting the repatriation of human remains illicitly taken from the country, driven by the need to address historical wrongs from the colonial era and restore human dignity. Two significant cases exemplify this policy. Saartjie Sarah Baartman, also known as the ‘hottentot Venus’, was a Khoisan woman who was taken to Britain in 1810 and later to France, where she was exhibited in a freak show attraction. In 2002, France agreed to return her remains to South Africa, and she was buried near her birthplace in the Eastern Cape province. Klaas and Trooi Pienaar’s remains, exhumed by an Austrian anthropologist in 1999 and taken to Austria for alleged scientific purposes, were repatriated in 2012. To address gaps in the existing legislation and frame such repatriation processes in the future, South Africa is developing a National Policy on the Repatriation and Restitution of Human Remains and Heritage Objects.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
The 1990 Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) provides a process for museums and federal agencies to return certain Native American cultural items, including human remains, funerary objects, sacred objects, and objects of cultural patrimony, to their respective tribes. The 2022 Safeguard Tribal Objects of Patrimony Act further enables the implementation of NAGPRA, by increasing criminal penalties for non-compliance and strengthening operational mechanisms.

Likewise, such processes intended to redress historical wrongs were also underlined as levers to support the reconciliation of memories and renew bilateral relations between concerned countries. Several examples of such processes were presented by participating countries.

While recognizing the achievements and good practices, experts also highlighted the persisting gaps and challenges related to the protection and restitution of cultural property. Among them are notably the lack of comprehensive inventories, which was consistently underlined as critical. Many experts underscored that an up-to-date and comprehensive inventory of cultural property is a fundamental tool for cultural heritage protection, supporting the management and conservation of cultural property, while also serving as an essential resource for provenance research and due diligence checks, ultimately deterring illicit trafficking. Some countries reported legislative mechanisms whereby the registration of cultural property, and the
establishment of a detailed inventory, is made mandatory. However, the creation and maintenance of these inventories are not without their challenges. Resource constraints, lack of expertise, and the sheer scale of the task were cited as some of the main obstacles.

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

The Ministry of Culture and Youth manages a database of cultural assets, encompassing cultural artefacts and historical sites. In addition, the Sharjah Archaeology Authority Database and the Abu Dhabi Historic Environment Record System, operated at the local level, enable the monitoring of artefacts, thus acting as a deterrent to illicit trafficking.

Additionally, the dynamic nature of cultural property, which could include newly discovered artefacts or recently designated heritage sites, makes the process of inventory creation and management even more complex.

Another recurring theme that emerged was the rising prevalence of online trade and illegal sales of cultural artefacts, an issue which was particularly exacerbated by the accelerated digital transformation. The ease of access, coupled with a lack of stringent control mechanisms, has allowed such illegal activities to flourish, challenging cultural heritage protection efforts. The issue was brought into sharp focus during the discussions, with participants acknowledging complexities and nuances. The internet’s global reach has the potential to obfuscate the traditional barriers and checkpoints that regulated the sale and movement of cultural artefacts. Further, the veil of anonymity that online platforms offer has made it increasingly difficult to track and identify individuals or groups involved in these illegal activities. This not only fuels the illicit trafficking of cultural property but also impedes efforts to repatriate stolen or illicitly obtained artefacts. The necessity to collaborate with the market was therefore put to the fore by some speakers, highlighting that the preservation of legal trade also hinges on the eradication of the illegal trade.

Addressing this issue requires a multi-faceted approach that integrates legal, technological, and educational strategies. Legally, there is a need for robust regulations that extend to the online marketplaces and effectively deter online illicit trade. Technologically, the use of advanced tools and techniques could aid in monitoring online platforms, tracking illicit activities, and identifying offenders. Educationally, awareness about the implications of purchasing cultural artefacts online needs to be increased among the general public and collectors. Often, individuals may unknowingly contribute to the illicit trade, not fully understanding the history or origin of the artefact they purchase. By informing the public about the potential implications and ethical considerations related to purchasing cultural artefacts online, a significant demand-side reduction in the illicit trade could be achieved.

In light of the challenges associated with protecting cultural heritage and preventing illicit trafficking of cultural property, experts echoed a unified call for capacity and knowledge building. They stressed the necessity of a comprehensive, multi-level approach that caters to various facets of cultural heritage protection across the conservation, investigation and prosecution aspects. Ensuring that reliable information is made available to all concerned stakeholders is a critical
endeavour, towards which some countries have developed dedicated information portals or knowledge building material. These initiatives aim to provide comprehensive and accessible resources for understanding cultural heritage, its significance, and the instruments available to ensure its safeguarding, thus enabling informed and coordinated efforts.

**One of the fundamental areas identified for capacity building was the enhancement of technical competencies, notably as regards the preparation and management of inventories of cultural property as a critical step towards the prevention of illicit trafficking.** In that perspective, strategies to scale up capacities for technical expertise in source and destination countries were presented, among which competence networks intended to provide expertise in identifying cultural property. Dedicated training programmes are needed with a view to equipping relevant professionals and units with the necessary skills to conduct inventorying processes and effectively develop and manage databases. Enhancing the technical capabilities to track and prevent online illicit trade was also viewed as an integral part of the larger capacity-building agenda.

**ICCROM**

Youth.Heritage.Africa programme is an example of a local initiative that works closely with local populations, particularly youth, to empower heritage leaders and connect them through innovative strategies and initiatives to make their heritage a driver of economic and social development. These types of hubs, located not just in Africa but around the world, are presented as effective means of capacity building in the field of cultural heritage preservation.

**Germany**

A web portal on the protection of cultural property was launched in both German and English. The portal includes notably a detailed presentation of relevant national and international law. The platform is used by a diversity of stakeholders, from importers, dealers and cultural professionals to customs and police officers, or prosecutors among others. The information provided informs investigations and decision-making.

**Mexico**

The National Customs Agency (ANAM), in collaboration with the National Institute of Anthropology and History (INAH), provided training to 165 Customs officers in 2022.
The country has a tradition of more than 35 years in training specialized law enforcement personnel, providing essential skills and expertise in combatting illicit trafficking.

One of the key themes across the discussions was the pressing need for expanding public awareness on cultural heritage protection and illicit trafficking of cultural property. Speakers collectively advocated for a comprehensive and far-reaching approach to public awareness, addressing the conservation of cultural heritage as a collective responsibility that society at large should participate in. Awareness raising activities should strive to deepen the understanding of cultural heritage's intrinsic value and the damaging implications of illicit trafficking, including their linkages with organized crime. Public awareness activities, as suggested by the speakers, should target not only the general public but also people who are directly involved in the art and antiquities market, including collectors, art dealers, and auction houses, with a view to curtail the demand for illicitly traded artefacts and reinforce ethical practices in the art market.

Speakers also underlined the importance of engaging the media and harnessing the power of new technologies and social media platforms. Several innovative examples of engagement of the public were shared – some of which were organized on the occasion of the International Day against Illicit Trafficking of Cultural Property – including online forums and public exhibitions, live streaming interview programmes or immersive technology experiences among others.

UNESCO Chair network can support the global reflection on the fight against illicit trafficking and the return and restitution of cultural property.

The National Commission recently produced a series of short films on the fight against the illicit trade of cultural property to raise public awareness, including through social media.

The National Gallery is raising awareness on the illicit trafficking of cultural property within the tertiary education sector through dedicated seminars, professional exchange and internships.
CHINA
Harnessing Public Engagement to Support the Return of Stolen Artefacts

A 1,000-year-old Buddha statue stolen from China and transferred overseas in the late 1990s was successfully ordered to be returned by Chinese courts. In addition to national legal frameworks, an innovative public engagement strategy played a crucial role in reclaiming this cultural property. Leveraging international treaties ratified by China, including the 1954 Hague Convention, the 1970 UNESCO Convention, and the 1995 UNIDROIT Convention, the country asserted its rightful claim over the artefact, leading to a ruling for its return. In addition, a live-streaming interview programme was launched to spotlight the case. The programme reached millions of viewers, creating a wave of public support for the return of the stolen artefact, while also raising awareness more broadly on the impact of illicit trafficking. This integrated approach showcased the power of combining legal measures and public engagement in combatting the illicit trafficking of cultural goods.

INDONESIA
Stirring Community Engagement through the Repatriation of Prince Diponegoro’s Dagger

Indonesia’s cultural repatriation journey highlights the importance of community awareness in the process. After two centuries in the Netherlands, the dagger of Prince Diponegoro – a historical figure in the fight against colonial rule – was returned to Indonesia in 2020. After being lost for decades, the object was located in the collections of the Dutch National Museum of Ethnology in Leiden, further to a thorough research process engaging experts from both Indonesia and the Netherlands. The object became the central piece of an exhibition on Prince Diponegoro’s legacy curated by the Indonesian National Museum, using the latest video mapping technology to reach out to the public. The case sparked public discussions in both societies, revealing a growing interest in Indonesia’s heritage and historical ties to colonialism, particularly among the youth, and stirring interest towards other Indonesian cultural artefacts held abroad, including the royal family heirlooms in Bali.
Uma Maheshwar
11th Century C.E.
Central India
Stone
Repatriated from USA in 2021
Government of India
The ‘Re(ad)dress – Return of Treasures’ Exhibition: Stirring a Renewed Dialogue on the Return and Restitution of Cultural Property

The exhibition ‘Re(ad)dress – Return of Treasures’ renews the narrative on restitution, highlighting its historical anchoring as well as its broader contribution to cultural diplomacy. The exhibition showcases 26 antiquities, as well as images and narratives of the 242 artefacts that were returned to India. Through digital panels, informative text, audiovisual and holographic displays, it provides an understanding of the journey of these artefacts and their repatriation story, highlighting the socio-cultural context and their broader contribution to intercultural dialogue. Curated for the first meeting of the G20 Culture Working Group, the exhibition was organized by the Archaeological Survey of India, the National Museum Institute, and the National Museum under the aegis of the Ministry of Culture. It was also made available through digital mediums as a virtual exhibition to reach a global audience.

**Increased engagement of the museums sector in the fight against illicit trafficking and enhanced dialogue on the return and restitution of cultural property was also reported as a growing trend.** A number of dedicated policy instruments are available at the international level to support such process – including ICOM ethical standards or standardized documentation procedures – or at the national level, including detailed guidelines for museums. Strengthening the capacities and means of museums professionals to prevent illicit trafficking of cultural property – notably through provenance research and enhanced security – as well as to fully deploy their education and awareness raising role in that area, was stressed as a critical perspective.

**ICOM**

The ICOM Code of Ethics emphasizes that museums must acquire objects legally and ethically, prohibiting the collection of stolen or looted items. Due diligence is critical, involving thorough research of an object’s history, ownership, and authenticity before acquisition. The ICOM guidelines not only protect against illegal trade but also underscore a museum’s commitment to ethical practices, helping to identify and return improperly acquired objects to their rightful owners or origin countries.

**AUSTRALIA**

The National Gallery initiated a provenance research project, systematically examining its national collection of over 155,000 works of art to identify and resolve any ethical or legal issues.

**UNITED KINGDOM**

A practical guide on restitution and repatriation was produced by the Arts Council, a government public body, to support museums in responding to restitution claims. The guide provides practical advice and best practices, including step-by-step processes for decision-making and information on a range of different outcomes.
Overall, harnessing the opportunities of the digital technologies was particularly highlighted as crucial to curb illicit trafficking of cultural property, while also enabling stronger commitment towards return and restitution of cultural property. Overall, the role of digital technology was explored as a double-edged sword – on the one hand, as a tool to tackle the new challenges posed by digital platforms for illicit trafficking, and on the other hand, as an instrument to democratise access to cultural heritage and foster global appreciation and protection of cultural properties. Digital technologies shall be used in more systemic ways to allow inclusive and equitable access to cultural property, support documentation and inventorying, enable the monitoring of online illicit trafficking as well as investigation and coordinated response, but also expand education and awareness raising efforts. Several examples of online platforms were shared, including a virtual museum of stolen cultural objects, or the possible use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) for provenance research. The discussion also emphasized that increasing complexity and sophistication of technological advancements necessitate a concerted effort among cultural authorities, legal bodies, customs officials, and online platform regulators to tackle the illicit trafficking of cultural goods.

The utility of technologies like blockchain or 3D scanning to identify and track cultural property, including for provenance verification, was particularly underscored. With its ability to create an immutable, traceable record of transactions, blockchain can be effectively employed for maintaining the provenance of cultural properties and ensuring that the record of an artefact’s history cannot be tampered with, providing a reliable verification tool. Some countries reported ongoing efforts to monitor websites and Facebook marketplaces, leading to the restitution of significant numbers of artefacts. A more systemic use of such technologies is thus likely to bolster the efforts to trace the origins of cultural properties, ascertain their authenticity, and prevent the sale of illicit artefacts.
ITALY
The Carabinieri, the national police unit, is developing a Stolen Works of Art Detection System (S.W.O.A.D.S.) for online identification of stolen works of art. The goal is to connect National European law enforcement agencies using a network based on blockchain technology.

SPAIN
An application tool for immediate data collection in the event of natural disasters or conflicts is being developed, with a view to enhance response to emergency situations, notably in South America.

Similarly, the discussions highlighted the potential of AI, 3D imaging or drones in helping identify stolen cultural property, notably through tracking online sales. AI’s capabilities in pattern recognition, data analysis, and predictive modelling make it a powerful tool in detecting illicit activities online. Implementing AI can enhance the monitoring mechanisms and alert systems, enabling timely identification and action against illicit online sales. It was noted that harnessing AI technology could revolutionize the way we respond to the increasing challenge of online trafficking of cultural property.

GERMANY
An AI-powered application was developed to identify the origin of archaeological cultural goods, allowing to expedite artefact verification and to disrupt illegal trade by making it more difficult for illegal items to go unnoticed.

UNESCO–INTERPOL–SAUDI ARABIA
A comprehensive, free of access online Virtual Museum showcasing 2D and 3D high-quality images of stolen cultural objects from INTERPOL’s Stolen Works of Art Database is being development. It will provide immersive contextual and educational content, while promoting scientific research and awareness.

Digital technology was also appreciated for its potential to democratise access to cultural heritage. The speakers recognized the transformative potential of digital technology in making cultural heritage more accessible to a broader audience. This was seen as a powerful means of fostering a sense of shared global heritage, creating a worldwide community of cultural guardians. Virtual tours, digital exhibitions, and online databases can provide unprecedented access to cultural artefacts, monuments, and heritage sites. This not only enhances public awareness about cultural heritage but also fosters an understanding of its intrinsic value and the need for its protection.

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES
Technologies such as digital mapping, imaging techniques and 3D printing are harnessed to create detailed records of archaeological sites and monuments, thus enabling documentation, research and access to the general public.

In order to harness digital technologies for fighting against illicit trafficking of cultural property bold investment from public policies and broader, multistakeholder
cooperation were called upon. Experts urged for the responsible and strategic use of technology in safeguarding cultural heritage, requiring investment in research, more systemic collaboration between public authorities, academic partners and the private sector but also expanded international cooperation to support effective implementation of such solutions, including through the harmonization of standards and legal frameworks as relevant.

The need for more systemic inter-ministerial and inter-institutional cooperation was strongly underlined. The discussions brought into focus the significance of a united, whole-of-government approach in addressing the issue of illicit trafficking of cultural property, especially among culture and antiquities, judiciary, and customs authorities. The need to break down silos, foster dialogue, and improve coordination among these various departments was underlined as critical to support effective prevention of illicit trafficking. As underlined by some speakers, such inter-ministerial coordination enables both normative and operational measures to be taken. Several examples of national inter-ministerial committees or mechanisms involving all concerned institutions were shared as good practices, both in source and destination countries, some of which were created several decades back.

ARGENTINA

A Committee to Combat Illicit Trafficking of Cultural Property has been in operation for the past 20 years, bringing together government agencies involved in heritage protection, law enforcement, customs and money laundering among others.

CHINA

A cultural property-focused inter-ministerial coordination mechanism was incorporated into the 2023–2025 work plan on cultural property crimes issued by six central authorities, including judicial organs and central administrative organs in culture, police, and customs.

SOUTH AFRICA

The National Forum for the Law Enforcement of Heritage Related Matters provides a platform for law enforcement and heritage agencies to collaborate in combatting theft and illicit trafficking in cultural objects.

Likewise, the relevance of multi-level governance systems, engaging national and local authorities and involving decentralised mechanisms as relevant was put to the fore. In particular, the engagement of local authorities, together with national authorities, was highlighted as a positive lever to engage local communities in more systemic ways. Some countries also reported decentralized public policy mechanisms pertaining to the protection of cultural heritage and the fight against illicit trafficking, supporting more effective monitoring and awareness-raising of local communities.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

As part of the 2022 Safeguard Tribal Objects of Patrimony Act, a Native working group consisting of representatives of Indian tribes and Native Hawaiian organizations provides advice on issues concerning the return of, and illegal trade in, human remains and cultural items.
ARGENTINA

As part of the country’s federal system, the administration of archaeological heritage is decentralized to provinces, allowing more effective engagement of local populations and field monitoring, while also being more cost effective.

Speakers equally highlighted the need to strengthen international cooperation towards preventing illicit trafficking of cultural property and advancing restitution – a commitment towards which the engagement of the G20 was deemed particularly critical. The global nature of illicit trafficking makes it a transnational issue that requires a cross-border response. International cooperation, in terms of information sharing, collaborative investigations, and joint efforts in recovery and return, was therefore underlined as paramount to the effective application of legal and regulatory frameworks. The role of the G20 Culture Workstream was emphasized in that context, notably in facilitating the exchange of information between regional markets. As underlined by some countries, strengthened international cooperation is needed to increase the traceability of cultural property, to support the networking of relevant national entities (including specialized police units and judicial authorities, customs or actors in the regulation of online platforms), to expand capacity building efforts or to enable the domestication of international norms and standards, among other priorities. Several ongoing or upcoming international policy developments were put forward by participating international organizations, also referring to the importance of sustained global dialogue at the multilateral level by relevant institutions such as UNESCO, and its partners Interpol, WCO, UNIDROIT, UNODC, ICOM, and ICCROM.

TÜRKIYE

Through active cooperation with the US District Attorney Office, the country managed to repatriate a significant number of illegally traded cultural objects from the USA in 2022.

ITALY

A Success Story of International Cooperation towards Cultural Asset Recovery

The Carabinieri of the “Nucleo Tutela Patrimonio Culturale” in Monza, Italy, achieved a significant success in recovering a gargoyle from the Milan Cathedral. The item had been illicitly transferred to the Netherlands by a restorer, who intended to display it for sale at an antiques fair after its restoration, thus demonstrating the audacity and international scope of such trafficking. The recovery was made possible through European investigation orders and the subsequent issuance of a freezing certificates, leading to the confiscation of the cultural asset. Collaboration between EUROJUST and the Dutch National Police played a crucial role in reconstructing the gargoyle’s journey and facilitating its return to Italy. This operation exemplifies the power of international cooperation in combatting the illicit trafficking of cultural assets. It demonstrates the effectiveness of coordinated efforts and robust international legal mechanisms.
Likewise, regional or sub-regional cooperation was put forward as a strong lever to advance this process. Several examples of regional or sub-regional strategies, policies or mechanisms were shared as significant contributions to accelerate and frame national efforts to fight against illicit trafficking or enable the return and restitution of cultural property. In particular, the development and dissemination by regional organizations of model laws allow to address the disparities in available resources among countries. Likewise, the development of regional position papers has proven effective to support countries in establishing national roadmaps, particularly in Africa where a common position on restitution was reported to be currently worked upon, further demonstrating the value of coordinated, cross-border efforts. Overall, the importance of recognizing the synergies and complementarities among regional, sub-regional, and interregional cooperation emerged as pivotal.

**EUROPEAN UNION**

The EU Action Plan against Trafficking in Cultural Goods was adopted in December 2022 by the European Commission as a comprehensive action plan to combat trafficking in cultural goods. The action plan emphasizes four priority areas: improving prevention and detection of crimes by market participants and cultural heritage institutions; strengthening law enforcement and judicial capabilities; boosting international cooperation; and raising public awareness about the issue of illicit trafficking.

**SINGAPORE**

The country is a signatory to the 2000 ASEAN Declaration on Cultural Heritage, which formalizes the commitment of ASEAN member countries to protect cultural property against theft, illicit trade, trafficking, and illegal transport.

**AFRICAN UNION (AU)**

The AU Draft Model Law on the Protection of Cultural Property and Heritage is intended as a policy instrument to assist Member States in developing, revising or strengthening their national legislation on the protection of cultural property and heritage.

**ECONOMIC COMMUNITY OF WEST AFRICAN STATES (ECOWAS)**

The ECOWAS Action Plan 2019-2023 for the return of African cultural property to their countries of origin is intended to support ECOWAS Member States across restitution processes, including through the establishment of a Regional Committee for monitoring the action plan.
List of participants
Protection and Restitution of Cultural Property

G20 Members

Ms. María Magdalena Vázquez, Researcher at the National Institute of Anthropology and Latin American Studies, Ministry of Culture of Argentina, Argentina

Ms. Bronwyn Campbell, Senior Curator, Provenance, National Gallery of Australia, Australia

Mr. Laio Veloso, International Advisor, Ministry of Culture, Brazil

Ms. Jennifer Mueller, Manager and Senior Analyst, Heritage Policy and Programs Directorate, Heritage Branch, Department of Canadian Heritage, Government of Canada, Canada

Ms. Meng Yu, Ph.D. Assistant Professor, China University of Political Science and Law, China

Ms. Anna Kedziorek Ramirez, Policy Manager, Illicit Trafficking Cultural Goods, Social Inclusion, Antisemitism, European Union

Ms. Sarah Nurdin, Advisor on European Union Policy, Ministry of Culture, France

Ms. Ines Zander, Legal Officer at German Minister of State for Culture and the Media, Germany

Ms. V. Vidyavathi, Secretary, Ministry of Tourism (former DG-ASI), India

Mr. Jyotindra Jain, Professor of Arts & Aesthetics, Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), India

Mr. Bonnie Triyana, Historian and Secretary of the Indonesian Cultural Objects Repatriation Committee, Indonesia

Mr. Major Claudio Sanzò, Carabinieri Command for the Protection of Cultural Heritage, Commander of the Monza Unit, Italy

Mr. Ren Yatsunami, Associate Professor, National University Cooperation Kyushu University, Japan

Ms. Rosana Calderon Martin Del Campo, Deputy Director for Special Projects, Directorate for World Heritage, National Institute of Anthropology and History, Mexico

Ms. Jihon Kim, Chief of the Division of International Cooperation Programme, Korean National Commission for UNESCO, Republic of Korea

Ms. Nadezhda Filatova, Deputy Director, Senior Researcher – Head of the Department of World Heritage and International Cooperation, Likhachev Russian Research Institute for Cultural and Natural Heritage, Russia


Mr. Kgomotso Mokgethi, Director, Heritage Research, Policy and Legislation, Department of Sport, Art and Culture, South Africa

Ms. Jennifer Mueller, Senior Curator, Provenance, National Gallery of Australia, Australia

Ms. Ines Zander, Legal Officer at German Minister of State for Culture and the Media, Germany

Ms. V. Vidyavathi, Secretary, Ministry of Tourism (former DG-ASI), India

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Mr. Ren Yatsunami, Associate Professor, National University Cooperation Kyushu University, Japan

Ms. Rosana Calderon Martin Del Campo, Deputy Director for Special Projects, Directorate for World Heritage, National Institute of Anthropology and History, Mexico

Ms. Jihon Kim, Chief of the Division of International Cooperation Programme, Korean National Commission for UNESCO, Republic of Korea

Ms. Nadezhda Filatova, Deputy Director, Senior Researcher – Head of the Department of World Heritage and International Cooperation, Likhachev Russian Research Institute for Cultural and Natural Heritage, Russia


Mr. Kgomotso Mokgethi, Director, Heritage Research, Policy and Legislation, Department of Sport, Art and Culture, South Africa

Ms. Zeynep Boz, Head of Department of Endeavor with Smuggling, Ministry of Culture and Tourism, Türkiye

Ms. Rosie Weetch, Head of Cultural Property, Department for Culture, Media and Sport, United Kingdom
Ms. Marion F. Werkheiser, Founding Partner, Cultural Heritage Partners, United States of America

Ms. Sophie Delepierre, Head of Protection Heritage and Capacity building Department, International Council of Museums (ICOM)

Mr. Kazi Nurul Islam, Deputy Secretary, Cultural Exchange Section, Ministry of Cultural Affairs, Bangladesh

Ms. Barbara Hoffman, Member of ICOMOS International Scientific Committee on Legal, Administrative and Financial issues, International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS)

Mr. Wael Abdel Wahab, Director of UNESCO Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Egypt

Mr. Gonzalo Giordano, Criminal Intelligence Officer, Acting Coordinator of the Works of Art Unit, INTERPOL

Ms. Krista Pikkat, Director of the Culture and Emergencies Entity, UNESCO

Ms. Sunna Altnoder, Chief of the Movable Heritage and Museums Unit in the Culture Sector, UNESCO

Ms. Alicja Jagielska-Burduk, Professor at the Faculty of Law and Administration, University of Opole, UNESCO Chair on Cultural Property Law

Ms. Ana Filipa Vrdoljak, Professor in the Faculty of Law, University of Technology, Sydney, UNESCO Chair in International Law and Cultural Heritage

Ms. Marina Schneider, Principal Legal Officer & Treaty Depositary, UNIDROIT

Mr. Ignacio Ibanez, Head of Madrid Programme Office, Coordinator, Vulnerable Targets Programme, Special Projects and Innovation Branch, United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT)

Mr. Daniele Marchesi, Coordination Officer, Office of the Director-General/Executive Director, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)

Non-Governmental Organizations

Ms. Tess Davis, Executive Director, The Antiquities Coalition

Ms. Marion F. Werkheiser, Founding Partner, Cultural Heritage Partners, United States of America

Ms. Sophie Delepierre, Head of Protection Heritage and Capacity building Department, International Council of Museums (ICOM)

Mr. Kazi Nurul Islam, Deputy Secretary, Cultural Exchange Section, Ministry of Cultural Affairs, Bangladesh

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Ms. Krista Pikkat, Director of the Culture and Emergencies Entity, UNESCO

Ms. Sunna Altnoder, Chief of the Movable Heritage and Museums Unit in the Culture Sector, UNESCO

Ms. Alicja Jagielska-Burduk, Professor at the Faculty of Law and Administration, University of Opole, UNESCO Chair on Cultural Property Law

Ms. Ana Filipa Vrdoljak, Professor in the Faculty of Law, University of Technology, Sydney, UNESCO Chair in International Law and Cultural Heritage

Ms. Marina Schneider, Principal Legal Officer & Treaty Depositary, UNIDROIT

Mr. Ignacio Ibanez, Head of Madrid Programme Office, Coordinator, Vulnerable Targets Programme, Special Projects and Innovation Branch, United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT)

Mr. Daniele Marchesi, Coordination Officer, Office of the Director-General/Executive Director, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)

Non-Governmental Organizations

Ms. Tess Davis, Executive Director, The Antiquities Coalition
Danza de los Voladores (Dance of the Flyers)
Playa del Carmen, Mexico
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PRIORITY II

Harnessing Living Heritage for a Sustainable Future
Living heritage is a critical component of the world’s cultural diversity and should be safeguarded and sustained for present and future generations. Also referred to as intangible cultural heritage according to the UNESCO 2003 Convention on the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage, it encompasses practices, representations, expressions, knowledge systems and skills living that are passed down across generations. It is notably manifested in oral traditions and expressions, performing arts, social practices, rituals and festive events, knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe, or traditional craftsmanship among other domains. Languages are a critical vector of living heritage.

Languages, in their rich diversity, underpin the intangible heritage of peoples and communities. The preservation and safeguarding of languages is critical to the world’s cultural diversity. Languages live in songs and stories, riddles and rhymes and so the protection of languages and the transmission of oral traditions and expressions are very closely linked. The extinction of a language inevitably leads to the permanent loss of oral traditions and expressions. However, it is these oral expressions themselves and their performance in public that best help to safeguard a language rather than dictionaries, grammars and databases. As underlined by the 2022–2032 International Decade of Indigenous Language proclaimed by the UN General Assembly, there is an urgent need to preserve, revitalise and promote indigenous languages which continue to disappear at an alarming rate worldwide. The Decade is notably intended to draw attention to the critical loss of languages worldwide and to take urgent steps at the national and international levels for their preservation.

The safeguarding of living heritage has gained increased international interest and support. The implementation of the widely ratified UNESCO 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage has contributed to prompting such recognition and strengthening related public policies and frameworks. The Convention frames concepts and approaches linked with intangible cultural heritage – notably its anchoring on bearers communities and its living, evolving nature – while also providing tools to enable its safeguarding, notably inventorying and safeguarding plans. More recently, such global commitment was reinvigorated by the UNESCO 2022 MONDIACULT Declaration, which reiterates commitment to protection and promote cultural identity and promotes a rights-based approach to culture.

Despite this global recognition, the safeguarding of living heritage is faced with mounting threats related notably to the impact of global challenges – including climate change, accelerated urbanization and the digital transformation – but also to the conditions of its commercialisation, which may lead to a decontextualization of this specific heritage – whose values and practices rely primarily on peoples and communities – but also to issues of over-commercialisation, misappropriation or misrepresentation which may deprive communities from the economic and social benefits related to the latter and the knowledge associated with them. For example, demographic issues such as rural urban migration, decontextualization linked with mass tourism, environmental
degradation spurred by as deforestation or urban development, negative attitudes such as intolerance or disrespect, weakened transmission due to diminishing youth interest or aged practitioners, or cultural globalization which entails educational standardization or rapid sociocultural change, are among the potential threats.

**LIVING HERITAGE, AN ENABLER OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

Living heritage is increasingly addressed and promoted as an enabler of sustainable development. The principle of intangible cultural heritage is central to the sustainable development definition of “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”, as living heritage acts as a vehicle of values and behaviours which are conducive to sustainable development. It offers a wellspring of knowledge, skills and values to support the commitment towards sustainable development and the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, either by inspiring more sustainable social and economic practices, fostering behavioural change towards ecological transition and climate action, supporting social inclusion and resilience, or enabling job creation and economic development for local communities. Identifying and safeguarding these practices is therefore critical to sustainable development efforts more broadly, particularly in view of the implementation gap of the 2030 Agenda across the G20 Membership.

As an integral element of living heritage, indigenous cultural practices are a critical vehicle of sustainability, whose value towards sustainable living and climate action in particular is increasingly acknowledged and documented in a number of studies. Indigenous knowledge contributes to achieve a broad range of development objectives such as food security, human and animal health, education or natural resources management, among other areas. Such research also contributed to raise awareness of policymakers and economists on the value of bottom-up viewpoints to develop more locally relevant and environmentally sustainable solutions, building on the values enshrined in indigenous knowledge.

Living heritage is a critical contributor to social inclusion particularly in increasingly multicultural societies. Enshrined within broader social, historical, natural and cultural environments, intangible heritage provides a sense of identity – both at the level of communities and countries as a whole – thereby also allowing communities, groups and individuals to interact. In that light, the role of living heritage in enabling social cohesion, mutual learning and adaptation, while also supporting the resilience and well-being of communities and their broader empowerment, is increasingly acknowledged. Living heritage can be conducive to sharing ideas, values and knowledge, thus also tackling stereotypes. Certain types of performing arts, in particular, such as theatre or dance forms, serve as a medium to voice opinions, convey emotions and messages or express dissatisfaction with social challenges such as poverty and inequality.

The engagement towards strengthening the linkages between living heritage and inclusive development requires a deliberate commitment to supporting contextual education that is content relevant. In this perspective, the wealth of cultural diversity enshrined in living practices, knowledge and know how constitute powerful drivers to enhance the quality of education, which should be sustained by public policy, notably as regards the adequate integration of education on cultural heritage in and across the education systems, from early childhood to formal – including Technical and Vocational Education and Training – non-formal, informal education and lifelong learning, including through digital technologies as relevant.
While fragile, living heritage is an important factor in maintaining cultural diversity in the face of growing globalization. An understanding of the living heritage of different communities helps with intercultural dialogue and encourages mutual respect for other ways of life, thus forging the foundation for peace and social cohesion. The importance of intangible cultural heritage is not the cultural manifestation itself but rather the wealth of knowledge and skills that is transmitted through it from one generation to the next. The social and economic value of this transmission of knowledge is relevant for minority groups and for mainstreaming social groups within a State and is as important for developing States as for developed ones.

The importance of intangible cultural heritage towards strengthening community-based resilience to natural disasters and climate change is increasingly recognized, particularly the role of knowledge and practices concerning geoscience and the climate towards sustaining disaster risk reduction, disaster recovery, climate adaptation and climate mitigation. Intangible cultural heritage is manifest in knowledge systems, which may for instance relate to knowledge about local flora and fauna, traditional farming techniques, healing systems and seasonal rituals. At the same time, such knowledge and practices are embodied within broader social, historical and cultural contexts, which provide a basis for our identity and how we understand and connect to the world. The transmission of these knowledge and practices also carry and engrain our values and attitudes towards nature, often fostering notions of respect, custodianship, and connectivity towards the environment. Understanding and valorizing these different attitudes, through the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage, will be critical in the coming years to facilitate the adoption of responsible behaviours towards the environment and inclusive and holistic approaches towards its management.

Such impact on environmental sustainability is notably exemplified in the area of agriculture and biodiversity conservation. Traditional practices and indigenous knowledge systems can play a significant role in ensuring food security. Indigenous systems of farming, fishing, hunting, food-gathering, and food preservation can significantly contribute to food and nutrition security. Communities have accumulated a wealth of traditional knowledge based on a holistic approach to their specific rural life and environment. The continuous strengthening and viability of these systems are crucial to ensuring food security and quality nutrition for many communities around the globe. In this context, farmers, herders, fishermen, and traditional healers, among other local knowledge holders, are significant custodians of biodiversity. The value of such local and ecological understanding has important implications for the status of the indigenous peoples and knowledge-holders. While they were earlier seen merely as resource users, they are now recognised as crucial collaborators in environmental management. Bridging traditional and indigenous systems with scientific knowledge remains however a key challenge, in a context where the common belief that science overrides other knowledge systems tends to be perpetuated.

Likewise, the impact of living heritage on environmental protection is manifested in the field of water management. Throughout history, local communities have demonstrated their ability to design sustainable water management methods and achieve access to clean water. These water management practices, notably in agriculture and other livelihoods, have led
to important and positive environmental implications. The key to developing sustainable solutions to water-related environmental and development challenges lies in recognising and respecting the diversity of water resource management systems, their enhancement and continued transmission.

Living heritage also directly supports communities livelihoods. Economic activities linked with the practice of living heritage, as well as the trade of cultural goods and services related to expressions of intangible cultural heritage, can generate income for their practitioners, contributing to improving the livelihoods of communities who practice and transmit this heritage, as well as strengthening the local economy and improving social cohesion, while also sustaining the continued practice of such living heritage. Traditional craftsmanship is a good example of a living heritage that often serves as a main source of income and livelihood for groups, communities and individuals that would otherwise be on the periphery of the economic system. It provides income not only to the artisans and their families but to workers employed across the value chain, such as those working in the transportation, production, and sale of raw materials or finished goods. As these activities are usually undertaken at the level of family or community, ensuring workplace security and a sense of belonging, these qualify as “decent work” as defined in the 2030 Agenda and by the International Labour Organization (ILO).

SUPPORTING THE SAFEGUARDING OF ICH: GAPS AND POLICY PERSPECTIVES

The safeguarding of living heritage thus requires strengthened and more systemic policy engagement at global, national and local levels with a view to address afore-mentioned threats in a comprehensive, concerted and sustainable manner. Intangible cultural heritage primarily owned by its bearers within concerned communities, who should therefore be placed at the centre of all inventorying and safeguarding processes. In addition, strengthening national and local institutional and policy frameworks dedicated to intangible heritage is equally critical to acknowledge, support and sustain safeguarding efforts over time that are ensured by communities themselves. National legislations or policy documents are needed to frame living heritage and its safeguarding. Policy support mechanisms are also necessary, including for example the provision of methodological guidance or financial support to concerned communities, with particular priority laid on marginalized or under-represented communities.

Likewise, further efforts are needed to document and frame the contribution of intangible heritage to communities’ livelihoods and to sustainable development more broadly. There is a considerable lack of

INDIA

Culture for LiFE: Embracing Living Heritage for a Sustainable Future

Amid global challenges of environmental degradation and climate change, the Prime Minister of India introduced the concept of Lifestyle for the Environment (LiFE) in the context of COP26. LiFE advocates a mindful and deliberate utilization of resources, rooted in cultural ethos and traditional knowledge, fostering sustainability and a harmonious relationship with nature. The initiative encourages an environmentally-conscious lifestyle based on the circular economy principles, calling for a reevaluation of individual choices to embrace sustainable practices that respect the planet and its resources. By harnessing living heritage and cultural wisdom, Culture for LiFE aims to bridge the gap between tradition and sustainability, offering solutions for a more sustainable future for all.
quantitative and qualitative data on the social, environmental and economic impacts of living heritage. Consequently, the importance and potential benefits of these practices and knowledge systems for sustainability prospects are not fully acknowledged or understood, by decisionmakers or bearers communities themselves. There is also a lack of research into the cultural and social significance of these practices, making it challenging to comprehend their importance to various communities fully, which can lead to further marginalization of concerned groups. Further engagement in knowledge building is therefore needed, notably through enhanced investment of public authorities in research and knowledge building through alliances with academia and research partners as relevant.

Expanding international and regional cooperation on the safeguarding of living heritage is equally important, a trend which has significantly gained traction over the past few years, as reflected by the increased number of regional strategies or policy mechanisms encompassing living heritage. Likewise, the sustained anchorage of living heritage in the discussions of the G20 culture workstream since its inception in 2020 also reflects such momentum. Looking forward, expanding the exchange of good practices across countries will be critical to further build knowledge on the impact of living heritage on sustainability and spur cross-sectoral and cross-border cooperation initiatives. The global reflection on the misappropriation of living heritage, which raises increased concerns, should also be expanded, with support from relevant international organizations, with a view to developing guidance to inform countries and communities’ engagement.
Odissi dancer in front of Brahmeswara Temple
Bhubaneswar, India
ShaikhMeraj/Shutterstock.com
As the world is poised at the tip of numerous global challenges, from the impact of climate change to natural disasters, the potential for harnessing living heritage to address these challenges and others that lie ahead has come into sharp focus.

There is recognition that the inheritance we share and have inherited from generations past is far from being a stagnant relic of a bygone age. Constantly adapting and evolving with the times, and to its surrounding environment, living heritage is attuned to times of abundance, as it is to times of scarcity and loss. It reflects its time, with ideas, practices, experiences, thoughts, and concerns that are shaped to contemporary necessities and inevitabilities.

India, with its vibrant living cultural traditions and its rich and diverse indigenous knowledge, is well positioned to contribute, facilitate, and revitalize global discussions on sustainable futures. Its historic narrative is a testament to the resilience and dynamism of a continually adapting living heritage. With the genesis of India’s heritage rooted in the first known settled civilization of the subcontinent, in the cities of the Indus Valley, providing the start to a 5,000-year journey. This living heritage has been nurtured by an astonishing diversity of languages, customs, and traditions, which continue to be supported, shared, innovated, participated, and sustained by the people of the land. With over 22 languages enshrined in the Indian Constitution and more than 1,600 mother tongues, sustain this fabric of heritage. Each language and dialect, holding within it the key to human endeavour, knowledge, and creativity, while supporting the living heritage it contains. Further, a culturally diverse population with over 2,000 ethnic groups, diverse religious practices, and over 4,000 festivals adds richness to the multiplicity. The countries landscape stretches across 6 major climatic sub-types from deserts to the alpines, each with their own practices suited to their situation and custom.

The scope of this living heritage permeates society, and groundwork on policy making in India has demonstrably kept living heritage and the need to safeguard it in the forefront at both the national and local levels.
This framework was rooted in place even before living heritage was fore fronted, and received global visibility with the establishment of the 2003 UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH). Amongst the 181 countries to have subsequently ratified this Convention, India can count as being one of the earliest ones to do so. Further recognition of the strategic need to take into account the impact of living heritage lies in its importance in achieving the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), outlined by the United Nations. This universal call to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity has further underlined the urgency to ensure ICH safeguarding. India again, being an early signatory to this declaration[1].

Of the 17 SDGs outlined by the UN, five of the goals are directly linked to ICH and integrate aspects of social, economic, and environmental sustainability. These are Goal 2 – zero hunger; Goal 4 – quality education; Goal 5 – gender equality; Goal 11 – sustainable cities and communities; and Goal 17 – partnerships for the goals. Furthermore, as emphasised by UNESCO, in order to operationally link ICH with these goals, it is necessary to additionally incorporate the fundamental principles of human rights and equality, while recognising that sustainable development cannot be realised without peace and security.

2022 furthered and invigorated the global focus with the Mondiacult Declaration at the UNESCO World Conference on Cultural Policies. Including India, over 150 ministers of culture from across the world unanimously approved and reiterated the global “commitment to protect and promote cultural diversity, as the foundation of the identity of peoples ...” These recommendations and declarations included a focus on knowledge systems, practices, objects and cultural sites, as well as in linguistic diversity. It further highlighted the global and national obligation to “ensure the conservation safeguarding and promotion of the entire cultural sector including cultural heritage, both tangible and intangible, as an ethical imperative.”

In India fieldwork, research and anecdotal evidence has all clearly pointed out that these interdependent, transversal, and cross-disciplinary spheres of action inform the process, with action in one area affecting outcomes in the others. Putting forward how culture matters both in the ends and means of development, The Nobel prize winning economist Amartya Sen has in his writings, discussed the dynamic and interactive role played by culture in development and the need for its integration as an important influence among others.[2]

[1] India is among the 180 countries that have ratified the 2003 UNESCO Convention; and among the 193 countries that have endorsed the UN 2030 Sustainable Development Goals. https://ich.unesco.org/en/states-parties-00024
Having ratified the 2003 Convention in 2005, India has 14 elements inscribed on the Representative List of UNESCO ICH – as of 13 April 2023.

Dynamic, changing and adapting to its times, yet at the core of living heritage lies its fragility. It remains increasingly at risk in the face of inexorable change and a complex amalgam of social, economic, technological, and environmental factors that threaten its knowledge base and the survival of practices, expressions, and skills, as well as associated objects and cultural spaces that are recognised by communities as part of their heritage. The effects of global adversities, from climate change, pandemics, natural disasters, to an accelerated digitised pace of life have further exacerbated the vulnerability of ICH. These are just the basics of several other challenges of the many-layered complex-to-navigate landscape that confront living heritage in the world today.

At this crucial point where India helms the G20 Working Group on Culture there are clear impediments that need to be overcome and commitments made. For the vast canvas of ICH elements, the building of resilience, its safeguarding and sustainability face these challenges. To remain relevant and germane in the present, with the potential to guide us into our more sustainable futures Priority 2 of the Culture Working Group (CWG) under India’s G20 Presidency brought this to the fore. In this context, the Global Thematic Webinar on ‘Harnessing Living Heritage for a Sustainable Future’ fostered an inclusive dialogue from an expert-driven perspective with a view to have an in-depth assessment of the issues leading to tangible and action-oriented recommendations.

While the wish-list is long, it has been pared down to three macro level policy recommendations that would impact the vast numbers of ICH bearers, practitioners and transmitters to ensure their future well-being, and continuing impact on the SDG’s and the transformative impact of living heritage on our lives. These issues have been on the boil, but their criticality has been brought to the fore in the current paradigm altering world where the future of ICH practitioners and their knowledge systems and practices lie on a balance.

The most prominent among these being the deficiency of reliable data and research on the contribution that living heritage makes to national economies, and sustainable development. Additionally, there is often a lack of qualitative research on the cultural and social significance of these practices, which can make it difficult to understand their importance to communities and inclusive social development. Such data gaps often lead to the marginalization of living heritage in development strategies and policies. There is a need to work towards the development of an international methodological framework, applicable across geographies, that would form the structure of reliable statistics. Inclusive, adaptable, and respecting of the specificities of national ICH that would quantify, ICH’s contribution to a nation’s economy including its contribution to GDP, to livelihood generation, to its sectorial contributions, and to the achievement of the SDGs. Thus, building a foundation for evidence-based policies for change, development and investment.

Simultaneously, the threat to ICH from unauthorized commercial appropriation due to gaps in intellectual property laws is increasingly pertinent. There is thus an urgent need to focus and
and progress on international legal instruments and standard setting that would provide much needed protection to safeguard ICH. As this appropriation—often continues to be legally, permissible, communities have little or no recourse against the appropriators, depriving them of the economic and social benefits related to their heritage, and its associated knowledge. Practitioners have found their livelihoods decimated by copying, faking and passing off of similar offerings. The intellectual property tools and systems being conceived and developed from the early years of industrialisation were created to safeguard innovation, invention and originality of individuals and companies with their rule-based systems, not appropriate for community based traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expression. Countries including Panama, Brazil, Mexico and Kenya have developed their own sui generis (specific, special) systems for protecting oral traditional knowledge of ICH. India has developed a database on traditional medicine that has played a substantial role in defensive protection of traditional knowledge that aims to stop people outside the community acquiring intellectual property rights over traditional knowledge. There is an urgent need to develop an equivalent and appropriate global defensive and positive ICH protection that grants rights that empower communities to promote their traditional knowledge to control its uses and benefit from its commercialisation.

Thirdly, given the impact of climate change, fragile eco-systems, to other disasters it is important to include living heritage in all Post-Disaster Needs Assessment and Recovery Frameworks, not as a default mechanism or a special case, but as a protocol by national governments and other stakeholders.

There is need for a continuing commitment to cherish, protect, and sustain living heritage for the generations yet to come.

In addition the binary divisions and dichotomies between built heritage and ICH that divide the UNESCO World Heritage Convention of 1972 and the 2003 ICH convention respectively have been addressed, when necessary, by a holistic and inclusive approach. The need of the hour is to fuse safeguarding measures that impact and ensure the viability and revitalisation of both the tangible and the intangible.

The central principle of intangible cultural heritage is also central to the sustainable development definition of “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”. A universal recognition of the incalculable influence and role of living and dynamic cultures and the part it plays in sustainable development needs recognition, locally, nationally, regionally and internationally. This could well be achieved by adding it on as a transversal pillar with its inclusion as the 18th goal in the 2030 UN goal for Sustainable Development. It would ensure that culture is acknowledged as a crosscutting pillar, promoting social cohesion, preserving biodiversity, and empowering local communities. By embracing cultures, we can forge a more inclusive and prosperous future for all.
Falconry, a living human heritage
Saudi Arabia
oneinchpunch/Shutterstock.com

Falconry was inscribed in 2021 on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity by United Arab Emirates, Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Czechia, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Kazakhstan, Republic of Korea, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Morocco, Netherlands, Pakistan, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Slovakia, Spain and Syrian Arab Republic.
Moderators

Harnessing Living Heritage for a Sustainable Future

Ms. Lindsey Hook
Head of Culture, World Food Forum, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)

Mr. Nils Fietje
Technical Officer, Behavioural and Cultural Insights Unit, World Health Organization (WHO)

Ms. Fumiko Ohinata
Head of Programme Management Unit, Secretariat of the UNESCO 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage
The Global Thematic Webinar on “Harnessing Intangible Heritage for a Sustainable Future” was organized on 13 April 2023. The webinar brought together 40 experts from 30 countries including G20 Members and Invitee nations, as well as 10 international organisations and other stakeholders. The three speaking segments were successively moderated by representatives from the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the World Health Organization (WHO) and UNESCO.

The webinar affirmed a widely shared commitment towards safeguarding living heritage, bringing together perspectives from a diversity of stakeholders, from indigenous bearers and community members, to representatives of national institutions and academia, relevant intergovernmental organizations, as well as international non-governmental organizations and networks. Speakers particularly underlined the need for a holistic approach, bridging intangible and tangible cultural heritage as intrinsically linked, as well as fostering linkages between intangible heritage and creativity more broadly. The importance of living heritage to create a sense of identity and belonging in increasingly multicultural societies was underlined, particularly against the backdrop of a volatile policy landscape.

Participating countries and organizations strongly reaffirmed the driving role of living heritage towards sustainable development, as a reservoir of knowledge and skills, notably as regards its contribution to climate action, biodiversity conservation or social inclusion. The importance of safeguarding intangible heritage towards social justice, human dignity and the respect of fundamental rights was equally highlighted. The contribution of living practices to diverse areas such as food biodiversity and security, health, education, social inclusion, economic development and livelihoods, climate action or risk management was underlined among other areas.

The role of international instruments in shaping these concepts and supporting their ownership was outlined across the discussions. In particular, the impact of UNESCO 2003 Convention on broadening the concept of cultural heritage was highlighted by some experts as leading to a greater appreciation of the role and value of traditional knowledge systems within our societies. Some speakers specifically called for webbing more closely the UNESCO 2003 Convention with the UNESCO 1972 World Heritage Convention and the UNESCO 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions. Some participants also shared specific conceptual approaches to intangible heritage and indigenous knowledge, linking intangible heritage with notions such as cultural landscapes, while also encouraging more broadly to bridge notions of indigenous knowledge and science.
Living heritage provides a multifaceted and interconnected approach which transcends across sustainable development. Living Heritage, or local and indigenous knowledge systems and practices, as well as languages, represents a body of long accumulated practical adaptations to specific ecological and social challenges. It provides sustainability rooted in the broadness of natural and local resources. Much of this heritage is under threat of changing demographics, economic pressure or environmental degradation. It is, therefore, critical to harness our living heritage as broad reaching resource to ensure a sustainable future by placing those communities, groups, and individuals who are the custodians of this knowledge at the centre of safeguarding efforts.

TIM CURTIS
SECRETARY OF THE UNESCO
2003 CONVENTION FOR THE
SAFEGUARDING OF THE
INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE

Examples of national policies and initiatives were shared across the discussion, testifying to the multifaceted impact of living heritage on sustainability, from traditional agricultural or building practices, to social and ritual practices, which were underlined as conducive to environmental protection or the development of civic participative spaces. Participants referred to various national legislations, and strategies that encompass the linkages between living heritage and sustainability. In order to harness these practices for sustainable living, speakers stressed the importance to invest in capacity building and training, provide adapted financial schemes, or develop dynamic agricultural conservation plans among other topics.

UNITED KINGDOM

The linkages between living heritage and sustainability are encompassed within national strategies, among which the UK 2008 Climate Change Act, Wales’ Well-being of Future Generations Act, Scotland’s Art strategy linking arts, health and well-being to climate.

MAURITIUS

Since its ratification of the 2003 Convention as early as 2004, the country developed its national policy framework on inventory, document, safeguarding and valorization of living heritage.

Our shared living heritage is under threat
Participants collectively acknowledged the persistent vulnerability of intangible cultural heritage and the growing threats which curtail its safeguarding, despite its resilience and adaptability. One such threat arises from natural hazards and extreme weather events – such as droughts, floods, wildfires, and cyclones – and the impact of climate change, which disrupt communities’ livelihoods and their intricate relationship with the national environment, upon which some of these practices depend. The impact of climate change on the viability of traditional farming practices was also referred to by some countries. Consequently, the transmission of cultural heritage and continued practice of living heritage can be hampered, causing the loss of traditional knowledge, practices, and skills that are intrinsically linked to specific ecosystems and landscapes, thus also undermining the socio-cultural resilience of these communities.

Other socio-economic challenges were outlined by speakers as adversely impacting the safeguarding and intergenerational transmission of living heritage. In particular, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic was mentioned by several speakers, referring to the disruption of cultural practices, rituals or events. More broadly, accelerated urbanization was reported by several countries as an important threat, also impacting traditional practices, under the effect of the displacement of local communities or the disconnection from their socio-cultural environment, leading notably to a loss of cultural diversity or the erosion of the social fabric. Economic crisis also stands among the threats reported by participating experts, often resulting in resource scarcity and social insecurity, whereby communities may be compelled to abandon certain practices for economic survival. Likewise, the scaling up of commercialisation and broader consumption patterns may raise specific challenges for living heritage. Finally, protracted conflicts may also lead to the disruption of intangible cultural heritage practices, as also referred to by participants.

Participants referred to the importance and diversity of indigenous communities, with some countries underlining more specifically the number of indigenous groups and their critical responsibility as repositories of a significant portion of countries’ biodiversity resources. As underlined by speakers, many of these indigenous communities have thrived in harmony with their natural surroundings for centuries, developing unique cultural practices, knowledge systems and resource management practices that have proven sustainable and resilient. However, these communities are facing increased pressure stemming notably from socio-economic and environmental changes, threatening the continued transmission and practice of their living heritage.

In this regard, several countries underlined more specifically the importance of safeguarding indigenous communities’ living heritage and supporting their meaningful contribution to sustainability discussions more broadly. The critical importance of indigenous knowledge towards the safeguarding of biological and cultural diversity was particularly underlined, reflecting the deep interconnectedness of ecological and cultural resilience. The importance of upholding and learning from these indigenous knowledge systems, as a way to address sustainability challenges and enhance biodiversity conservation, was widely acknowledged by the participants. A number of examples of community-owned processes, conducted by indigenous communities in partnership with several stakeholders such as universities, were presented, aiming notably at promoting indigenous seeds or empowering the youth among others.
The need to engage towards the safeguarding of indigenous languages was particularly highlighted, including as a means to sustain culture and the arts that are expressed through languages, but also as levers of knowledge, beliefs, traditions and worldviews. In that regard, the role of languages to sustain both cultural diversity and biological diversity was put forward. Many participants underlined the number of indigenous languages within their respective countries, referring in some cases to their acknowledgment within national constitutions, while also underlining more broadly their contribution to national cultural diversity.

Countries and organizations exemplified their commitment to sustaining linguistic diversity and safeguarding indigenous languages, including as part of the International Decade for Indigenous Languages. Some countries, referring to their national policies, pointed out that an earnest commitment has been made at the national level towards safeguarding and revitalizing indigenous languages. The need for a systematic documentation of indigenous languages was recognized as an essential step towards their preservation and revitalization, along with proactive policy measures intended to acknowledge these languages and foster their practice and transmission.

A broad scope of national or local public policies and measures were presented in that regard – including dedicated national acts, action plans or policy papers – with the aim to promote and document linguistic diversity and multilingualism including through comprehensive repositories or enhanced linguistic research, empowering communities to safeguard their languages notably through language learning resources, providing adequate and community-owned funding mechanisms, and enhancing partnerships and collaborations to enable utilisation of indigenous languages in public service delivery, among other outcomes. These policy efforts have already yielded positive results, as reflected by the increased practice of indigenous languages reported by some speakers further to the implementation of the afore-mentioned policies.

As per the 8th Schedule of the Indian Constitution, India has about 22 official languages.

The acute threats on indigenous languages – many of which face risks of extinction in a near future – were particularly underlined, calling for urgent safeguarding measures. Some countries reported up to 75% of registered indigenous languages as endangered, highlighting that none of them could be considered without risk. The lack of intergenerational transmission and the persisting marginalization of indigenous languages were recalled as key issues. In that regard, the lasting impact of discriminatory policies during the colonial era, promoting cultural and linguistic assimilation and undermining indigenous languages and practices, was highlighted by some speakers.
AUSTRALIA

The 2022 First Nations Languages Policy Partnership seeks to support the transmission of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander language, notably enabling their utilization in public service delivery through enhanced local partnerships between local language centres and health of early childhood education services.

BRAZIL

A national public policy is in place to promote and document linguistic diversity.

CANADA

National Policies towards Preserving and Revitalizing Indigenous Languages

As part of the implementation of the International Decade of Indigenous Languages, Canada has embarked upon revitalizing and strengthening indigenous languages. A majority of the 70 languages spoken by Indigenous peoples from First Nations, Inuit and Métis are considered at risk. Against this backdrop, the 2019 Indigenous Languages Act is intended to support Indigenous groups to reclaim, revitalize, maintain and strengthen their Indigenous languages. The development of more sustainable, predictable and community owned funding models to support indigenous languages is an important aspect of this Act.

Advancing access to federal services in indigenous languages is another component of the national policy, notably manifested by the creation of a dedicated senior level steering committee gathering 15 government agencies.

Finally, a National Action Plan is being developed to empower indigenous communities, including youth, in shaping their vision for the Decade and accelerate the implementation of the 2019 Act.

G20 Members and Invitee nations outlined their commitment towards strengthening national frameworks pertaining to the safeguarding of living heritage. The importance to enshrine within national policy frameworks the safeguarding of intangible heritage, but also more broadly the recognition of cultural diversity and cultural rights, was particularly underlined. Some countries reported longstanding national policy mechanisms in that regard, while others have stressed the need for a comprehensive approach to cultural policy making, addressing culture as a unified sector.

In view of the transversal, cross-cutting nature of living heritage, cutting across several policy areas, the need for an integrated policy approach was particularly brought to the fore. Such an approach considers the interplay of various elements of culture – from language, music, and traditional crafts to beliefs, rituals, and social practices – and their collective contribution to the identity, vibrancy, and resilience of communities. Echoing the multifaceted potential of living heritage for societal development and sustainable development prospects, participants argued for its explicit inclusion in broader policy objectives and frameworks, such as health, food security, social cohesion, environmental protection, education or peace building among others.

The need to effectively translate such integrated approaches into actual policymaking was particularly underlined. In that regard, forging effective and innovative modalities was highlighted by one speaker as both critical and
potential challenging. In that context, fostering inter-ministerial cooperation and transversal working modalities across relevant institutions was underlined as critical and exemplified by several national policy mechanisms introduced by speakers. Beyond institutional mechanisms, other policy processes should be looked at creatively with a view to enable such cross-fertilization across the different policy domains, building on the power of living heritage.

Countries shared examples of dedicated policy measures aimed at enabling the safeguarding of living heritage. Some countries referred to national laws specifically dedicated to the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage, while others indicated that intangible heritage was encompassed within national framework laws dedicated to cultural heritage across its different components. As underlined by speakers, these policy frameworks have often been shaped across time, encompassing successive revisions which reflect conceptual or operational shifts in policymaking. Some participants underlined the development of comprehensive multi-year national plans and strategies targeting living heritage, testifying to a strong, prospective policy engagement.

**FRANCE**

The body in charge of advising the Minister of Culture on the implementation of the UNESCO 2003 Convention comprises representatives from different ministries, including the Ministry of Agriculture and Food.

**REPUBLIC OF KOREA**

Building on the outcomes of the 2017–2021 national plan, a second 5-year plan was launched in 2022 with a view to ensure sustainable safeguarding and transmission of intangible heritage in a context of social and demographic changes. Strategies include policy reforms, networking, creative transmission, educational content development to enhance public awareness.

**JAPAN**

The 1950 Law for the Protection of Cultural Property, as the foundation of the national policy, has been strengthened through successive amendments intended notably to encompass intangible folk cultural heritage, skills and techniques related to the protection of cultural heritage and, more recently, the cultural landscape.

The need to engage local communities in inventorying intangible cultural heritage was underlined as a particularly critical step, with a view to enhance knowledge and recognition of intangible cultural heritage. In this context, countries shared examples of national inventory mechanisms, some of which were reported to be anchored in long-standing national systems. The importance of a community-based, bottom-up approach was particularly brought to the fore, with participants underlining that inventory processes should be designed and implemented by concerned communities – a principle which is also foundational to the 2003 Convention. Building on afore-mentioned inventorying processes, some
participants also shared experience on the development of community-owned safeguarding plans intended to support the transmission and practice of living heritage, including through its continuous adaptation and by fostering its impact on communities’ livelihoods and resilience.

**EGYPT**

A national system for documenting and inventorying intangible cultural heritage is in place since 1957.

**TÜRKIYE**

Two complementary national inventories are in place, targeting respectively intangible cultural heritage and living human treasures. Inventorying relies on decentralized processes, through intangible cultural heritage boards established in each province.

Likewise, the importance to invest in training and capacity building, while also enabling the exchange of good practices, was highlighted as critical. Overall, capacity building efforts should target not only national institutions in charge of living heritage, but also other relevant cultural institutions with a view to enable a comprehensive approach. As underlined by some countries, training activities should also directly engage bearers’ communities themselves. Enabling the exchange of good practices and strengthened relationships between public authorities and dedicated training or research institutions, were equally outlined as equally critical towards informing the shaping of public policy mechanisms pertaining to the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage.

**ITALY**

Public policy measures are intended to raise communities’ awareness on the importance of living heritage for sustainability through capacity building programmes, knowledge sharing activities, exchange of good practices and empowerment of local communities.

Several countries reported on their engagement in the implementation of the UNESCO 2003 Convention, highlighting its relevance to strengthening national frameworks pertaining to the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage through community led processes. Capacity building and international assistance mechanisms available as part of the Convention were underlined as levers to support the development of national frameworks dedicated to the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage. Some countries called for enhanced ratification of the Convention, while other encouraged the operationalization of its operational instruments, particularly the Ethical principles through dedicated frameworks, with a view to addressing some of the challenges ahead, including issues linked with the misappropriation of intangible cultural heritage.

**FRANCE**

The country applies the 2003 Convention in domestic law in due respect with the 2015 Ethical principles. Consequently, practices which are deemed incompatible with sustainable development criteria may not be included in the national inventory of living heritage.
Most speakers underlined the vital importance to ensure the empowerment and ownership of bearer communities in the safeguarding of their heritage as an ethical principle, also echoing one of the core concepts of the UNESCO 2003 Convention. Living heritage bearers and practitioners should be the primary custodians of their intangible heritage, ensuring its identification, inventorying and safeguarding. Some participants underlined that such grassroots experience are also likely to inform the design and implementation of national mechanisms, as exemplified notably in the field of crafts or food, by providing inspiration and operational insights. Leaning from the communities should be a guiding principle for public policies dedicated to living heritage.

Echoing this ethical principle, activities and processes related to the safeguarding of cultural heritage should rely fully on communities themselves, as was pointed by several speakers. With respect to indigenous living heritage, in particular, the need to ensure that communities are fully onboard and aware of processes, mechanisms and frameworks to sustain their living heritage was strongly evidenced. In that regard, some countries referred explicitly to the need to acknowledge indigenous peoples’ practices and forms of self-organization, and ensure prior, free and informed consent, when designing and implementing policies and initiatives in the field of intangible cultural heritage. A strong call to engage in capacity building of cultural bearers – including towards supporting entrepreneurship or harnessing new technologies – was also underlined.
governments and bearer communities’ efforts in safeguarding their intangible heritage, including through the provision of models for sustainable community development. Some countries highlighted national policy mechanisms aimed at incentivising communities’ engagement through specific benefits, including tax exemptions or priority given when participating in festivals, workshops, and exhibitions. Participants also shared examples of policies aimed at building capacities not only of communities, but also of heritage professionals to enable them to work with these communities to safeguard their living heritage.

Overall, the importance of living heritage to forge inclusive social development pathways was underlined across the discussions, including in light of the aforementioned community-based approach. Socio-cultural practices, linked in particular to food and gastronomy, were reported as essential to supporting social cohesion and interactions. In the face of social inequalities, discrimination, and marginalization, the safeguarding of living heritage was highlighted as a powerful tool for fostering social inclusion, by acknowledging the diverse cultural identities within a society and promoting mutual respect and understanding. As highlighted by some speakers, safeguarding intangible cultural heritage also allows to give voices to more vulnerable or marginalized communities, thus allowing the implementation of cultural rights more broadly. A number of examples were presented in that regard, notably as regards the safeguarding of the living heritage of people of African descent.

Participants outlined ways to harness living heritage to sustain livelihoods and economic development, while also contributing to sustainable consumption and production patterns. The emphasis was notably on promoting community-owned market-driven solutions, notably in the field of crafts or food as demonstrated by several examples. Such initiatives support community professionalization and enable distribution, including at an international level. The importance was also laid on promoting circular economy and enhanced employment opportunities within the communities for an inclusive economic development, while also reaching out to mainstream markets beyond niche audiences.

CHINA

Tea making, processing and sharing has been developed for thousands of years as a social practice. Involving a wide range of practitioners and stakeholders, it is key to intergenerational transmission and social cohesion, while also spurring economic growth and sustaining livelihoods, including for vulnerable populations, and supporting environmental protection more broadly.

REGIONAL CENTRE FOR THE SAFEGUARDING OF THE INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE OF LATIN AMERICA (CRESPIAL)

A project was launched to support capacity building for the safeguarding of the Afro-descendant intangible cultural heritage in Central American countries and Cuba. The project will identify processes linked to living heritage of people of African descent and map relevant initiatives, with a view to build capacity of public managers and community leaders in safeguarding such heritage.
ARGENTINA
The Market of Traditional Arts and Crafts of Argentina (MATRA) and the Cultural Industries Market of Argentina (MICA) are intended to support communities’ professionalization and enable distribution, including at the international level.

Ensuring the economic viability of living heritage for its communities, including by investing in skills development, was underlined as critical to the safeguarding process itself. The need to ensure direct benefits for communities themselves, notably in terms of livelihoods and job creation, was underlined as critical. As underlined by some speakers, such process should be proactively supported by public policies, in a context where experience shows that communities are often deprived from the economic benefits of their living heritage. In that context, some participants placed emphasis on reviving skills and knowledge related to the conservation of cultural heritage, with a view to sustaining youth employment and livelihoods. The importance to strengthen entrepreneurial capacities within bearer communities, notably indigenous communities, was equally brought to the fore.

INDONESIA
Developing of a Sustainable Food Market Ecosystem

Javara Indonesia works across the supply chain to sustain Indonesia’s forgotten food biodiversity heritage by delivering it to national and international markets. Driven by a grassroot approach involving farmers, fishers and artisans – including from indigenous communities – the company supports the development of a sustainable food market ecosystem, from production to supply. 600 products are exported to 20 countries around the world. Particular focus is laid on sustaining innovation and entrepreneurship, as well as renewing the storytelling on living heritage. Looking forward, cross-sectoral collaborations between policymakers, grassroot organizations and the private sector are called upon to sustain such ecosystems.

EUROPEAN UNION
The EU-funded Cash for Work project, implemented by UNESCO in Yemen, seeks to revive skills and know-how related with the conservation of cultural heritage with a view to sustain youth employment and livelihoods.

Culture without economic development and economic development without culture cannot really survive.

JAYA JAITLY
PRESIDENT,
DASTKARI HAAT SAMITI
Traditional tea processing techniques and associated social practices in China
Playa del Carmen, Mexico
JodieWangss/Shutterstock.com
In the same spirit, enabling **renewed narratives** on living heritage, including through innovative alliances across the cultural ecosystems, was considered an **important perspective**, as exemplified by several interventions. The need to innovate the narratives linked to intangible heritage towards more explicit linkages with creativity and innovation was underlined as critical with a view to reach out to a broader audience and enable living heritage to adapt continuously to fast-evolving societies and lifestyles – an aspect which is intrinsic to the notion of living heritage itself. In that area, some countries shared innovative examples of cross-fertilizing collaborations between living heritage bearers on the one hand, notably craftsmen, and creators on the other hand, notably designers. Such collaborations were underlined as mutually beneficial to both the creation and safeguarding processes, also demonstrating living heritage’s relevance in contemporary societies.

**SINGAPORE**

Craft x Design: Blending Tradition and Modernity in Singapore’s Living Heritage

The National Heritage Board curated the “Craft x Design” exhibition to showcase innovative collaborations between local craft practitioners and designers, combining traditional and modern methods in furniture, fashion, and metalware. An 8-month process fostered understanding and appreciation, benefiting both parties. Traditional practitioners shared knowledge, while designers gained insights into cultural heritage for their future work. This showcases living heritage’s relevance in contemporary times.

However, escalating threats associated with the **misappropriation and decontextualization** of living heritage in a market context were highlighted, impacting both the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage and its economic viability. It was underlined that commodification of living heritage can lead to cultural misappropriation, whereby cultural elements are used out of their original context, often without consent or acknowledgement by concerned communities. Additionally, when cultural elements become commercial commodities, traditions bearers, the true custodians of these practices, can be marginalized, discouraging the continuation and the very viability of these practices, particularly when they are under-remunerated. Importantly, not all living heritage is suitable for commercialisation. Some cultural practices hold deep spiritual or social significance, and their commercial exploitation can degrade cultural integrity, thus also infringing upon cultural rights and leading to misrepresentation.

**“**

 Persistent gaps in intellectual property laws have left ICH elements and its communities largely unprotected against unauthorized commercial appropriation. As this appropriation often continues to be legally permissible, communities have little or no recourse against the appropriators with little or no negotiating powers, depriving them of the economic and social benefits related to their heritage, and its associated knowledge.

**DR. RITU SETHI**

**FOUNDER-TRUSTEE, CRAFT REVIVAL TRUST**
In that regard, some countries shared specific experiences aimed at framing the commercialisation of living heritage through ethical practices and principles. Such experiences are anchored in rights-based approaches, recognizing the critical importance to protect collective cultural rights of concerned communities, as more specifically pointed at by some countries. Such community-owned processes involve notably the implementation of cooperative mechanisms, the provision of appropriate community equipment, the enforcement of fair trade practices, as well as in some cases a broader reflection on ways to frame equitable partnerships between communities and the private sector, including through dedicated guidelines or legal mechanisms as relevant. While such processes shall be community-owned, the essential enabling function of national authorities was also underlined as essential, particularly in view of legal gaps pertaining to intellectual property.

A number of prospective recommendations were reformulated with a view to address this topic in more systemic ways. The need to enhance collaboration between tourism, trade, culture and education ministries, as well as ensuring a dialogue platform between policymakers and the private sector on this issue, inclusive of community bearers, was put to the fore. In view of the gaps in intellectual property frameworks, advancing international legal instruments was underlined as critical to provide legal protection to communities against misappropriation of their cultural heritage, building on existing national and international frameworks and policy measures as relevant. Bridging legal instruments, ethical approaches and cooperative engagement is particularly critical. Some speakers called for the development of international guidelines, supported by related consultative mechanisms, building on good practices developed at the national level. Others outlined that the Operational Directives and Ethical Principles of the UNESCO 2003 Convention could inform the preparation of guidelines at the national, regional or international levels for cultural and economically sustainable use of living heritage. Building data on risks linked to commercialisation, developing planning tools to support communities towards a sustainable use of their living heritage, as well as strengthening entrepreneurial capacities are also among the ways forward highlighted by speakers.

MEXICO

Promoting ethical commercialisation of textile handicrafts

As a response to the pervasive problem of misappropriation of indigenous Mexican symbols and designs by local and foreign corporations, the Cultural Secretary of Mexico developed in 2021 the project “Original, a gathering of Mexican textiles”. This permanent cultural movement supported by the development of local public policies aims to promote ethical commercialisation of handicrafts and safeguard the collective rights of artisan groups. The movement’s strategy entails recognizing the sociocultural and economic importance of artisan production through a range of initiatives, such as community visits, the creation of an advisory board, runways for jewelry and textiles, and a business room that facilitates the development of fair partnerships with artisans. Moreover, the project has delivered more than 78 decentralized trainings to date, and a yearly event showcasing 1000 artisans from 317 communities from all over Mexico. Original is groundbreaking example of a country’s response to protect and promote cultural integrity.
Overall, addressing the complex, multifaceted challenges that communities face in a market environment was outlined as a complex combination of law, ethics, and cooperative engagement, a perspective particularly underscored by one expert. While laws are important to frame communities’ engagement and to delineate the conditions of a more equitable framework, these should be complemented by other policy and cooperative mechanisms. An ethical perspective is needed, relying on a rights-based approach to culture, whereby all communities shall be entitled to access and benefit from their living heritage in equitable ways, building on principles of human dignity and social justice. Meanwhile, designing specific policy mechanisms and operation instruments is equally critical to underpin such processes and effectively enable the multiple cooperative mechanisms needed between communities, policymakers and civil society or private sector entities. This multi-pronged approach helps in crafting both broad strategies and targeted interventions to assist communities in addressing their concerns.

Across the webinar, speakers called upon an integrated, cross-sectoral approach, engaging more systemic linkages between the safeguarding of living heritage and other policy domains. A broad spectrum of cross-fertilizing linkages were brought to the fore by participants and exemplified through practical examples, involving notably climate action, biodiversity protection, disaster risk preparedness, food security and agriculture, health, social inclusion, education, health and well-being, or urban development among others.

Harnessing in more systemic ways the role of intangible heritage towards climate action, biodiversity protection and disaster risk management was equally outlined as critical. Across the discussions, the intrinsic relationships between cultural and biological diversity were brought to the fore. It was equally acknowledged that culture has a profound impact on the sustainable connections between humans, nature, and the environment, with the protection of the natural environment often closely linked to safeguarding a community’s cosmology and worldviews. Such linkages are deeply enshrined in a broad range of living heritage practices, as reflected through many of the examples shared by participants.
Intangible heritage should thus be encompassed in mainstream climate action and disaster risk recovery processes, building on existing international mechanisms and frameworks. Overall, the intrinsic linkages between cultural and climate diplomacy were brought to the fore. The importance of acknowledging and further harnessing the role of traditional knowledge for climate action was particularly recalled. A number of national examples were shared in that regard, from the development of public incentive mechanisms, to the introduction of environmental impact guidelines in cultural policies, with a view to support civil engagement and ownership towards climate action. Likewise, several examples of cross-sectoral alliances and partnerships intended to anchor living heritage in environmental action were introduced. Such linkages are increasingly documented and analysed, as exemplified by a number of studies and reports developed at national, regional or international levels.

**EUROPEAN UNION**

The 2022 report “Strengthening cultural heritage resilience for climate change. Where the European Green Deal meets cultural heritage” documents the contribution of cultural heritage, including living heritage, to climate action and includes a compilation of good practices from 27 EU Member States.

The **interlinkages between intangible cultural heritage and education** were also discussed. Some speakers referred in this context to the ongoing elaboration by UNESCO of a Global Framework on Culture and Arts Education, expanding the relevance of education notably through cultural resources and capital. A number of national initiatives targeting education and awareness raising were shared by participating countries and organizations, from developing curricula dedicated to living heritage, to crafting cross-sectoral partnership to bridge culture and education policies, or investing in technical and vocational education and training in the field of living heritage, among others.

**BRAZIL**

The “Green Scholarship” programme enables traditional masters and community leaders to promote sustainable management of natural resources or reforestation actions as a part of heritage education actions.

**FRANCE**

A partnership has been established between the Ministry of Culture and the Federation of regional natural parks to identify and safeguard living heritage practiced within regional parks.

Equally, the growing role of museums towards strengthening linkages between living heritage and education was emphasized across the discussions. The capacity of museums to bring about numerous education outcomes in the field of physics, chemistry of materials or environment among others, was particularly recalled. Speakers also outlined the crucial responsibility of cultural institutions in fostering more inclusive cultural narratives, particularly in a post–colonial context or to enable more systemic acknowledgement of indigenous communities’ knowledge. A growing commitment of museums was reported in that regard and exemplified notably by collaborative mechanisms,
engaging communities in curation or research activities. Examples of integrated learning approaches pertaining to living heritage were also outlined by several participants.

RUSSIA
The Russian House of Folk Art has implemented more than 500 initiatives targeting education or awareness raising.

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES
The Abu Dhabi Department of Culture and Tourism has created an intangible heritage curriculum that is disseminated throughout schools.

EGYPT
A protocol was signed between the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Education and Technical Education to integrate intangible cultural heritage in the education curriculum.

Some speakers underlined the critical importance of intangible cultural heritage for health and well-being. The need to further acknowledge traditional medicinal knowledge and indigenous practices within healthcare policies and practices, thus also fostering health care sustainability more broadly, was equally underlined. Across several presentations, culture and the arts were outlined as playing a pivotal role in promoting health and well-being, both on an individual and societal level. Such impact has become increasingly evident to policy-makers, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. Culture influences individual health behaviours, beliefs, and reactions to health interventions, while also fostering community connections, personal development, and mental resilience. Recognizing the cultural contexts can lead to the design of more effective and tailored health policies, conducive to enhancing health outcomes, decrease health disparities, and promote a healthier society. Moreover, culture and creativity can facilitate healing for a variety of health challenges, including recovery from trauma by actively fostering reconciliation and resilience.
WHO’s European regional action framework for behavioural and cultural insights for health was adopted in 2022 and spans until 2027. It underlines the significance of behavioural and cultural understanding in forming health policies and practices, encouraging countries to integrate such insights into their health strategies, thereby promoting a more comprehensive and effective approach to health and well-being.

A number of policy developments aimed at harnessing living heritage for health were presented. Several countries introduced national initiatives on living heritage encompassing a health component, notably as regards the inclusion of traditional medicine in mainstream health curricula. Building evidence on the benefits of living heritage, and culture more broadly, on health and well-being was further called for, including through the collection of good practices. Such intrinsic linkages between culture and health are increasingly documented, as reflected by examples of studies and reports shared across the webinar.

The 2022 CultureForHealth report provides a scoping review to synthesise existing evidence on the positive effect of arts and cultural activities on health and well-being, while also outlining challenges and providing policy recommendations.

The country issues professional licenses in the fields of traditional, complementary and alternative medicine to control and monitor traditional medicine methods.

Some countries emphasised on the importance of engaging the youth through raising awareness activities on living heritage. Recognizing the potential impact of intangible heritage on young people’s development and well-being, speakers invited to invest in effective methods for conveying the value and importance of living heritage to the younger generation, including through renewed narratives, and extended linkages between living heritage and creativity. Such engagement with living heritage from an early age appears to imbue the youth with a sense of purpose and direction, encouraging them to pursue positive life paths. Several youth-led or youth-focused initiatives were introduced by speakers, underlining the importance to harness new technologies to reach out to younger audiences, while also encompassing education in more systemic ways in formal and non-formal education.

The National Institute for Cultural Orientation (NICO) establishes youth culture clubs across secondary schools to teach local languages and assist communities in mapping their living heritage.
Likewise, the contribution of living heritage to food security and sovereignty was underlined by a significant number of speakers. Some countries highlighted notably the importance of indigenous farming practices and knowledge to address contemporary agricultural challenges, notably linked with the impact of climate change, while others put forth the importance of food culture for social cohesion and national cultural identity. A broad diversity of programmes and initiatives were introduced. Some countries have bolstered cross-sectoral alliances or dialogue mechanisms to bring closer cultural and agricultural policies. Others are engaged in promoting living heritage practices linked with agriculture or food, underlining their multiple benefits across the sustainable development spectrum. In order to safeguard traditional agricultural and food systems and enable equitable sharing of benefits arising from the use of genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge, some countries also called for an open dialogue among the cultural, agricultural and environmental sectors.

**ITALY**

The Mediterranean Diet involves skills, knowledge and traditions concerning notably crops, harvesting, fishing, or food conservation, processing, preparation and consumption, which reflect the contribution of living heritage to health and well-being, social inclusion as well as cultural and biological diversity.

**SAUDI ARABIA**

The FAO Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GHIAS) programme was launched in 2022 to protect and share local traditional agricultural practices, thus contributing to climate adaptation. The 78 GHIAS sites across 24 countries act as living, evolving systems of human communities in an intricate relationship with their territory, cultural or agricultural landscape and wider social environment.

**BRAZIL**

Agricultural practices such as hedge braiding or grassland irrigation help substantially increase biodiversity and better regulate water balances, evidencing how living heritage can contribute to a sustainable future.

**THE NETHERLANDS**

The Intangible Heritage Department promotes an open dialogue among the cultural, agricultural and environmental sectors, in order to safeguard traditional agricultural and food systems and enable equitable sharing of benefits arising from the use of genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge. Some countries have bolstered cross-sectoral alliances or dialogue mechanisms to bring closer cultural and agricultural policies. Others are engaged in promoting living heritage practices linked with agriculture or food, underlining their multiple benefits across the sustainable development spectrum. In order to safeguard traditional agricultural and food systems and enable equitable sharing of benefits arising from the use of genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge, some countries also called for an open dialogue among the cultural, agricultural and environmental sectors.

**FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION (FAO)**

The FAO Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GHIAS) programme was launched in 2022 to protect and share local traditional agricultural practices, thus contributing to climate adaptation. The 78 GHIAS sites across 24 countries act as living, evolving systems of human communities in an intricate relationship with their territory, cultural or agricultural landscape and wider social environment.
Harnessing museums to support engagement in food heritage

The Cencalli museum in Mexico City has engaged various initiatives related to food culture, including hosting the agroecological market El Solar, creating audiovisual documentation of food heritage and organizing the national contest “¿A qué sabe la patria?” (What does the homeland taste like?). The museum also hosts permanent exhibitions to educate the public on issues related to food biodiversity, techniques, art and culture around ancestral and contemporary culinary traditions. In addition, projects were engaged during the COVID-19 pandemic inviting traditional cooks to recover recipes, building on traditional knowledge, thus also coping with the impact of the health crisis.

Throughout the webinar, discussions consistently underscored the crucial role of research and knowledge in safeguarding intangible cultural heritage. Recognizing the potential contribution of living heritage to sustainable development, participants emphasized the importance of developing a strong evidence base to inform decision-making, shape effective policies, and highlight the value of living heritage towards sustainable development prospects. Challenges linked to the lack of quantitative evidence as regards the contribution of living heritage to the national economy and, more broadly, to all components of sustainable development, from climate action to social inclusion, were particularly underlined. Some participants called upon deepening the understanding of the cross-cutting linkages between living heritage and a diversity of other domains such as livelihoods, lifestyles, faith, social practices, local governance or environmental sustainability among others.

Several initiatives aimed at building knowledge at different levels were introduced. Among them are notably the establishment of dedicated research institutes and UNESCO chairs, the allocation of public funding for specific research programs, the organization of webinars and training activities, the public commissioning of publications or books on living heritage or indigenous knowledge targeting the broad public, or the promotion of collaborations between researchers, practitioners as well as communities. Likewise, a broad spectrum of research and documentation projects were outlined, some being of a more generic nature across living heritage, other targeting more specialized areas such as for example the classification of indigenous seeds or the impact of lime making on climate mitigation among others. Across their interventions, participants highlighted the benefits of such research projects, notably in terms of enabling livelihoods and supporting safeguarding efforts.

Looking forward, the conversation unfolded on future areas of policy engagement in terms of knowledge building. The opportunity to develop an international statistical framework, allowing to monitor the contribution of living heritage to sustainable development, while taking into account the specificity of intangible heritage, was put to the fore. Some speakers underlined, in that regard, the need to engage bold efforts towards capacity building on cultural statistics. Overall, the call for increased investment in research and data collection at all levels – national, regional, and international – was a recurring theme, highlighting the necessity of an evidence-driven approach to
effectively safeguard intangible heritage in a fast-evolving policy landscape. To that effect, building sustained and systemic relationships between public authorities, notably ministries of culture, and academia was highlighted as an important pathway.

**FRANCE**

The Ministry of Culture supported the launch in 2022 of the UNESCO Chair dedicated to living heritage and sustainable development to address knowledge gaps. A webinar series and a training seminar on the links between living heritage, health and well-being were organized.

**JAPAN**

The International Research Centre for Intangible Cultural Heritage in the Asia-Pacific Region conducts multi-partner research projects to document the role of living heritage towards building sustainable and resilient societies, targeting notably disaster risk reduction, COVID-19 response strategies and the contribution to Sustainable Development Goals.

**SOUTH AFRICA**

A series of books on indigenous knowledge holders have been commissioned by the National Department of Sports, Arts and Culture to document knowledge and skills embedded in living heritage and support intergenerational transmission.

**UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**

Classifying indigenous seeds to support livelihoods

The University of Arizona is engaged in classifying indigenous seeds. Building on the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act, the initiative aims to ensure respect for the intellectual property of indigenous communities and to build knowledge on traditional agriculture.

**ICOM**

The International Journal of Intangible Heritage (IJIH) was initiated by ICOM in 2004, in collaboration with the National Folk Museum of Korea and ICOM Korea. As the world’s first international academic journal on this subject, IJIH aims to enhance global comprehension of intangible heritage and facilitate the dissemination of research and professional practices.

**SPAIN**

Green Insights: Unlocking the Sustainable Power of Traditional Lime-Making

Research undertaken on the traditional craftsmanship of lime-making in Morón de la Frontera has revealed its ability to absorb carbon dioxide, making it a sustainable industry from production to application. This exemplifies the importance for public authorities to invest in research, through expanded alliances with academia, to better understand the benefits of living heritage for sustainable prospects.
Speakers underlined the importance to harness the potential of digital technologies towards the safeguarding of living heritage, notably to support documentation, inventory and archiving, sustain education and awareness raising, or expand tourism opportunities. In that regard, the potential of digital technologies for the safeguarding of living heritage should be used as a means to engage the youth in using technologies to enhance safeguarding and transmission. A number of examples were shared on the utilization of new technologies such as motion capture or 3D scanning for digitalising and archiving living heritage. Leveraging metaverse technology and creation of digital platforms in collaboration with local communities and master practitioners to safeguard living heritage was also highlighted. Meanwhile, the challenges raised by the utilization of digital technologies were also discussed, notably enhanced risks of decontextualization. Strengthened collaboration with academia and the private sector, was called for with a few to enhance applications of digital technologies to living heritage, including in the tourism industry or for education purposes, thus expanding ways to learn and experience living heritage.

**ITALY**

The digital presentation of the manual bell ringing in local museums provides visual, tactile, olfactory and sound itineraries, allowing youth to learn about physics, chemistry of materials, and music, while supporting the transmission of this living heritage practice.

**SAUDI ARABIA**

The Heritage Commission is developing digital tools and platforms aimed at preserving and promoting traditional cultural practices and knowledge, particularly among the youth. One such initiative involves engaging young adults in a metaverse, where they can explore heritage sites, complete tasks, and answer heritage-related questions. As a reward, they earn NFTs that mimic artefacts discovered during excavations in Saudi Arabia. Additionally, other efforts include the creation of a digital platform that serves as a valuable resource for traditional practices and working in collaboration with local communities and master practitioners towards safeguarding these valuable traditions.

**REPUBLIC OF KOREA**

The National University of Cultural Heritage is engaged in digitalising and archiving living heritage, using the video conferencing, e-learning, motion capture and 3D scanning, while also expanding collaboration with business partners.

**BANGLADESH**

An online platform is being developed to host the inventory of intangible cultural heritage.

Empowering Culture for Sustainability: Exchanging Ideas, Implementing Practices and Joining Forces across the G20
Finally, speakers called upon expanded partnership and collaborative actions, bringing together communities and grassroots civil society organizations, policymakers as well as academia and the private sector. More systemic collaboration with knowledge organizations, in particular, was deemed critical. Sustained engagement on the topic of living heritage was called for as part of the G20 culture workstream. The importance of taking into consideration regional cultural strategies that build upon living heritage was also put to the fore. Several such examples were introduced, touching upon various dimensions of living heritage such as indigenous languages, the protection of traditional knowledge and access benefit sharing, or the linkages between living heritage and ocean science for example. Sustaining regional cultural markets building on the exchange of living heritage products – including through enabling policy frameworks towards mobility and trade or the investment in regional cultural events and festivals – was equally brought to the fore and several examples were outlined in that regard.

**AFRICAN UNION**

The African Union plans to create a Great Museum of Africa to be hosted in Algeria as part of the First Ten-Year Implementation Plan of its Agenda 2063. The Museum is intended to showcase Africa plural culture through its tangible and intangible expressions.

**THE PACIFIC COMMUNITY (SPC)**

The Pacific Regional Culture Strategy 2022–2032 is a 10-year regional policy framework that recognizes culture as a standalone sustainable development priority and a cross-cutting driver for development. The strategy touches on various aspects of living heritage such as indigenous languages, protection of traditional knowledge and access benefit sharing. The strategy also explores linkages between living heritage and other domains such as cultural and creative industries, ocean science, climate action, food security, education, and social inclusion.
List of participants
Harnessing Living Heritage for a Sustainable Future

G20 Members

Mr. Francisco Taiana, Director of International Cooperation, Ministry of Culture, Argentina

Ms. Karina Lester, Co-Manager, Senior Aboriginal Language Worker, Mobile Language Team, First Languages Australia

Ms. Desirée Tozi, Director of the Department of Cooperation and Promotion of the National Historical and Artistic Heritage Institute of Brazil (IPHAN), Brazil

Ms. Amanda Shannon, Director, Policy Directorate, Indigenous Languages Branch, Department of Canadian Heritage, Government of Canada, Canada

Mr. Gang Zhu, Associate Research Fellow, Institute of Ethnic Literature, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, China

Mr. Olivier Fontaine, Team Leader International Cultural Relations, European Union

Ms. Lily Martinet, Project Officer for Intangible Cultural Heritage at the Delegation for Inspection, Research and Innovation – Ministry of Culture, France

Ms. Wiebke Ahrndt, German Uebersee Museum in Bremen and President of the German Museum Association, Germany

Ms. Jaya Jaitly, President, Dastkari Haat Samiti, India

Dr. Ritu Sethi, Founder-Trustee, Craft Revival Trust, India

Ms. Helianti Hilman, Founder Javara Indonesia

Ms. Elena Sinibaldi, Official Cultural Anthropologist – National Focal Point UNESCO 2003 and 2005 Conventions – Ministry of Culture of Italy, Italy

Ms. Yoko Nojima, Head, Research Section, International Research Centre for Intangible Cultural Heritage in the Asia-Pacific Region (IRCI), Japan

Mr. Jesús Mendoza Mejia, Head of the Programme for the Preservation and Strengthening of Food Culture, Ministry of Culture, Mexico

Ms. Jieun Park, Korea National University of Cultural Heritage, Republic of Korea

Mr. Vladimir Aristarkhov, Director of the Likhachev Russian Research Institute for Cultural and Natural Heritage, Russia

Ms. Ebtisam Alwehaibi, Intangible Heritage General Manager, Heritage Commission, Ministry of Culture, Saudi Arabia

Ms. Cleon Noah, Director, Multilaterals and Resources, Department of Arts and Culture, South Africa

Ms. Wiebke Ahrndt, German Uebersee Museum in Bremen and President of the German Museum Association, Germany

Ms. Alisson Tickell, Director, Julie’s Bicycle, United Kingdom

Mr. Michael Kotutwa Johnson, Indigenous Resiliency centre, University of Arizona, Assistant Specialist, United States of America
Invitee Nations

Ms. Asma Ferdousi, Keeper, Bangladesh National Museum, Bangladesh

Ms. Nahla Emam, Advisor of the Minister of culture for intangible cultural heritage, Egypt

Mr. Shivajee Dowlutrao, Director, National Heritage Fund, Mauritius

Mr. Gábor Kozijn, Policy Advisor, Netherlands

Mr. Emmanuel Odekanyin, International Cultural Relations Department, Federal Ministry of Information and Culture, Nigeria

Ms. Maryam Nasser Alkhroooshi, Director of the Cultural Identity Department, Oman

Ms. Bernadette Yew, Senior Assistant Director of Heritage Policy and Research, National Heritage Board, Singapore

Ms. Marta Duarte, ICH Technician for the Spanish Ministry of Culture and Sport, Spain

Ms. Alya Alhazami, Senior Studies and Research Specialist, Ministry of Culture and Youth, United Arab Emirates

International Organizations

Ms. Vicensia Shule, Senior Cultural Officer, Department of Health, Humanitarian Affairs and Social Development. African Union

Ms. Veronica Ugarte Rivera, Director General, Regional Centre for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Latin America (CRESPIAL)

Ms. Aurelie Fernandez, Programme Specialist, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)

Ms. Lindsey Hook, Head of Culture, World Food Forum, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)

Mr. Joseph King, Senior Director, Office of the Director-General, International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM)


Ms. Ananya Bhattacharya, Member of ICOMOS International Scientific Committee on Cultural Tourism and ICOMOS Working Group on the SDGs, International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS)

Ms. Frances C. Vaka’uta, Team Leader Culture for Development, Pacific Community (SPC)

Mr. Tim Curtis, Secretary of the UNESCO 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, UNESCO

Ms. Fumiko Ohinata, Head of Programme Management Unit, Secretariat of the UNESCO 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, UNESCO

Ms. Harriet Deacon UNESCO facilitator for the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage

Ms. Janet Blake, Associate Professor of Law at the University of Shahid Beheshti, Persian Garden Institute for Living Heritage (Video Message)

Mr. Nils Fietje, Technical Officer, Behavioural and Cultural Insights Unit, World Health Organization (WHO)
PRIORITY III

Promotion of Cultural and Creative Industries and Creative Economy
Overview & Rationale

Over the past decades, the creative economy has grown to become one of the great powerhouses of our times, whose contribution to economic growth and employment, but also to sustainable development more broadly, is increasingly acknowledged around the world, stirring growing policy engagement at the national, regional and international levels. Its contribution to expansion of Global Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and share in global trade is only likely to increase as it intersects with the digital economy, e-commerce and the many opportunities emerging in this context. While the precise nature and scope of cultural and creative industries (CCI), and that of the creative economy can vary from one country to another, they are uncontestedly recognised around the world as a veritable engine for economic growth, employment and sustainable livelihoods.

Currently, the creative economy accounts for 3.1% of GDP making it among the most rapidly growing sectors of the world economy, and it employs more people aged 15–29 than any other sector. Export in cultural goods doubled in value from 2005 to US$ 271.7 billion in 2019, while that of cultural services doubled in value from 2006 to US$ 117.4 billion in 2019 (UNESCO, 2022). Moreover, the sector has created employment opportunities for nearly 50 million people across the globe and generated revenues of US $2.25 trillion. With the increased recognition of the weight of the creative sector, policy engagement has spurred across the different regions, as reflected in the almost two-fold rise of South-South trade in creative goods over the past two decades.

In 2020, South-South trade in creative goods represented 40.5% of creative exports by developing economies. The creative economy has been increasingly harnessed as a highly transformative and growth stimulating sector in emerging economies, leading to growing policy engagement across the different regions.

Cultural policies have evolved from a defensive approach to a more inclusive one, driven by the digital era’s transformative impact and a broader recognition of culture’s role in sustainable development. New technologies revolutionised how cultural industries create, produce, and disseminate content. However, fully integrating the creative sector’s specificity and economic power into public policy requires comprehensive structural adjustment of the cultural and creative sector, sustained investment, and a deeper understanding of its potential contributions to societal and economic growth that encompass fully the specificity of the creative sector.

The creative economy accounts for 3.1% of the Global GDP

UNESCO, 2022
Since the inclusion of culture in the G20 under the Presidency of Saudi Arabia in 2020, the cultural and creative economy has been a continuous area of policy discussions within the G20 culture workstream, testifying to the recognition of its uniquely and undisputed transformative impact as a driver of sustainable and inclusive growth. Across the successive presidencies, G20 Members have addressed the weight of the cultural and creative economy, highlighting, notably, the challenges and opportunities to harness the impact of the digital transformation, to invest in training and professionalisation, as well as to support inclusive growth. The recognition of such impact is explicitly enshrined in both the Rome Leaders Declaration under the Presidency of Italy (2021) and the Bali Declaration under the Presidency of Indonesia (2022). Such recognition by G20 Leaders carved the way to expand a sustained workstream dedicated to expanding reflection, collaboration and action in the creative economy across the upcoming presidencies.

**THE CREATIVE ECONOMY FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: A NEW MOMENTUM**

The adoption and progressive implementation of the UNESCO 2005 Convention for the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions in a growing number of G20 States has led the global community to better recognise, notably, the dual nature, both cultural and economic, of contemporary cultural expressions produced by artists and cultural professionals, including as regards cultural practitioners within communities and indigenous peoples. Shaping the design and implementation of policies and measures that support the creation, production, distribution of and access to cultural goods and services, while ensuring the adequate recognition, remuneration, social protection and intellectual property rights for artists and cultural professionals has become a matter of enhanced attention at the policy level. The 2005 Convention supports governments and civil society in the design and implementation of policy responses to the challenges of devising and adapting governance systems for the cultural and creative sectors that rely on a set of guiding principles including encompassing the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, of which the freedom to create; the sovereignty of each State to devise national policies and measures that are appropriate to their context which promote creation, production, distribution and access with regard to diverse cultural goods and services; the complementarity of economic and cultural aspects of development; and the equitable access, openness and balance, amongst other guiding principles.

With a view to sustain the steadfast growth of the cultural and creative sectors, States are encouraged to enable preferential treatment measures with a view to facilitate a balanced flow of cultural goods and services and promote the mobility of artists and cultural professionals across all regions globally so as to support the due integration of culture and the creative economy as a strategic dimension within sustainable development policies and international assistance programmes and strategies.

Acknowledging the important role that artists and cultural professionals play in society, encouraging creative expression and ensuring equitable treatment for artists and cultural professionals through the development of appropriate measures such as recognizing the status of artists is critical.
The MONDIACULT Declaration adopted by 150 States, in September 2022, issued an unprecedented call upon countries to support inclusive access to culture and participation in cultural life and its benefits as an ethical, social and economic imperative; to strengthen the economic and social rights of artists, cultural professionals and practitioners, facilitating their mobility and upholding their status, including by reinforcing intellectual property; to protect and promote artistic freedom and freedom of expression; and to foster the diversity of cultural contents, as well as linguistic diversity, thereby, shaping a broad approach to the respect for cultural rights.

CULTIVATING CREATIVE ECONOMIES: IDENTIFYING AND ADDRESSING LIMITATIONS

While the engagement towards the creative sector raises increasing interest of policymakers, a number of challenges and gaps remain to be addressed to fully harness the potential of the creative economy for economic growth and sustainable livelihoods. Likewise, the COVID-19 pandemic had a major disruptive impact on the sector, highlighting its pre-existing vulnerability while also exposing its critical importance for resilience, well-being and employment.

Policies need more than ever to factor in the nature and structure of the creative economy and its workforce. The creative economy usually operates with a unique structure, relying on networks of small- and medium-sized enterprises and freelance workers. However, this setup, combined with informality, poses a risk of excluding the cultural and creative industries from government support schemes. Within this sector, artists and cultural professionals, some of which operating informally, face significant challenges due to a high prevalence of non-standard work contracts, irregular incomes, and the need for secondary jobs. The fragmented landscape of the creative economy also creates gaps in labor and social protection, making it difficult to recognize their status, provide fair remuneration, and ensure social security.

Among the major challenges, put forward in the recent ILO Sectoral meeting on the Future of Work in the Art and Entertainment Sector (February 2023), are a strong reliance on informal cultural networks and institutions; the variation of regulation of the conditions of cultural practitioners; the wide range and diversity of workers involved in specific projects, with multiple, short-term contracts, freelancing and a variety of employment statuses, including an increasing resort to new and more flexible contractual arrangements, i.e., employee sharing, job-sharing, portfolio work.

As such, the complex nature of the cultural and creative industries also affects monitoring and data collection, hindering the accurate and measurement of cultural employment’s size and overall contribution to development. This has resulted in insufficient investment in cultural data production, collection, and analysis, significantly hampering the development of the creative economy. The lack of adequate monitoring leaves jobs unaccounted for in official labor force statistics, further impeding the development and assessment of these industries.

In this context, the need for greater collaboration between States in streamlining and monitoring analysis of the broad scope of the creative economy remains highly critical, notably, due to the dynamic evolution of the cultural and creative industries, particularly influenced by the digital transformation and the complex interplay of culture, economy, and technology. Consequently, a diverse range
of frameworks and measurement approaches have emerged over the past decade. This diversity of frameworks and measurement approaches hinders the analysis of global statistics from a comprehensive and integrated perspective which undermines the economic and social weight of the cultural and creative sectors globally. These variations in approaches to cultural and creative industries, the social and economic status of artists and the creative economy across different countries and international organisations speaks to the urgent necessity for greater mainstreaming, alignment and global collaboration in this area.

Furthermore, as a result of globalisation, the scope and uptake of cultural and creative industries has also expanded, due to fast-paced technological and social changes. Meanwhile, traditional trade in creative goods and services remains an important part of the local economies of many countries. As highlighted by UNESCO Report Culture and Public Policy for Sustainable Development, in some regions such as Asia, the creative economy can be a two-tier-economy. On the one hand, it can comprise fully-fledged, globalised cultural industries that are strongly connected with digitisation and, on the other, more locally-anchored, tradition-based cultural industries, such as crafts, which are heavily enshrined in the informal economy and local communities as testified in the G20 Bali Declaration (2022).

The digital transformation has been a game changer for the cultural and creative sectors, altering the operational context of the cultural and creative industries – including forms of creation, production, distribution and access – as well as their business models. Therefore, the protection of online linguistic and cultural diversity, ensuring inclusive access to culture and enabling the adequate remuneration of online cultural work prevail as challenges in the sector. Similarly, addressing the gaps in the status and socio-economic conditions of artists, craftspeople, and cultural professionals and practitioners, along with supporting their professionalisation and skills’ development, pose critical challenges that necessitate renewed policy engagement at the national, regional, and international levels.

**INNOVATIVE PATHWAYS: REALISING THE FULL POTENTIAL OF THE CULTURAL AND CREATIVE ECONOMY**

The cultural and creative sectors span across a broad spectrum of public policy sectors from culture to trade, tourism, digital, engineering, education and training, and planning. Considering the complex, multifaceted and transversal nature of the cultural and creative sectors, participatory, whole-of-government public policies must be developed, while further efforts may engage towards developing harmonised frameworks and approaches in the measurement of the creative economy and cultural and creative industries, as well as better adapted and streamlined monitoring instruments combined with a more systemic inter-ministerial cooperation – with a view to harness the full and multidimensional impact of the creative economy.

Public policy engagement needs to be proactively strengthened and reshaped to provide comprehensive, sustained, and effective support to the cultural and creative economy, while also ensuring more robust integration of the creative economy in country level sustainable development strategies. Addressing the current fragmentation of the policy mechanisms pertaining to the creative economy is of paramount importance to strengthen the latter. Providing an enabling environment for creative ecosystems to thrive and allowing the creative economy to be more resilient and sustainable in the face of future crises,
requires policy adaptation, which should encompass culture, trade, planning and finance.

Wider policy engagement towards the creative economy should also be matched by the adaptation of policy instruments, including funding and operational schemes. In most countries around the world, public funding towards the cultural and creative sector does not rise to the level of ambition formulated by policymakers, nor to the scope of economic and social benefits generated by the creative sector. Ensuring sustained and reliable public funding for cultural and creative industries – including through international or public-private partnerships or by improving the sustainability of existing economic models – is essential to ensure the resilience of the sector as a major contributor to sustainable societies and economies. Likewise, a robust alliance between public authorities, civil society and the private sector is also needed.

In a fast-evolving creative sector, continuously reshaped by the impact of the digital transformation which transforms value chains and business models, investing in the professionalisation and the adaptation of skills will be particularly critical to support cultural employment and decent work, while also fully harnessing the impact of the creative sector on economic growth and its broader contribution to sustainable development patterns. Cultural professionals and practitioners must be enabled to update their skillsets to ensure continued growth and development of the sector and improve working conditions and livelihoods. Therefore, access to adequate capacity building and trainings should be fostered, notably in such areas of the creative economy relating to advanced technology, engineering, and innovation such as design, digital creation, audiovisual and film.

Likewise, strengthening the status and socio-economic conditions of artists, craftspeople and cultural professionals and practitioners, supporting the professionalisation of the latter remain critical endeavours at the national, regional and international levels, also with a view to anchoring a broader understanding of the value of the creative economy among policymakers and business on the weight and dynamism of the sector.

INTEGRATING CULTURE IN THE G20 AGENDA: INDIA’S LEGACY

In view of the widely acknowledged impact of the creative economy on inclusive growth and employment, and the specific challenges encountered in the context of the digital transformation, the vision of the G20 Culture Working Group under India’s Presidency is to mobilise the G20 Membership, building on G20 countries’ leadership in the global creative economy, towards (i) supporting and monitoring the contribution of cultural and creative industries to global GDP and the international exchange of goods and services, and to sustainable development more broadly, including through strengthened monitoring and streamlining approaches to data collection and analysis at the global level, including as regards statistical instruments and knowledge building; (ii) strengthening the status and socio-economic rights of artists and cultural professionals and practitioners, including in the informal sector, to support decent work, the professionalisation and skills building more broadly; (iii) advancing the adaptation of the creative economy to the digital transformation – as regards adequate remuneration, equitable access or the protection of online cultural and linguistic diversity – including through fostering a structured dialogue engaging all stakeholders; and (iv) prioritising policy interventions that foster inter-ministerial collaboration, while expanding cooperation at the national, regional and international levels to sustain a more inclusive global flow of cultural goods and services.
Cultural and creative industries market around the world

Cultural and creative industries provide nearly 30 million jobs worldwide, and employ more people aged 15–29 than any other sector

North America is the third largest CCI market with revenues of US$620b (28 per cent of global revenues) and 4.7 million jobs (16 per cent of total jobs). The North American market is powered by leading cultural and entertainment players: the region is the largest market for TV (US$182b), movies (US$28b) and radio (US$21b).

Europe is the second largest CCI market, accounting for US$709 billion of revenues (32 per cent of the global total) and 7.7 million jobs (26 per cent of all CCI jobs).

Africa and the Middle East CCI market achieves US$58b in revenues (3 per cent of the total) and provides 2.4 million jobs (8 per cent of total CCI jobs).

Asia-Pacific is the world’s biggest market for the cultural and creative industry (CCI), generating US$743 billion of revenue (33 per cent of global CCI sales) and 12.7 million jobs (43 per cent of CCI jobs worldwide).

The Latin American CCI generates US$124b in revenues (6 per cent of CCI global market) and 1.9 million jobs (7 per cent of total CCI jobs).

The report cites the case India, as one of the world’s largest handicraft producers and exporters, is home to 7 million artisans, most of whom are in rural and semi-urban areas. However, data from unofficial sources indicate that the real figure may be as high as 200 million. The reason for this disparity is the informal and unorganised nature of this sector.

Information extracted from Creative Industries 4.0, Towards a New Globalized Creative Economy, UNCTAD, 2022
Promotion of Cultural and Creative Industries and Creative Economy

by Dr. Poonam Munjal
Professor, National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER)

“Culture is the set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual, and emotional features of society or a social group, that encompasses, not only art and literature, but lifestyles, ways of living together, value systems, traditions, and beliefs.” (UNESCO 2001)

Culture and Creative economy aptly gained renewed attention with its inclusion in the G20 under the Presidency of Saudi Arabia in 2020. It was the first time that G20 Ministers of Culture met and recognised culture as global policy agenda and a key contributor to the global economy. They also brought to light the vulnerability of the culture sector amidst Covid19 pandemic, while also acknowledging its contribution to the resilience, well-being, and prosperity of the societies. The G20 Ministers continued this agenda as the Rome Declaration of 2021, under the Presidency of Italy (2021), positioned culture as the driver of sustainable socio-economic recovery, and then MONDIACULT 2022, the UNESCO World Conference on Cultural Policies and Sustainable Development, adopted a Declaration affirming culture as a global public good.

In 2023, under the Indian Presidency, the G20 countries’ leadership in the creative economy met again to discuss the priorities and to provide recommendations around four culture–related priorities set forth by the Presidency. For this, the Culture Working Group (CWG) brought together representatives from G20 Member countries, guest nations as well as international organisations with the four priority areas of focus, that is, Protection and Restitution of Cultural Property (Priority 1); Harnessing Living Heritage for a Sustainable Future (Priority 2); Promotion of Cultural and Creative Industries and Creative Economy (Priority 3); and Leveraging Digital Technologies for the Protection and Promotion of Culture (Priority 4).

With regard to Priority 3, the need to bring the attention of the world culture leaders towards this priority area arises due to the fact that while the culture and creative sector is well acknowledged as an enabler of growth, creator of jobs, and income enhancer across all socio-economic sections of society, but to what extent does it enable growth or create jobs largely remains unknown.
In other words, its contributions to the economy with respect to the two most important economic indicators - Gross Domestic Product and Employment - are rarely quantified, as they do not directly figure in the System of National Accounts. Besides economic contribution, it is equally important to understand its social contribution and its contribution to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). If the SDGs are grouped around the economic, social, and environmental objectives as the three pillars of sustainable development, then culture and creativity contribute to each of these pillars transversally (The UNESCO Courier, Ari-Jun, 2017).

The same is the case with some other sectors, particularly Tourism, which are not identified as separate sectors in the countries’ National Income Accounts and, therefore, their economic values are not readily available. However, in the case of Tourism sector, an internationally recommended and accepted methodological framework developed by World Tourism Organisation makes it possible to measure its economic value and also make cross-country comparisons.

On the other hand, for the culture & creative sector, not only is there no standard methodology but this sector also suffers from the lack of uniform definition across the countries. In fact, one of the reasons for suggesting a standard methodology and uniform definition for culture is the fact that for other activities, such as tourism, there is a methodology within the framework of the System of National Accounts (SNA) that is globally accepted and adopted, making international comparisons possible.

With regard to culture and the creative sector, there is a lot of variation in what is included within each of these. This is because of the variations in national policy priorities, which also led to the variation in the definitions followed by different international organisations. The Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) includes those activities through which ideas are transformed into cultural and creative goods and services and whose value is or could be protected by intellectual property rights (IPRs). UNESCO focuses on the social and economic dimensions of culture. The World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) concentrates on the importance of copyright and categorises industries according to the extent to which their activities depend on copyright. UNCTAD focuses on international trade and compiles data on international trade in creative goods and services.

In many cases, the difference in definition is also because of the differences in the data that are available which can likely be used to measure the sector, and also because of the standard industrial classification systems which fail to capture the entirety of the sector.

Most countries follow the UN International Standard Industrial Classification (ISIC) as the classification scheme for their industries, to the extent possible. But the culture and creative sector is often not identifiable even at the lowest level of disaggregation of such classification schemes.
As a result, in order to define the sector without ambiguity and overlap with non-cultural sectors, there is a need for clarity on what forms the sector, as well as highly precise data to capture these constituents.

This is where the concept of Culture Satellite Accounts is extremely useful. The satellite account of a sector is prepared to measure its economic importance as it is not observable in the traditional Systems of National Accounts. Tourism Satellite Account, or TSA, is one of the popular examples.

Culture Satellite Account (CSA) is a statistical framework for measuring the economic contribution of culture. The first official document to suggest a methodological framework for the measurement of culture was developed by the UNESCO in 1986, titled “Framework for Culture Statistics 1986”. This framework was revised in 2009 as “Framework for Cultural Statistics Domains”, with notable contributions on the measurement of culture as an industry.

The key characteristic of this framework is the clear and transparent guideline for referring to international economic classifications to define culture, both as an industry and as goods and services. These are ISIC, Central Product Classification (CPC), Harmonised Commodity Description and Coding System (HS), and also International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO) for the identification of cultural occupations.

However, there are still no global guidelines on which specific industries should be included in the production side of cultural activities, making international comparison difficult.

At present, the CSA system for measuring the economic contribution of culture is used in several countries. Canada prepared its first CSA in 2011 and updates it every year. Other countries to have prepared such accounts include most Latin American countries, like Mexico, Colombia, Guatemala, Peru, Argentina and Portugal.

Like TSA, CSA also integrates the demand-side data with supply-side data. Typically, the demand-side data are collected through primary surveys of households and enterprises and supply-side data are obtained from the country’s National Accounts Statements, Supply and Use Tables, and in many cases, the industry surveys to accurately assess the supply of culture-related produce in the economy.

Such a framework derives the direct contribution of the cultural economy to the overall economy. However, there is also the scope of determining its indirect or spill-over contribution through the construction of culture-specific Input-Output Tables and derivation of the sector’s output multiplier, employment multiplier, income multiplier, etc.

It should be noted that at the global level, culture industries and the creative economy are estimated to contribute a notable 3.1 percent to the global GDP, generating employment opportunities for about 50 million across the world (UNESCO, 2022).
However, the absence of a standard definition, limited cultural data collection, and informal nature continue to be the serious challenges affecting its long-term growth.

Therefore, G20 countries’ representatives placed an emphasis on the need for cultural data collection for the creation of satellite accounts for the sector, agreeing on a standard definition. Among other benefits, this will facilitate evidence-based policy interventions; the development of harmonised monitoring framework to assess its contribution to economic growth and sustainable development; pooling of expertise and capacities across the G20 Membership; and defining policy actions to increase the share of cultural and creative industries in the global GDP by 2033. Among social benefits, the collaboration of G20 representatives can also help in enhancing the status of cultural practitioners through their upskilling, increased formalisation, and by ensuring access to employment, innovation, infrastructure, and business support measures.
Moderators

Promotion of Cultural and Creative Industries and Creative Economy

Ms. Margherita Licata
Technical Specialist Private Services, Sectoral Policies Department, International Labour Organization (ILO)

Ms. Marisa Henderson
Rotating Officer in Charge, Trading Systems, Services and Creative Economy Branch, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)

Mr. Dimiter Gantchev
Deputy Director, Information and Digital Outreach Division, World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO)
The Global Thematic Webinar on the ‘Promotion of Cultural and Creative Industries and Creative Economy’ was organised on 19 April 2023. The webinar brought together 42 experts from 29 countries including G20 Members and Invitee nations, as well as 13 international organizations and other stakeholders. The three speaking segments were successively moderated by representatives from the International Labour Organization (ILO), the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO).

Throughout the webinar, the transformative power of the creative sector came to the forefront, with most speakers emphasizing its weight in national GDP and employment – an impact on economic growth which is increasingly acknowledged by policymakers, as underlined by some participants. More broadly, participants underlined across their interventions the importance of the sector to support the transformation of societies and ecological transition. The conversation spanned beyond the economic realm, with participants emphasizing the sector’s inextricable ties to fostering innovation and resilience, while also contributing to diverse sustainable development prospects, from social inclusion and urban development, climate action or health and well-being among others. Of particular significance were the opportunities the cultural and creative industries presented for youth engagement, employment and livelihoods.

Speakers drew attention to the unique specificity of the creative sector. They emphasized particularly the diversity of the sector and its fast-evolving dimension, notably linked to its strong connection with innovation. Fast evolving sub-sectors such as gaming for example were underlined as raising increasing attention from policymakers for their growth potential. Speakers also recalled the specificity of the creative ecosystems, largely driven by Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and self-employed people, an aspect which requires specific policy mechanisms as underlined by several countries, notably with a view to support decent work and sustainable employment. Some speakers also emphasized the linkages between the creative sector and other cultural domains, referring to a continuum across the cultural sector.

Most countries and organizations recalled the sector’s vulnerability, underlining the unprecedented disruptive impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, which exposed its preexisting fragility and the need to strengthen policy mechanisms. Some countries reported that the pandemic had pushed a significant number of cultural professionals away from the sector, raising significant concerns on its resilience in the long run. The magnitude of this disruption stirred a shift in policymaking, with an increasing number of countries engaging towards strengthening the social and economic rights of the artist.

The webinar provided a platform for countries to share diverse conceptual approaches to the creative economy, particularly with respect to its multifaceted nature. Some countries reported comprehensive approaches to the creative sector across its different sub-sectors,
The UNESCO 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions provides legal weight to foster structural change to sustain cultural goods and services as vectors of identity, values, and meaning as public goods requiring public support and investment towards sustainable, inclusive, and diversified cultural and creative ecosystems. Yet, artists and cultural professionals struggle to benefit from the full scope of fundamental rights, the freedom to create and distribute their artistic work, labour protection globally, including as regards intellectual property rights, and the skills to distribute and monetise cultural contents online. Equitable access, openness, and balance should govern global cultural exchanges towards inclusive flows of cultural goods and services and the transnational mobility of artists and cultural professionals. Data collection and the development of cultural information systems also remain a pressing need to measure the economic weight of cultural industries and international flows of creative goods and services.

TOUSSAINT TIENDREBOGO
SECRETARY OF THE UNESCO 2005 CONVENTION ON THE PROTECTION AND PROMOTION OF THE DIVERSITY OF CULTURAL EXPRESSIONS
Recommendation on the Status of the Artist. The impact of the implementation of the UNESCO 2005 Convention were underlined, notably in terms of shaping public policies towards strengthening the status of the artist, supporting more inclusive cultural trade at regional or international level or enabling the mobility of artists among other benefits. Some speakers underlined that the implementation of the Convention allowed to stir participatory mechanisms across the creative ecosystems towards the shaping of national cultural policies. A number of participating countries also referred to ongoing bilateral or multilateral cooperation projects spurred by the implementation of the Convention. Some speakers also underlined the importance of a comprehensive approach across the different cultural normative instruments, bridging notably the UNESCO 2005 Convention with the 1972 Convention and the 2003 Convention.

To prioritise sustainable development and promote creative industries, the country has taken significant steps. Building on the domestication of the UNESCO 2005 Convention, ratified in 2007, the country has developed measures to strengthen the participation of the private sector in fostering creative industries.

**EGYPT**

To prioritise sustainable development and promote creative industries, the country has taken significant steps. Building on the domestication of the UNESCO 2005 Convention, ratified in 2007, the country has developed measures to strengthen the participation of the private sector in fostering creative industries.

Countries reiterated the need for robust, comprehensive public policy engagement to frame the creative sector, underlining various examples of national policy frameworks. The spectrum of strategies showcased was vast, ranging from dedicated national laws on the creative sector to mid-term national strategies for CCI. Many countries reported the development of national roadmaps aimed at framing the development of the sector in the mid-term. In some cases, support to the creative sector is anchored in the revision of national cultural policies more broadly, underlining the importance of a comprehensive approach across the public policy spectrum.

**SOUTH AFRICA**

Through the Mzansi Golden Economy Strategy and Departmental Funding agencies like the National Arts Council, the government has been able to support the culture sector. The funding is dedicated to promoting international exchanges and skills development, creating high quality job opportunities for agents in the cultural and creative industries. This has contributed to the transformation of the sector and has created an enabling environment for arts and culture to flourish.

Countries and organizations also underlined persisting gaps which deserve further policy attention to fully harness the potential of the creative economy. The need to provide an enabling environment for creative industries and creators to thrive was reiterated, notably as regards copyright and intellectual property frameworks. In that regard, some countries reported the implementation of specific legal frameworks on the status of the artist or the development of databases of practitioners, bridging economic and social rights. Mounting threats were underlined as regards the misappropriation of creative contents, a risk further exacerbated by the digital transformation, which leaves creators unprotected and deprives them from sources of income generation.
Participants reported a broad range of institutional mechanisms dedicated to the creative economy, also pointing to the importance of cross-sectoral approaches. Some countries reported the creation of specific national public institutes dedicated to the creative economy, or cultural and creative industries councils. Such dedicated institutions are entrusted with framing the development of the sector and strategizing policies and investment. In other countries, specialized, sub-sectoral commissions were set up to support the development of priority sub-sectors. Such institutional mechanisms were reported as critical to frame the effective implementation of national plans and enable growth of the sector. Many participants also underlined the value of such dedicated institutions or commissions in enabling inter-ministerial cooperation. In that regard, robust interministerial mechanisms were called for, involving notably culture, trade finance, education, or social affairs ministries among others.

UNITED KINGDOM

The Arts Humanities and Research Council initiated 9 Creative Clusters and a Policy and Evidence Centre, uniting leading UK creative companies in areas like screen industries, digital storytelling, fashion, and video games. These clusters promote collaboration among businesses, organisations, and universities, driving locally focused, internationally connected growth.

Countries shared examples of policy measures intended to support the growth of the creative economy, notably as regards funding and business development. In that regard, the need to address the lack of predictable funding and evolve or consolidate business models was particularly underlined across the presentations. Such policy measures were developed both at the national and city level, also pointing to a growing engagement of local authorities in harnessing the power of the creative economy. Some countries or cities have invested in large-sized funding packages to support the creative economy as a whole, while other report dedicated funding schemes targeting specific sub-sectors, product-based subsidies or tax incentives. These mechanisms were hailed not just for their direct financial impact, but also for their role in catalysing innovation and entrepreneurship within the creative sector. Some countries have embarked on ambitious creative export strategies or the creation of free zones and other incentives for investment in the CCIs and business development. Regional trade agreements were also highlighted as a way to expand market opportunities and enable more inclusive global trade of cultural goods and services. The

TÜRKIYE

Established in 2021 by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, the Cultural Industries Platform involves a wide range of participants: universities, researcher centres, practitioners from the cultural and creative industries as well as relevant authorities. By encouraging a public-private collaboration, this platform contributes to centralize all information, initiatives, programmes and policies related to the cultural industries with a view to monitoring the development of the sector.
perspective of a Global Arts Funding was equally outlined as a necessary contribution to longer term funding for the sector, while the development of smart monetarization strategies was presented as a possible option.

MAURITIUS

The country has developed different initiatives such as the National Arts Fund, the National Resilience Fund, the Film Assistance Scheme and the Film Rebate Scheme to help emerging and established artists in the development of their skills and the use of new technologies. The main objectives of these projects and events are to provide training, refunds and technical assistance to produce new contents.

CANADA

Launched in 2018, The Creative Export Strategy aims to sustain and support creative industries exportations. By investing $125 million until 2026, this Strategy generates and offers new opportunities for the creative sector. Indeed, the main objectives of this policy framework are to increase exportations and GDP, provide new jobs, and funding programmes and ensure that practitioners, compagnies and organizations can find new opportunities.

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

Launched in 2021, the 10-year National Strategy for the Cultural and Creatives Industries seeks to increase the competitiveness of the creative economy nationally and internationally. The overall objective is to strengthen the contribution of this sector to the country’s economic development and make it one of the country’s most successful sectors.

Overall, the importance to take into account specific needs of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) and to support entrepreneurship were particularly underlined. Several countries referred to dedicated mechanisms intended to support immersion, skills building or mentorship programmes, notably targeting women entrepreneurship. The importance to raise awareness of the business environment on the benefits of the creative sector was set forth. Innovative funding schemes were introduced, including through online applications for entrepreneurs with a view to address the urban/rural gap, as well as in kind mechanisms, requiring further knowledge building.

BRAZIL

The government organized annually the Mercado das Indústrias Criativas do Brasil (MICBR), a digital event seeking to enhance the professionalization of cultural agents and the internationalization of the country’s cultural production. During the event, cultural and creative entrepreneurs conduct business rounds, pitching, business sessions and networking initiatives. In 2018, 406 international entrepreneurs from 25 countries attended the event.

JAPAN

Organized every three years in the country, the Setouchi Art Festival gathers a wide number of international artists with the aim of engaging discussions and cooperation within local ecosystems. The festival contributes to enhancing local heritage and identity, while revitalizing the local economy by attracting new residents and businesses.
**REPUBLIC OF KOREA**

Through numerous initiatives, the government is providing support to SMEs to sustain their development. From access to low-interest rates and warranty, to providing important legal information and data, these initiatives encourage the resilience of small companies, especially as they represent 92% of the creative economy sector.

**ARGENTINA**

In order to promote the cultural industries, the Ministry of Culture organises *Mercado de Industrias Culturales Argentinas* (MICA) market. By including more than 15 sectors, ranging from traditional arts to innovative areas like video games, MICA convenes the nation’s main cultural and creative players to promote exchange and create business opportunities.

Improving the social and economic rights of artists and cultural practitioners, as well as promoting artistic freedom more broadly, was presented as a critical endeavour, particularly in view of the social and economic disruption linked with the COVID-19 pandemic, stirring notably talent drain, and the rising threats of the misappropriation of creative content that is worsened by digital transformation. Speakers underlined the diversity of mechanisms across countries and the need to firmly acknowledge the status of artists, including through the development of dedicated laws and policies, in line with the 1980 UNESCO Recommendation on the Status of the Artist. The importance to establish robust governance frameworks for cultural work was underlined, requiring strong interministerial cooperation. The need to take into account the specific nature of cultural workers across the different sub-sectors was also underlined, including through the development of social portraits of cultural entrepreneurs. More broadly, the importance of a rights-based approach to cultural policies, encompassing the broad spectrum of cultural, social and economic rights was put forth, as well as the importance to address the specific needs of the informal sector. Strengthened synergies between relevant international organisations, notably UNESCO and ILO, were called upon. Strengthening pension schemes, social security and enabling fair remuneration, particularly in the digital platform economy, as well as supporting the transition to formality was highlighted as crucial and exemplified through several policy measures across the discussions.

**GERMANY**

The Federal Association of Independent Performing Arts (BFDK) has taken the initiative to introduce a minimum fee for freelance actors in the performing arts sector. Additionally, the Cultural Code in North Rhine-Westphalia is working towards making fair payment for artists a prerequisite for receiving state funding. The Association has also hosted a conference to explore various fairness processes, discussing the significance of supporting artists’ rights and well-being.

**CANADA**

Canadian Heritage and Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) have collaborated throughout 2022-2023 to reform the Canada Labour Code and to voice the needs of practitioners for the purpose of improving artists’ working conditions.
NETHERLANDS
To increase job security in the cultural and creative sectors, the government is encouraging the use of employment contracts instead of hiring freelancers. The government has also earmarked a budget to allow freelancers to obtain disability insurance and pension provisions. In addition, budget had been allocated and an appropriate policy is being investigated to ensure fair remuneration for workers in the industry by 2025.

INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANIZATION
A one week technical meeting on “the future of work in the arts and entertainment sector” was organized in February 2023 to engage ILO’s governing bodies. Representatives from countries, as well as employers and workers’ organizations, discussed opportunities and challenges for decent work in the sector in the context of digital technologies, globalization, environmental sustainability, demographic changes and a human-centred recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. They approved a set of recommendations towards investing in skills and lifelong learning, shaping an enabling environment for decent work and business stability or enhancing social dialogue within the cultural sector, thus shaping areas if engagement for labour and cultural policies for the future.

WORLD INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY ORGANIZATION
Through a joint initiative with the Music Rights Awareness Foundation the WIPO for Creators consortium was launched to promote intellectual property rights and guarantee that all creators, regardless of their conditions and status, can enjoy their rights.

INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF ARTS COUNCILS AND CULTURE AGENCIES
The 9th World Summit on Arts and Culture, co-organized by the Swedish Arts Council and IFACCA in Stockholm (Sweden) in May 2023, focused on ‘Safeguarding Artistic Freedom’. The Summit explored the tools and strategies for strengthening and advancing artistic freedom. It focused notably on enhancing labour rights, safeguarding the interests of creative and cultural workers, implementing effective support models for CCIs, embracing digitalisation, promoting international mobility, fostering inclusivity, and advancing decolonisation efforts.
The importance to invest in education, skills and capacity building targeting both cultural practitioners and policy makers was particularly emphasised. The need to acknowledge and monitor the skills gap, both globally and across subsectors, was emphasized, calling for the development of competency frameworks or the implementation of specific surveys to identify areas to be focused on. Investing in skills building and talent development, notably targeting youth, was reaffirmed as critical, including through lifelong learning or digital literacy programmes that are accessible, affordable, and adaptable to the needs of diverse learners. Many examples of such mechanisms were shared by speakers across the webinar. Some countries also reported the development of specific frameworks for arts education or competency frameworks, while others underlined their commitment to update curricula systems in the face of a fast-evolving sector. Speakers particularly emphasised the need to support entrepreneurship through immersion, skills building or mentorship programmes, that may include incubators, accelerators, and funding opportunities.

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Voices of Culture fosters a structured dialogue between representatives of the cultural sector in the European Union and the European Commission, addressing key issues such as the status and working conditions of artists and cultural professionals. The project aims to explore topics ranging from fairness and public support to freedom of artistic expression. The product is a brainstorming report which helps highlight the key problematics to be discussed at a policy EU level. It emphasizes the positive impact of cultural participation on mental health and well-being, particularly for young people, and seeks synergies with other policy fields to maximize results.

SPAIN

The UNESCO Chair on Creative Economy for Sustainable Development and Transforming the World, established in 2022, is actively promoting education and training in the fields of the creative economy and creative cities. One of the key initiatives of the Chair is the implementation of a master’s degree on “Management of Cultural and Creative Industries and Sustainable Urban Transformation” at the Rey Juan Carlos University. This programme aims to equip students with the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively manage cultural and creative industries while also promoting sustainable urban transformation. Through this programme, the UNESCO Chair is actively contributing to the development of professionals who can drive the growth and sustainability of the creative economy and foster positive transformation in cities.

SOUTH AFRICA

The Education Programme by Business and Arts South Africa (BASA) is an initiative aimed at ensuring the sustainability of the culture and creative sector by actively supporting training in the arts, fostering the relevance of curricula and long-term development of the sector within communities.
FRANCE
The public sector investment bank Bpifrance launched in 2022 the first edition of the “Cultur’Export”. This 12-month programme aims to encourage skills development and introduce cultural businesses to the global market so that they can expand their activities. For the first edition, 22 companies have benefited from this initiative.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
The Escala initiative is a global programme that aims to empower disadvantaged entrepreneurs and artisans through basic business education and financial resources. It specifically focuses on empowering women. The programme consists of a four-month intervention with classes in production, accounting, legalization, procurement, and customer service to drive business growth. It collects data on 27 metrics to track project performance and demonstrate economic benefits. Over 1000 women from Peru, Mexico, Guatemala, and Tanzania have enrolled in the programme by the end of 2022. The initiative also finances projects near endangered archaeological sites, fostering cultural preservation and community development.

SOUTH AFRICA
Through a joint initiative, the government and United Overseas Bank FinLab have launched the Acceleration Programme for the Arts. This initiative seeks to encourage the development of strong and stable ecosystem based on sustainable organizations. To achieve this goal, training in the field of digital, business management and financial competencies is provided.

SINGAPORE
Speakers underscored the importance of strengthening data and measurement frameworks. Overall, measuring the weight and scope of the creative sector, as well as quantifying its benefits, was deemed essential to support firm policy investment and inform the shaping of public policies. Statistical frameworks should allow to capture the weight of the sector, but also its direct and indirect contribution to other development goals, including climate action and gender equality among other targets. Some participants recommended that data collection be inclusive and participatory, to capture a diverse range of activities and impacts that encompass the breadth of the creative sector’s reach. Experts also recommended to build on existing datasets and indicators frameworks, both within and beyond the cultural sector, to support this measurement effort in comprehensive ways. Combining a diversity of data sources, including public and private data, administrative data or big data, was equally highlighted as crucial. In that regard, exploring through dedicated surveys the supply and demand, as well as new ways of distribution and consumption was also underlined as a possible way forward. Equally, monitoring the impact of policy interventions in terms of job or value creation was specifically pointed out.
Countries shared diverse examples of policy measures or initiatives pertaining to the measurement of the creative economy. Several countries and organizations reported their commitment towards policy monitoring and analysis at both the national and global levels, including through national yearly monitoring reports on CCIs, cultural observatories, open source platforms as well as national or transnational studies. Examples of utilization of cultural satellite accounts were shared by several countries, calling for continuous update to adapt to the digital transformation. Other countries shared their experience on the implementation of the UNESCO Culture | 2030 Indicators on Culture and Sustainable Development – a framework intended to be implemented at both the national and city levels to monitor the contribution of culture to the Sustainable Development Goals. Overall, more systemic engagement in research was called upon with a view to support public policy analysis.

**SAUDI ARABIA**

The Ministry of Culture in a country has been publishing an annual “State of Culture” report since 2019. This report serves as a reference point to monitor the progress of the cultural field and has several objectives. It documents government decisions related to culture, identifies new trends and patterns of cultural creation, measures cultural participation, and recognizes non–governmental cultural achievements. The report helps public and private institutions understand the current state of the cultural scene, aiding in the development of effective programs and policies. In 2020, the report addressed the impact of COVID-19 on culture, while in 2021, it focused on culture and public spaces.

**AUSTRALIA**

The Cultural and Creative Activity Satellite Accounts are measurements by the Bureau of Statistics to quantify the economic contribution of activities connected with arts, media, heritage, design, fashion and information technology. These statistical accounts are a key source of information for policymakers, the industry, as well as academia. A separate public institution regularly updates the methodology to better capture the economic contribution of the cultural and creative sector and ensure that estimates remain adapted to a changing economy. Updates are usually applied to both the framework used to scope and identify cultural and creative activities as well as to the methodologies that produce estimates themselves.

Finally, the need to promote a harmonized definition and classification of the creative sector was reiterated as critical by a number of countries and organizations, including to support measurement systems. The importance to reach an internationally agreed upon definition and classification of the creative economy, recognizing the multidisciplinary approach to CCIs, was strongly reaffirmed. Such a unified conceptual understanding was deemed critical to inform national and international policy discussions, support policy engagement and form the basis for comparable statistical data across different regions and countries. In addition, it was underlined that a shared understanding of the sector also aids in identifying and addressing gaps and opportunities, as well as facilitating cross–country learning and collaboration. In that perspective, the development of harmonized standards by international organizations was called upon.
Some speakers also recommended that such initiative be also backed by capacity building schemes. Finally, targeted statistical cooperation programmes were called upon, which should be backed by related training, capacity building on existing international instruments as well as the creation of specific tools.

**MEXICO**

Launched with the support of the United Nations Development Programme, Accelerator Lab, The Resonancias Platform, is an incubator whose purpose is to collect and share data and information to develop and build innovative cultural policies.

**OMAN**

Launched in 2021, the Creative Industries Map Project seeks to collect data to develop strategies and policies that meet the needs of the Omani creative sector.

**CULTURE FUNDING WATCH**

Originally created to generate and provide statistics on the cultural and creative enterprises from around the world, the Cultural and Creative Industries Boost is now an open-source matchmaking platform that connects industry actors to funders and supporters, creating an enabling eco-system for producers to grow their activities. Organizations or individuals looking for financial, technical or other types of resources can join the platform to connect with all sorts of entities that support this sector.

**UNESCO CHAIR OF GLOBAL CREATIVE ECONOMY**

The Creative Industries Cultural Economy Production Network (CICERONE) is a 4-year research programme that seeks to better understand cultural and creatives industries and to propose innovative solutions to develop new policies. This project will contribute to the development of a creative economy observatory.

The impact of the digital transformation was reiterated as bringing a paradigm shift in creation, consumption patterns and distribution, supporting global cultural exchange while also allowing new forms of storytelling and fostering direct and indirect job creation. While highlighting the benefits of the digital transformation, some countries reported the gaps to be addressed, including the need to invest in infrastructure and equipment, support digital skills and develop comprehensive national digital culture strategies, strengthen intellectual property rights frameworks and reshape business models. Examples of engagement of global digital platforms in supporting skills building, fostering more inclusive access to culture to a broad audience, as well as supporting local film production were also shared. Addressing the digital divide and the unequal cost of access to data was underlined as a persisting issue requiring policy attention.

**NETFLIX**

The US company and UNESCO are collaborating to launch Mighty Little Bheem, a global animated series that centres on a toddler version of the mythological-inspired Indian character. The objective is to globally promote India’s tangible and intangible cultural heritage, making visible India’s monuments, living heritage, performing arts, social practices, rituals and festivals such as Dussehra, Diwali and Holi.
The national cultural digitization strategy aims to convert cultural resources into digital form and create a big data system focused on culture by 2035. The strategy includes setting up a cultural database, developing a national cultural network, and supporting digital culture enterprises. Efforts are also being made to digitize museums, archives, and libraries, making cultural heritage accessible through virtual exhibitions and online platforms. The integration of the cultural industry and digital technology has led to emerging businesses like online streaming services and virtual tours.

Framed within its Digital Agenda 2026, €1.6 million are being invested until 2025 in order to increase the country’s audiovisual production by 30%. The project is called “Spain, Audiovisual Hub of Europe” and its main objectives are to improve companies’ competitiveness by applying digitalisation, to build talent by reducing the gender gap and to make the country a pole of attraction for international investment in the sector. The project also seeks to expand beyond the audiovisual sector itself by linking it with the tourism sector and the broader culture sector.

Finally, participants reiterated the importance to strengthen international and regional cooperation, as a core lever for a more resilient and robust global creative economy. Countries and organizations notably called for investing further in cultural exchanges and mobility, enabling the development of international and regional markets, but also promoting interregional policy discussions, bringing together countries, UN agencies and CSOs, with a view to foster joint prospective reflection on upcoming trends. In that regard, it was recommended to strengthen the synergies between the G20 Culture workstream and other relevant G20 workstreams notably pertaining to employment. As regards international culture normative frameworks, a comprehensive approach was strongly called for, bridging the UNESCO 1972, 2003 and 2005 together, away from existing silos. A number of policy dialogue platforms, at the national, regional or international levels were presented, highlighting the growing commitment of countries towards international cooperation in that area. Such cooperation was reported to focus notably on addressing frontier issues and contributing to the global reflection, notably as part of the COVID-19 response. The growing commitment of regional organizations towards the creative sector was clearly evidenced through the development of regional strategies, networks and policy mechanisms targeting the sector.

The African Union Plan of Action on Cultural and Creative Industries aims to develop and strengthen the African CCIs. It recognizes their role in inclusive development, good governance, economic empowerment, poverty reduction, job creation, trade, and regional integration. The plan outlines growth priorities and pathways and envisions an innovative, integrated, peaceful, and prosperous Africa. It highlights the importance of digital technologies in revolutionizing artistic expression, creating new genres, and marketing creative products. The plan emphasizes the economic growth potential of expanding internet access, enhancing productivity, and generating jobs.
The first World Conference on Creative Economy was organized in 2018 where over 100 countries and international organizations participated to exchange ideas, resolve challenges and identify opportunities within the creative economy.

**INDONESIA**

The first World Conference on Creative Economy was organized in 2018 where over 100 countries and international organizations participated to exchange ideas, resolve challenges and identify opportunities within the creative economy.

**THE PACIFIC COMMUNITY**

In its Regional Cultural Strategy, the community recognizes culture as a cross-cutting driver for sustainable development and therefore considers it as a standalone priority.

**UNCTAD**

The 2022 Creative Economy Outlook report provides recommendations to adapt the creative economy to digital transformation, to invest in skills development and measures the creative economy’s contribution to economic development.

**THE INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF LIBRARY ASSOCIATIONS AND INSTITUTIONS**

The organization, as a member of The Culture 2030 Goal Campaign, supports the zero draft for a culture goal to strengthen culture’s contribution to sustainable development and to include culture in the post-2030 prospects.

**ILO–AFRICAN UNION–UNESCO**

A scoping study on “Promoting decent work in the African cultural and creative economy” was conducted in 2023 to unlock the potential of an inclusive and sustainable culture and creative economy in Africa. The study provides policy recommendations on skills development, entrepreneurship, working conditions, social protection, and workers’ rights. It will be used to develop a joint programme at regional and country levels to promote decent work in the cultural and creative sector. The programme aims to shape labor relations, rights, entrepreneurship, skills development, social dialogue, representation, and enhance social protection for workers in the sector.
List of participants
Promotion of Cultural and Creative Industries and Creative Economy

G20 Members

Mr. Francisco Taiana, Director of International Cooperation, Argentina

Mr. David Hayden-Poole, A/g Director, Communications & Arts Research, Bureau of Communications, Arts & Regional Research (BCARR), Australia

Ms. Andrea Guimarães, Director of Economic Development of Culture, Ministry of Culture, Brazil

Mr. Dominique Kowlessar, CD, Director, International Trade Policy, International Trade Branch, Cultural Affairs, Canadian Heritage, Government of Canada

Mr. Yu Hu, Professor, School of Journalism & Communication, Tsinghua University, and Dean of Institute for Culture & Creativity, China

Mr. Olivier Fontaine, Team Leader International Cultural Relations, European Union

Ms. Amélie Tchadirdjian, Export and territorial development officer at the Delegation for Cultural Enterprises, France

Mr. Fabian Richter, Deputy Head, Division for Multilateral Cultural Policies, German Foreign Office, Germany

Dr. Bibek Debroy, Chairman of the Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister, India

Dr. Ritu Sethi, Founder-Trustee, Craft Revival Trust, India

Mr. Ricky Yoseph Pesik, Chairman of the Permanent Commission for Creative and Digital Economy, Indonesian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Indonesia

Ms. Annalisa Ciccheria, Senior Researcher at the Italian National Statistical Institute, Professor of Economics and Management of Cultural Resources, Roma University Tor Vergata, Italy

Ms. Nobuko Kawashima, Professor, Faculty of Economics Department of Economics, Doshisha University, Japan

Ms. Marcela Flores Mendez, Director of the centre for Digital Culture (CCD), Mexico

Ms. Veronika Peshkova, President of the Foundation for the Development of Public Diplomacy, Russia

Mr. Hwikyung Kim, Deputy Director of the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism, Republic of Korea

Mr. Ahmed Saad Alowfi, Ministry of Culture, Saudi Arabia

Mr. Moleleki Ledimo, Director, Arts and Youth Development, South Africa

Ms. Belgin Aslan, Culture and Tourism Expert, Türkiye

Ms. Rehana Mughal, Director of Creative Economy, British Council, United Kingdom

Mr. Larry Coben, ESCALA Sustainable Preservation Initiative, Executive Director, United States of America (Video Message)
Invitee Nations

Ms. S. M Shamim Akter, Deputy Director (Research and Publication), Organization: Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy, Bangladesh

Ms. Nahla Emam, Advisor of the Minister of Culture for Intangible Cultural Heritage, Egypt

Mr. Vikram Neeraj Boodhun, Director of Culture, Ministry of Arts and Cultural Heritage, Mauritius

Ms. Flora van Regteren Altena, Co-ordinating Policy Advisor, Netherlands

Ms. Thuraya Hamed ALMawali, Head of Culture and Creative Industries section, Oman

Ms. May Tan, Director, Education & Development, National Arts Council, Singapore

Ms. Mercedes Pico de Coaña, Deputy Directorate for International Relations and EU, Ministry of Culture and Sports, Spain

Ms. Waheeda Al Hadhrami, Director of the National Cultural and Creative Industries Promotion Department, United Arab Emirates

International Organizations

Ms. Vicensia Shule, Senior Cultural Officer, Department of Health, Humanitarian Affairs and Social Development, African Union

Ms. Ouafa Belgacem, President, Culture Funding Watch

Mr. Joseph King, Senior Director, Office of the Director-General, International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM)

Mr. Gabriel Caballero, Focal Point of the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) Working Group on SDGs

Ms. Magdalena Moreno Mujica, Executive Director of the International Federation of Arts Councils and Culture Agencies (IFACCA)

Ms. Claire McGuire, Policy and Research Officer, International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA)

Ms. Margherita Licata, Technical Specialist Private Services, Sectoral Policies Department, International Labour Organization (ILO)

Ms. Letila Mitchell, Culture Adviser, the Pacific Community (SPC)

Ms. Marisa Henderson, Chief of the Creative Economy and Development Programme, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)

Mr. Toussaint Tiendrebeogo, Secretary of the UNESCO 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, UNESCO

Mr. Andy Pratt, UNESCO Chair on Global Creative Economy

Mr. Dimiter Gantchev, Deputy Director, Information and Digital Outreach Division, World Intellectual Property Organization, (WIPO)

Ms. Sherine Greiss, Senior programme Management Officer, Copyright Development Division, World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO)

Non-Governmental Organizations

Ms. Ambika Khurana, Director for Public Policy for India, Netflix

Mr. Guilherme Zuchetti, Focal Point of International Affairs of the Municipality of Curitiba, Curitiba UNESCO Creative City of Design
PRIORITY IV

Leveraging Digital Technologies for the Protection and Promotion of Culture
Digital technologies have experienced an unparalleled surge over the last decade, profoundly influencing all policy areas, and particularly the cultural sector. The impact of digital technologies has been most profound across all cultural domains, from cultural heritage and museums to the creative economy, crafts or cultural tourism among others. With an understanding of the vast potential inherent in this technological revolution, policymakers, cultural institutions, and professionals are leveraging digital technologies to safeguard, conserve, and promote heritage sites, living heritage and cultural artefacts. They are also utilising these advanced tools in combatting illicit trafficking, thereby supporting more broadly the protection of cultural heritage worldwide.

Not limited merely to conservation, this digital revolution transforms our engagement with the culture sector across various platforms, including museums, archives, private collections, and broader memory institutions. In an era where information and experiences are increasingly digitized, the incorporation of digital technologies in cultural preservation and promotion is a natural progression. This shift is sweeping, affecting professional practices across multiple domains, from curators and heritage architects to archivists. The transformations spurred by digitization are not merely confined to the realm of professional conduct. They extend far beyond, impacting the manner in which institutions and professionals forge new relationships with audiences and the general public. A growing number of academic works are exploring the role and impact of digital technologies in the preservation, documentation and study of cultural heritage across its different components. While the limitations and threats of virtual cultural storages as opposed to physical museums in terms of engaging with memory and history are underlined by some scholars, virtual museums and digital reconstructions of cultural artefacts also help to protect and preserve information which otherwise would be lost, while also opening up new pathways to document and analyse cultural heritage, thus offering critical source of knowledge building. Similarly, the benefits of innovation in digital technologies towards strengthening conservation, documentation and inventorying practices is a particular area of focus. In a global context where the number of research entities specialized on the digitalisation of culture remains limited, strengthening research in this area will be critical in the future to support countries in encompassing digital issues within their cultural policies, notably towards the development of national roadmaps.

The rising wave of culture digitization mobilizes a broad range of digital technologies and platforms. From the ubiquity of social media and the widespread use of the internet to the burgeoning fields of artificial intelligence, virtual and augmented reality, and robotics, these technologies are poised to dramatically overhaul our modes of preserving, creating, accessing, and experiencing culture. The digitization of cultural heritage is not a fringe element in this technological revolution; it is, indeed, one of its most critical aspects.
The acceleration expected over the forthcoming five years could dwarf the technological advancements made over the past thirty years. In the foreseeable future, the deployment of fifth-generation wireless technology (5G), the advanced use of AI and machine learning, and the harnessing of big data are predicted to trigger seismic shifts. Furthermore, the COVID-19 pandemic has expedited this rate of change, forcing a rapid technological advancement that has seen an estimated five years of progress condensed into three months. This drastic upheaval has also spurred the migration of cultural content to online platforms, spanning museum collections to heritage site virtual visits.

**LEVERAGING DIGITAL TOOLS TO EXPAND ACCESS TO CULTURE AND HERITAGE, WHILE SUPPORTING ITS SAFEGUARDING**

Today, digital technologies lie at the intersection between culture and education. During the height of the COVID-19 pandemic global lockdown, with hundreds of millions of students worldwide confined at home, cultural material proved to be vital to continue learning, stimulate the imagination and engage in critical thinking. The role of the publishing industry, artists’ audio recordings of books, and the online resources made available by museums and other cultural institutions were brought to the fore. In addition, the internet provides opportunities for lifelong learning about heritage and the arts, opening up channels for intercultural dialogue. Digital technologies are also proving key in contributing to community-based education and learning about intangible cultural heritage.

Overall, the immense potential of digitization in fortifying the preservation and accessibility of cultural heritage sites is unquestionable. Digitizing cultural assets would enable their global dissemination, fostering an appreciation of the richness and diversity of cultures across the world. The prospect of a child in a remote village accessing a digitized archive of an ancient civilization on the other side of the globe is no longer a mere dream but a realizable reality. The cross-cultural understanding such accessibility fosters is invaluable.

**Digital technologies – and particularly Open Access approaches to technology – also allow to increase and democratise access to cultural sites and experiences, engaging more broadly with a diversity of audiences – particularly youth as the primary users of digital technologies – reshaping narratives on cultural heritage and facilitating their transmission and appropriation. Overall, technologies support interest, appreciation and awareness among larger audiences. By leveraging social media, in particular, the outreach of curated digital cultural experiences may become accessible to a diverse global audience.**

In the future, virtual and augmented reality usage may be further expanded to enhance the visitor experience, also allowing visitors to explore World Heritage sites in their original state, or providing personalised virtual museums. UNESCO’s 2015 Recommendation concerning the Protection and Promotion of Museums and Collections, their Diversity and their Role in Society explicitly acknowledges the opportunities of information and communications technologies for museums in terms of “the preservation, study, creation and transmission of heritage and related knowledge” and calls upon countries to support museums in using these technologies. Doing so could enable public authorities to overcome the paradox of the digital transformation, whereby certain populations suffer further exclusion from cultural life, for example by reaching out to...
new audiences, such as youth, or enhancing visitor spaces for people living with a disability to enjoy content.

**Beyond expanded access, the increased digitalisation of culture expands opportunities to effectively ensure the documentation, protection and safeguarding of cultural heritage** across its different components, both tangible and intangible. Digital tools offer new possibilities to enhance the documentation, inventorying and monitoring of cultural heritage sites across time, contributing to research and knowledge building in unprecedented ways. Likewise, the broad range of digital technologies, among which augmented reality or 3D scanning among others, expand the possibilities to frame the protection, safeguarding and restoration of cultural heritage, notably by monitoring and anticipating threats on the state of conservation, supporting post-conflict or post-disaster reconstruction and restoration, or monitoring the impact of climate change, among other possible benefits.

**Finally, digitizing cultural heritage can also act as a springboard for economic development**, creating new avenues for tourism and creative industries. As digital technologies can considerably enhance visitor experiences, they offer an opportunity to reimagine how cultural heritage is presented and accessed. They facilitate immersive storytelling, connecting audiences to the past in a deeply personal and engaging manner. Furthermore, they engender innovative business models that can contribute to the sustainability of the cultural sector, enabling institutions to reach wider audiences and diversify their revenue streams.

**ADDRESSING A PERSISTENT DIGITAL DIVIDE, WHILE TACKLING TECHNICAL, LEGAL AND ETHICAL CHALLENGES**

Yet, alongside these immense benefits, digitization carries its own unique set of challenges. A significant concern is the existence of a digital divide, invariably determined by gender, socio-economic disparities, and language barriers. This digital disparity precludes certain communities from accessing digital cultural heritage. Therefore, it is imperative to bridge this divide through digital upskilling and capacity building among cultural practitioners. Efforts towards this end need to be deliberate, sustained, and comprehensive, aiming for inclusivity and equitable access.

Overall, the digital transformation raises new inequalities and areas of concerns across all policy areas, including culture. The cost of digital infrastructure and technologies – both in terms of acquisition and maintenance – remains a barrier in some parts of the world, particularly for public authorities, stirring inequalities in terms of connectivity and access. While significant progress has been achieved over the past decade and particularly in the context of the pandemic – which spurred public investment in digital infrastructure globally, notably as part of public funding devoted to COVID-19 recovery plans – access to digital technologies remains unequal between Global North and Global South countries, but also between urban and rural areas. The Broadband Commission estimates that 66% of the world now has access to digital technologies, leaving one third of the world population offline – a global coverage which has however significantly increased since 2020 where it was estimated to reach only 53.6 % (Broadband Commission, 2020). Likewise, the 2022 Global Connectivity report states that many internet users only enjoy basic connectivity, preventing them
from harnessing the full potential of digital tools. There are also glaring inequalities between and within countries: digital penetration drops to 36% in the Least Economically Developed Countries, whilst there are 16% fewer women who use mobile internet than men in Low and Middle Income Countries (ITU, 2022).

Such a digital divide encompasses the “access divide” – namely inequalities in terms of access to internet and digital technologies, which curtails access to information and related economic opportunities – but also more broadly the “use divide” – inequalities in terms of digital skills and literacy, language barriers and socio-economic factors which prevent users from fully utilizing digital technologies – as well as the “quality of use” gap – encompassing the disparities in the quality and speed of access to digital technologies and services linked to the reliability of internet connection or the quality of devices among others.

The extent of these inequalities in access to digital technologies has profound implications for culture. While online cultural consumption has increased massively in most countries, the digital divide is clearly reflected in cultural production and consumption patterns. For example, in 2020, only 5% of museums in Africa and the Small Island Developing States were reported to have an online presence as per a study undertaken by UNESCO in the context of the pandemic (UNESCO, 2020). Such inequalities impact access to digital resources and tools – and the related knowledge – but also access to the broad spectrum of digital technologies and tools, which curtails in turn countries’ capacities to preserve, safeguard and promote their cultural heritage.

Addressing the impact of the digital divide in the cultural sector requires further engagement in the development of infrastructure, but also in the adaptation of digital technologies to make them more accessible and operational across the different countries. For example, digital data and platforms need to be optimized to overcome some of these gaps, allowing them to be functional irrespective of connection speeds. Likewise, 3D platforms which offer users different quality options are more accessible in areas with limited connectivity. More broadly, addressing the digital divide in culture requires a policy shift, whereby the broad spectrum of these inequalities are encompassed when designing strategies and roadmaps on digital culture.

Beyond the digital divide, other challenges have emerged in the wake of the transformative impact that digital technologies have had on the preservation, documentation, protection, and monitoring of cultural heritage. These challenges are both technical, such as issues related to data storage, maintenance, and preservation, and ethical, such as considerations related to privacy, ownership, and representation. Overall, the digital transformation raises critical policy-related issues, including the need for regulations and standards that can ensure the responsible use of digital technologies in the cultural domain.

**ENCOMPASSING DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES IN CULTURAL POLICIES IN MORE SYSTEMIC WAYS**

Looking forward, enhancing the skills and knowledge base of cultural practitioners is paramount in ensuring that digital cultural heritage is accessible, inclusive, and engaging for a diverse audience. Investing in technical and vocational training to strengthen digital skills in the cultural sector is therefore critical. The exchange of best practices for digitizing tangible, intangible, and natural heritage assets also forms the
backbone of long-term preservation and the successful execution of digitization initiatives. These efforts would go a long way in realizing the full potential of digitization in the cultural domain.

Collaborative endeavours and the sharing of knowledge and good practices among stakeholders can nurture innovative solutions, optimize resource allocation, and expedite the digitization process. Inter-institutional, inter-disciplinary, and international collaborations are essential in navigating the complexities of this task. These partnerships can aid in preserving cultural heritage in the long run, while fostering cross-cultural understanding and appreciation. In this digital era, preserving and sharing cultural heritage is no longer the purview of a few dedicated institutions. It is a global effort, integrating perspectives and expertise from diverse stakeholders.

Ensuring that digital heritage is preserved and remains accessible over time requires the development of technical and ethical standards—a domain where the engagement of international organizations is particularly critical in view of their normative function. Digital heritage is particularly vulnerable to the risk of technical obsolescence, data migration and data integrity issues. To ensure digital data preservation, efforts are also needed to develop and implement international data standards and FAIR data management to improve the Findability, Accessibility, Interoperability and Reuse of digital assets, so that digital cultural heritage can be sustainably preserved for the future. Interoperability between existing and future digital platforms for culture is key to ensure longevity. The UNESCO Charter on the Preservation of the Digital Heritage (2009) provides guidance on ways in which texts, audio, film and image files should be preserved. Likewise, in the field of tangible cultural heritage, developing international standards for digitizing cultural heritage, as well as data processing and optimization, is particularly critical—a process currently underway as part of the UNESCO 1972 World Heritage Convention, with a view to create an online platform leveraging digital technologies using 3D models, GIS, satellite imagery and audiovisual resources.

This viewpoint further necessitates a more comprehensive development of ethical standards that address issues such as intellectual property, privacy, or access, among others. These standards should notably encompass the free, prior and informed consent of rights holders, including local communities and indigenous peoples, particularly as regards intangible cultural heritage. In line with the principles at the core of the UNESCO 2003 Convention, community-based negotiations for the documentation and digital circulation of representations of local intangible expressions remain key in ensuring that digital technologies are harnessed in ethical ways. Concurrently, it is increasingly important to combat the associated emerging challenges around the digital ownership of cultural artefacts, including the need to compensate local and indigenous communities for digital commodities created for and traded digitally. In that regard, leveraging the knowledge and expertise of universities and international institutions to build capacities in digital recording, processing and modelling can enhance local ownership of digital data assets.

Overall, adapting to the new digital landscape is one of the main frontier issues for the development of national cultural policies, with a view to ensuring that culture, and cultural heritage in particular, remains a global public good, accessible to all. In that regard, ministries of culture and public cultural agencies around the world have made positive steps towards adapting their policy frameworks to meet the demands of the digital age, even if this work tends
to fall short of a comprehensive national digital culture plan. Many of these initiatives have focused on the modernization of specific sectors, such as books, music and film, as well as updating copyright legislation. Cultural statistics remain exceedingly scarce and very few countries collect information on culture in the digital environment, thus hampering the development of evidence-based policies.
Leveraging Digital Technologies for the Protection and Promotion of Culture

by Ms. Debjani Ghosh
President, Nasscom

In today’s world defined by an increasingly fragmented state and a fracturing social fabric, it is crucial to focus on preserving and propagating culture across the global populace. Culture plays a vital role in bridging gaps between distinct societies and individuals, fostering tolerance and understanding and can serve as a significant instrument for remediation in the world. It serves as a reflection of our identities and has the potential to bring people together. That is why it is so important for communities around the world to find ways to protect and promote their culture.

Digital technologies are revolutionizing the landscape of culture and heritage, profoundly influencing how we access and participate in these domains. The digitization of cultural heritage has the potential to serve as a catalyst for economic development, offering new opportunities for tourism and creative industries. Digital technologies can enhance visitor experience, facilitate immersive storytelling, and generate innovative business models that contribute significantly to the sustainability of the cultural sector.

The evolution and widespread adoption of technology provide both an opportunity and a challenge. The opportunity lies in taking culture beyond geographical boundaries and traditional limitations, making it accessible to all. The challenge lies in ensuring that in this process, the essence of culture, its variety and vibrancy, and the rights of those who create and propagate it, are not compromised.

In an era characterized by expanding social inequalities, digital technologies also offer new avenues to transcend disparities in access to culture. This is particularly relevant when considering differences between urban and rural areas, or between urban centres and their peripheries.
Leveraging Digital Technologies for the Protection and Promotion of Culture

While the digitization of cultural heritage undoubtedly presents its own set of unique challenges, overcoming these obstacles through strategic capacity building, active knowledge sharing, and addressing the digital divide can unlock the substantial potential of digital cultural assets. By harnessing the power of digitization, we can preserve our shared cultural heritage, promote the richness and diversity of cultures worldwide, and make substantial contributions to the socio-economic development of communities. This approach is required to provide equitable access to culture for all, promote inclusive cultural participation, and lend support to the emergence of more participatory, community-based cultural policy models.

Online platforms and collaborative tools are increasingly being harnessed, primarily at the city level, to reshape the governance of culture. They are utilized to support more participatory, community-led public policies, which include fields of culture and cultural heritage. This novel approach paves the way for a democratisation of culture, empowering individuals and communities to contribute to the cultural landscape and to shape public policies that resonate with their unique cultural contexts.

However, digital transformation is not without its challenges. As the world becomes increasingly digital, those without access to digital technologies or the skills to use them are being left behind, facing a new form of inequality. This not only exacerbates existing social and economic disparities but also hinders the accessibility and inclusivity of culture. The cost associated with digital infrastructure and technologies, both in terms of acquisition and maintenance, remains a formidable barrier in certain parts of the world. This issue is particularly relevant for public authorities, stirring disparities in terms of connectivity and access.

To address these and other issues, the requirement for devising pertinent design principles to safeguard and promote culture becomes paramount. The emphasis on utilizing tools and technology necessitates a strategic shift towards the contemplation of more comprehensive frameworks. These should be designed to effectively address and tackle the complex task at hand.

Inclusion emerges as a cornerstone design principle as culture is about every individual, irrespective of their socio-economic status, language, or religion that might typically impede such access. The challenge that presents itself here lies in the formulation of strategies that can foster inclusion, thereby cultivating an open ecosystem where cultural heritage is safeguarded and broadly shared. Instead of the currently prevalent platform approach, which effectively confines within a metaphorical ‘walled garden’, there’s an imperative need to disrupt the norm and conceive an open, inclusive ecosystem.

The role of education and capacity-building in equipping individuals and communities with the necessary digital skills cannot be underestimated. Inclusion in the digital sphere does not

by Ms. Debjani Ghosh
merely entail providing access to digital technologies; it also necessitates equipping individuals with the necessary skills to navigate this sphere. Thus, initiatives aiming to bridge the digital divide should also focus on enhancing digital literacy and building capacity in digital skills.

Moreover, another fundamental principle that merits serious consideration and attention is security. Threats such as cyberattacks, and data loss of digital cultural heritage is an emerging concern. We also need to focus on digital preservation strategies to ensure the longevity of digital cultural assets. In this context, ensuring the interoperability of digital cultural assets, while maintaining their security, is of paramount importance. It allows for the exchange and reuse of digital cultural assets across different platforms and applications, enhancing their accessibility and reach.

The advent and advancements in Artificial Intelligence (AI) and generative AI provides unprecedented access to content, thereby potentially enabling misuse and intellectual property concerns become key. There’s also a significant requirement for scale, interoperability, and an open network. These aspects form the foundational bedrock upon which the necessary framework for cultural preservation and promotion should be constructed.

As we navigate this complex landscape, we may draw inspiration from the successful implementation of the Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) revolution in India. This innovative approach, with its distinct emphasis on interoperability, inclusion, scale, and security, has demonstrated its efficacy in driving exponential scale and making a substantial societal impact. It has achieved this across multiple sectors, including but not limited to financial inclusion, healthcare, e-commerce, and agriculture. This same set of principles, if adapted and adopted, could serve as an effective model for the preservation and promotion of culture.

E-commerce also serves as a useful example to illustrate how these principles could be applied in practice. Currently, each e-commerce platform operates within its own silo, effectively limiting their overall reach. The creation of an open protocol network can facilitate communication between platforms, thereby significantly expanding reach and accessibility. When applied to the realm of culture, this model would mean that artists, with their intellectual property rights protected, can become part of this open network, and their cultural contributions can be discovered by anyone, anywhere in the world.

The present era demands challenging the traditional mindset that is prevalent in the technology world. The era of platformisation must yield to a new era, one of open networks driven by open protocols. A significant paradigm shift is necessary to rethink existing frameworks, define new and more effective design principles, and ensure that technology is leveraged to make culture universally accessible, all while simultaneously preserving the rights of all stakeholders involved.
Adopting this kind of innovative approach can create a mutually beneficial situation for all stakeholders, be it the artists, the creators, or the users. With the right framework, design principles, and a strategic approach, culture can be preserved and promoted on a massive scale. Examples of this approach working effectively can be seen in the successful applications in India, such as financial inclusion, healthcare inclusion, and the world’s largest vaccine drive.

Adoption of a decisive and innovative approach on a global scale is key to preservation and propagation of culture. The ultimate objective goes beyond the preservation of tangible, intangible, and natural heritage assets, extending to the successful implementation of digitization initiatives that promote culture as a collective heritage to every global citizen.

To achieve this, collaborative efforts and the active exchange of knowledge and good practices among stakeholders is essential. This approach can foster innovative solutions, enhance resource allocation efficiency, and accelerate the digitization process. A strategy of this nature holds the promise of preserving cultural heritage for future generations, creating a repository of knowledge and history that can be accessed for understanding their past, appreciating the journey that led to their present, and strategising their path into the future.

To summarise, global collaboration on the bedrock of design principles of inclusion, security, scale, interoperability, and an open network, has the potential to facilitate a quantum leap in the way culture is viewed and interacted with. This goes beyond providing a platform for artists and creators to share their work; it is about ensuring that the rights of all stakeholders are protected, and that culture becomes a unifying force rather than a divisive one.

As we harness the power of digital technologies to preserve, promote, and disseminate culture, we must not lose sight of the challenges and must work proactively to address them. Through concerted efforts, we can ensure that digital culture is accessible, inclusive, secure, and sustainable, contributing to a more equitable and connected world.
Moderators

Leveraging Digital Technologies for the Protection and Promotion of Culture

Ms. Michelle de Gruchy
Analyst, Archaeology & Cultural Heritage, United Nations Satellite Centre (UNOSAT)

Mr. Gai Jorajev
President of the ICOMOS International Scientific Committee on Aerospace Heritage International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS)

Ms. Sophie Delepierre
Head of Heritage Protection Department, International Council of Museums (ICOM)
The Global Thematic Webinar on “Leveraging Digital Technologies for the Protection and Promotion of Culture” was organized on 20 April 2023. The webinar brought together 34 experts from 26 countries including G20 Members and Invitee nations, as well as 7 international organizations and other stakeholders. The three speaking segments were successively moderated by representatives from the International Council of Museums (ICOM), the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) and the United Nations Satellite Centre (UNOSAT).

The webinar provided a very broad perspective on culture and digital technologies, cutting across all dimensions of culture in its wide spectrum – from cultural heritage to the arts, including museums and cultural tourism among others – and touching upon a wide array of digital technologies, from web-based technologies to Artificial Intelligence (AI) and robotics. A wide range of experts and representatives shared views and expertise, from representatives of governments and international organizations to experts and representatives of civil society organizations, thus underlining the transversal nature of such topic, involving a diversity of skills and perspectives.

Speakers elaborated on the intrinsic relationship between culture and technology and ways in which these interactions have continuously transformed the cultural sector. As recalled by some speakers, such relationship is not new and can be traced from early times. However, the current pace of acceleration of digital technologies are a game changer for the cultural sector, leading to transformation and, in some cases disruption, the pace and magnitude of which is unprecedented. It is therefore paramount to join forces towards addressing this topic in systemic and coordinated ways, both within the cultural sector and beyond, with a view to informing policymaking and supporting cultural stakeholders in more appropriate ways.

Participants underscored the need to perceive technology primarily as a tool to safeguard and promote culture, rather than an end in itself. They advocated for shifting the focus away from a purely technological approach to technologies, which may sometimes distract policymakers and cultural stakeholders from the core objectives of cultural policies, notably as regards ensuring effective safeguarding of cultural heritage or enabling inclusive access to culture and cultural heritage among other topics. In that light, participants emphasized the importance of designing a comprehensive framework to support the adaptation of the cultural sector to the digital transformation, encompassing digital technologies in systemic ways.

The massive, multifaceted impact of the digital transformation on cultural heritage and the cultural sector more broadly was underlined across the board. Speakers recalled that such impact was clearly accelerated by the COVID–19 pandemic. They also stressed that digital technologies have expanded boundaries for preservation, conservation,
Digital Technologies brought new tools and opportunities in the fields of cultural heritage research, management, and conservation, mapping through satellite imagery and recovery, including supporting local socio-economic development, or enhancing cultural industries and entrepreneurship. However, these benefits bring along challenges, relating to access and skills development. The UNESCO Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence provides guidance on addressing the digital divide, access, and copyright issues, promoting the responsible and equitable use of digital technologies which adhere to the FAIR principles (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, and Reusable). Public policies should support usability and accessibility, fostering investment and collaboration with the private sector, tackling issues of privacy and equal access.

On the one hand, interventions underlined the multiple benefits of the digital transformation for the cultural sector across its different components, with a particular focus on cultural heritage.

Firstly, it was emphasized that digital technologies expand the ways towards archiving, documenting and inventorying cultural heritage. The broad range of fast-evolving digital technologies – including laser scanning, 3D reconstruction, digital photography or blockchain technology among others – are increasingly harnessed to support the documentation and inventorying processes, notably as regards protected cultural heritage sites. Various examples of digital platforms targeting notably World Heritage sites were introduced by participating countries, underlining the broad scope of technologies involved and the fast-evolving nature of these processes.

CHINA
In the Mogao Caves World Heritage site in Dunhuang, China, 289 of the 492 caves were digitized, in collaboration with academia, to preserve and promote the site’s Buddhist art, building on digital photography, image processing, 3D reconstruction, and panorama-tour programs. Advanced technology, such as laser scanning, ensures millimeter-level accuracy in capturing delicate artworks. The Digital Dunhuang project, offering free access to 30 caves’ digital replicas, has attracted more than 16.8 million website views.
### INDONESIA
The Borobudur World Heritage site was digitized as of 2021 through LiDAR technology, building on laser scanning and photogrammetry. Blockchain technology also allowed to track how digital assets were used, while securely storing the entire digitized dataset in a repository.

### OMAN
The government has created a digital platform to digitize and preserve manuscripts in the fields of science and culture.

### NETHERLANDS
To ensure the long-term preservation of national heritage through digitization, the country has chosen a decentralized approach. Instead of compiling data within specific major institutions, the country has offered access to a shared platform for all collection holders. This strategy allows data to remain at its source and promotes collaboration among different stakeholders.

### BANGLADESH
The country is currently working on the development of a GIS-based online inventory for its national cultural heritage. In addition to this online inventory, the country will develop a mobile app that will be available in Bangla and English.

### UNITED ARAB EMIRATES
Engagement in the creation of digital cultural archives is reflected at the local level through the Abu Dhabi Historic Environment Record System – which brings together tangible, intangible and natural heritage – but also at the regional level through the Arabian Gulf Digital Archives. The latter is accessible online and showcases historical and cultural material on the rich history of the Arabian Gulf.

### EUROPEAN UNION
Funded by the EU’s Digital Europe program, Europeana is a common European data space for cultural heritage, enabling museums, galleries, libraries and archives to share digitized content with high-quality metadata, including 3D models of historical sites and paintings.
Beyond the inventory of cultural heritage per se, speakers also underlined more broadly the impact of digital technologies on the knowledge and circulation of culture, not only within countries but also across the world. It was also stressed that the digitization of cultural heritage allows to build and disseminate knowledge in unprecedented ways, opening possibilities to compile and curate data across cultures. Some speakers underlined that digitization processes support the circulation of cultural knowledge across professional networks or within the general public. Digital technologies were thus reported, across the discussions, to foster learning and education and to create new communities and new cultures.

Speakers stressed that digital technologies have opened unprecedented opportunities to access culture in more inclusive ways. It was underlined that by leveraging digital technologies, we can effectively enhance access to culture by creating contextually relevant cultural content that embraces its diverse range and enable continuous adaptation to the dynamic dimension of culture. Allowing to uncover unknown sites, artefacts and practices, providing new options for interpretation and presentation, or bringing new audiences to museums or heritage sites, are among the diverse benefits in terms of access reported across the discussions. As demonstrated by some of the examples presented, the digitization also allows to expand and diversify the engagement with culture and cultural experiences more broadly, thus helping to overcome barriers to cultural participation and reaching out to broader audiences.

Overall, the notions of inclusivity and equitable representation were particularly emphasized across the discussions. As underlined by some speakers, the application of digital technologies in the cultural sector should, first and foremost, rely on an inclusive approach, both as regards equitable representation of culture or access to a broad diversity of contents. As reflected across several examples, digital technologies have allowed to display artefacts that would not otherwise be widely accessible, including from smaller museums or remote areas. Some of the cases presented also exemplified ways in which digital technologies can empower communities to tell their own stories and address issues of under-representation or misrepresentation of some communities, an aspect which was underlined to be particularly critical as regards indigenous communities. By making culture more accessible, digitization also has the potential to support greater exposure to cultural diversity, thus fostering intercultural dialogue and understanding. Such dimension was underlined as equally critical in multicultural societies.

PheNoumenon, a project by the Human Expression Dance Company, debuted in 2019 as a 360° virtual reality (VR) dance experience. Viewers had the unique opportunity to rent and enjoy the performance from their homes. With the freedom to select their virtual position, observe specific dancers, and revisit scenes, it shattered the conventions of traditional seating, blurring the boundaries between performers and spectators. This innovative concept enabled to renew the way audiences engage with dance, providing an immersive and interactive experience.

SINGAPORE
Renewing Audience Engagement: a Virtual Reality Dance Experience

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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Preserving the Past while Empowering Indigenous Communities: an Innovative Tech Journey at Mesa Verde World Heritage Site

CYARK, a non-profit organization focusing on cultural heritage accessibility through technology, embarked on a project intended to showcase the UNESCO World Heritage site of Mesa Verde National Park (USA) and share its stories. Utilizing 3D documentation technology and existing data, the organization crafted virtual tours of the cliff dwellings, providing an immersive experience for visitors. Additionally, a virtual reality game was developed to engage audiences further. The main objective was notably to raise public awareness about climate change and its impact on World Heritage sites, demonstrating the role of ancestral cultural knowledge in addressing such challenge. Close collaboration with the 26 indigenous communities tied to the site allowed to ensure their appropriate representation and engagement. In particular, elements of indigenous languages and communities’ voices were encompassed in the virtual tours, thus acknowledging their knowledge.

AUSTRALIA

Art centres hold immense significance for Australian Aboriginal communities, especially those residing in remote regions. Serving as heartlands and vibrant meeting points, these centres transcend mere cultural entertainment. They embody cultural continuity, acting as hubs for conservation and preservation of precious heritage. Beyond artistic expression, art centres become nurturing spaces that safeguard the essence of their culture, fostering a sense of identity and belonging, particularly for younger generations.

In the same spirit, speakers emphasized that new technologies offer a means to enable fair and equitable cultural exposure and trade. Several interventions exemplified such impact, underlining its benefits for more vulnerable or marginalized communities. In particular, digital fairs or markets were reported to enable cultural creators, producers and practitioners, including those from indigenous communities, to access broader markets at the national, regional or event international levels. Experiences intended to promote more equitable cultural trade, inclusive of the Global South, were also presented, seeking to apply fair trade principles to the cultural sector.

GERMANY

In the pursuit of fair representation and equality in cultural trade, the German Commission for UNESCO has been leading the “Fair Culture” initiative for the last five years. In view of the dominance of Global North in global cultural trade and cultural digital platforms – with Global South countries accounting only for 5% of cultural exports worldwide – the initiative promotes the application of “Fair Trade” principles to the creative sector. Building on a global alliance formed at the 2022 UNESCO MONDIACULT Conference, a “Fair Culture Charter” is being drafted to ensure equitable and sustainable cultural cooperation and trade.
The Tarnanthi Art Fair is an annual event that showcases Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art from across Australia. It aims to promote the paintings, ceramics, jewelry, sculptures, woven items, textiles, and home goods produced by independent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists working from more than 50 art centres around the country. The fair has been running for eight years and has generated over $6 million for Aboriginal communities.

The growing engagement of museums in harnessing digital technologies was particularly brought to the fore. Some countries outlined successful strategies conducted by museums or cultural institutions to digitize their collection and enable online visits, including through online platforms cultural artefacts or cultural heritage more broadly. Such experiences were reported to stir significant increase in public attendance, while also allowing to reach out to communities who may, otherwise, not engage in formal education or access physical cultural sites and museums, and enabling more broadly the use and impact of cultural collections. It was underlined that the success of such endeavor often relies on a comprehensive approach, combining on-site and online visits as complementary pillars, with the understanding that online visits in the first place are likely to encourage the public towards on-site visits, thus also overcoming potential barriers to cultural participation. Such comprehensive strategy is all the more critical as only a small portion of cultural collections have been digitized so far, in view of financial, capacity or intellectual property limitations, as underlined by some speakers. Some countries shared that they have developed specific guidelines to support museums and cultural institutions in encompassing digital technologies, including ethical principles, digital processes, and detailed operational procedures – an aspect which was highlighted as critical, notably to standardize practices and procedures.

The online visit of Georges Clémenceau’s birthplace in Mouilleron received 650 visits since its launch in February 2023, marking a 50% increase compared to the monthly on-site attendance. Similarly, the Prince Eugene exhibition’s online tour at the Château de Malmaison garnered over 5,800 views of its Reels on Instagram, three times more than the average Reels viewship.

The Oman Across Ages Museum uses advanced technology to offer a journey through the country’s history and culture, featuring large film materials, interactive games for children and over 1200 devices operating virtual reality technologies.

The Working Group for Digital Strategy Development is producing material and guidelines to help museums to develop digital strategies, to promote digital preservation, museum process implementation and enhance digital capabilities.
Some countries referred to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the digitization of culture, in terms of shifting cultural practices but also stirring public policy engagement. While the disruptive impact of the pandemic on the sector was recalled – notably as regards digital inequity in terms of access or skills – participants also noted that such measures often stirred increased attendance and expanded audience, notably among the youth. In some countries, the development of online cultural platforms during the pandemic also contributed to shift the lines towards more systemic engagement of cultural policies in the digital realm, including through public policy funding, as reported by some of the speakers. Such massive shift of public collections online also spurred critical issues which should be addressed by public policies in the future, notably as regards intellectual property rights or data security among others.

GERMANY

In celebration of the annual UNESCO World Heritage Day, orchestrated by the German National Commission for UNESCO, digital formats, including livestreams, online interviews, and virtual educational materials, were introduced to adapt to the pandemic’s challenges. This approach not only enhanced accessibility and inclusivity but also extended the outreach to a broader and younger audience.

MAURITIUS

Amidst the pandemic, a diverse range of cultural activities, including online concerts, theatre performances, artistic training, storytelling for children, virtual exhibitions, painting, photography, written stories, videos, songs, and clips, were offered online, ensuring the continuity of cultural life.

REPUBLIC OF KOREA

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism took significant measures to ensure access to culture through online streaming and virtual reality exhibitions. Performances from national institutions like the Seoul Arts centre and the National Theatre of Korea were recorded, along with virtual exhibits from the National Museum of Korea. These efforts resulted in a notable increase in attendance and facilitated wider distribution of cultural products both nationally and internationally.

Digital technologies were also highlighted as powerful instruments to support the protection and safeguarding of cultural heritage, allowing to map artefacts, sites and practices, to understand conservation challenges and threats, but also to monitor state of conservation or destruction more thoroughly. While the impact of these technologies on the effectiveness of conservation measures is undisputed, some speakers argued that digitization should however not substitute actual field conservation efforts. Their role in supporting the protection of cultural heritage in emergency and conflict situations, as well as enabling post-conflict reconstruction, was particularly brought to the fore. The utility of digital technologies to support disaster risk reduction and protect cultural heritage against the impact of climate change and map its effects was also emphasized, especially in the context of Small Island Developing States (SIDS). A number of examples were provided in that regard, including as regards ways in which satellite technologies helps safeguard both tangible and intangible cultural heritage.
JAPAN
National authorities are cooperating with the private sector to create a topographic database of cultural heritage sites, with a view to support disaster risk preparedness, notably as regards floods and landslides.

ICOM
The programme on “Applying New solutions for Cultural Heritage protection by Innovative Scientific, social and economic Engagement” (ANCHISE) aims to response to overarching challenges in the protection of cultural heritage in Europe, by providing an operational set of tools, including through digital technologies, replicable in the European context. The programme is conducted by a consortium of partners including ICOM.

ICOMOS
A Memorandum of Understanding was signed in 2022 with the International Centre on Space Technologies for Natural and Cultural Heritage (HIST). Through innovative technological advances in remote sensing, both organisations recognise the role of space information technologies in the identification, monitoring, evaluation, presentation, restoration, conservation and management of World Cultural Heritage.

UNITAR–UNOSAT–UNESCO
A damage assessment of the Ancient City of Aleppo in Syria was conducted, using digital technologies such as satellite imagery and a detailed 3D model of the Citadel.

Beyond tangible cultural heritage, digital technologies were also underscored as creating new opportunities for safeguarding intangible cultural heritage and languages. As underlined by some speakers, new technologies such as motion picture have allowed recording of living practices, skills, and gestures in unprecedented ways, thus supporting knowledge and inventorying of living heritage, but also allowing the public to engage with intangible cultural heritage in creative ways. A number of examples were also brought to the fore to illustrate ways in which digital technologies open up creative pathways to support the safeguarding of indigenous languages and the promotion of linguistic diversity, notably as regards the documentation and practice of languages.

AUSTRALIA
The Art Gallery of South Australia (AGSA) has collaborated with elderly people from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to create a digital series of language classes, showcasing the diversity of dialects and acknowledging the land on which AGSA stands. These online experiences have helped bring Aboriginal culture closer to people in Australia and around the world.

SOUTH AFRICA
South Africa has created the Human Language Technology Unit whose purpose is to encourage the development of “language technologies” to narrow the digital divide, ensuring that disabled and low-literate people can have access to new technologies in their mother tongues, and guarantying access to information.
Digital artwork Cultural Centre AKM Atatürk
İstanbul, Türkiye
okanozdemir/Shutterstock.com
MEXICO

Nurturing Digital Culture: Exploring Mexico’s Innovative Laboratories in Language, Identity, and Technology

The Centre for Digital Culture within the Mexican Ministry of Culture has been addressing the issue of culture digitisation for over 10 years. A key initiative has been to create 7 thematic laboratories addressing such topics as machine ethics, common digitalisation, native languages and technology, cooperation networks and digital culture, or identity traps among others. For example, the Native Languages and Technology Laboratory is a platform dedicated to supporting various speaker communities and their languages. Its main goal is to encourage the use of digital tools and foster dialogue about linguistic diversity across the country. Language is viewed as a technology, and speaking a native language is considered an act of resistance. The lab facilitates active reflection, training, and accompaniment in this pursuit, and all activities are carried out in collaboration with the Centro Cultural de España en México (CCEMex). This initiative is supported by Rising Voices as part of Global Voices, a global community dedicated to supporting a more cultural and linguistically inclusive digital environment.

Some speakers also stressed the potential of digital technologies in enabling countries to harness the economic potential of culture, particularly in the field of cultural tourism. Digital technologies were reported to enhance the accessibility of cultural and heritage sites and to improve visitor experience, allowing them to engage with cultural heritage in more meaningful ways, notably through immersive storytelling. Some countries underlined that these technologies allowed to capture new tourism audience or to foster a more inclusive and sustainable approach to cultural tourism. Several examples of digital platforms intended for tourism purposes were outlined across the discussions, calling for more systemic collaboration between the cultural and tourism sectors more broadly.

Beyond the tourism sector, participants discussed the impact of digital technologies on the broader monetisation of culture, notably as regards cultural industries. As underlined by one speaker, advancements in digitalisation and technology are expected to strengthen the contribution of the cultural sector to the global GDP. Furthermore, they engender innovative business models that can contribute to the sustainability of the cultural sector, enabling institutions to reach wider audiences and diversify their revenue streams.

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

In 2020, the Abu Dhabi Department of Culture and Tourism launched the “Culture for All” initiative, which provides virtual experiences that allow anyone to learn, discover and enjoy the country’s cultural history remotely. The government operates websites with content such as traditional crafts, contemporary art, historical locations, music and performing arts.

UNCTAD

The 2022 UNCTAD report on Creative Industries 4.0 examines the influence of rapid changes in automated technology and internet communication on the Creative Economy. The report highlights key observations, including accelerated technology transfer, expanded product development beyond domestic markets, and emerging niche opportunities. To ensure a sustainable development, the report recommends implementing policy options that make advanced technology accessible to all stakeholders.
Echoing this broad array of benefits, several innovative examples of application of digital technologies in the cultural sector were presented, including online cultural archiving of cultural heritage, databases for practitioners, cultural marketplaces, digital platforms for manuscripts, archaeology databases, culture-related phone applications, Non-Fungible Token galleries, multilingual cultural platforms, cultural tourism platforms, or digital festivals among others. Overall, enabling inclusive, customized, and flexible digital tools and platforms was underlined as a critical priority.

Across the discussions, participants also highlighted the need to strengthen national strategies and policy mechanisms pertaining to culture and digital technologies, including through national digital heritage strategies – examples of which were shared by speakers. Some speakers referred to the necessary reshaping of existing policy frameworks, both as regards cultural and digital policies. In some cases, digital technologies were reported to be included in more comprehensive national cultural policy mechanisms. In other cases, existing policy documents were amended to encompass digital challenges in more systemic ways. Countries also exemplified ways in which digital technologies are likely to inform the shaping of cultural policies, allowing to monitor trends in more accurate ways, notably as regards audience development.

**RUSSIA**

Launched in 2019, the "Digital Culture" project aims to harness digital technologies to support the development of the national cultural sector, notably by providing new resources and infrastructure, as well as supporting accessibility and cultural participation.

**CANADA**

Bill C-11, also known as the Online Streaming Act, was introduced in 2022 by the Minister of Canadian Heritage to amend the Broadcasting Act and bring online platforms under its scope. The Act aims to ensure accessibility and representation for all Canadians, including those from diverse backgrounds based on race, ethnicity, socio-economic status, abilities, disabilities, sexual orientations, gender identities, and ages. It seeks to showcase Canadian stories and music on streaming services and support creators and producers, providing more opportunities for high-quality content creation. The government’s broader agenda is to make the online world fairer, more inclusive, and safer while supporting cultural and artistic ecosystems. The bill received royal assent in April 2023.

**INDONESIA**

The 2017 Law on Advancing the Culture or Pemajuan Kebudayaan seeks to protect and promote the country’s rich cultural diversity and heritage, using technology and media to safeguard tangible and intangible cultural heritage. It provides a legal framework based on principles of unity in diversity, tolerance and sustainability. The law notably covers provisions on rights, obligations, funding, appreciation, and sanctions related to cultural preservation and promotion.
Cultural Concierge is a one-stop digital platform created by the National Arts Council that aggregates all arts and culture events in the city. It comes with search, filter, recommendation and even booking capabilities. The application provides data on cultural consumption trends, allowing the government to better understand, engage and grow audiences.

Participants also underlined challenges to be addressed in the coming years by public policies, be it at the national, regional or international levels. Critical legal and ethical gaps, areas of imbalance and inequalities, as well as upcoming risks were outlined across the interventions, shaping areas of further policy engagement for the future. Making the digital environment a fairer, more inclusive and safer place was underlined as a key prospect. Some representatives of museums outlined challenges related to the digital curation of museum collections, notably as regards the existing legislation on public access to museum collections and the need to balance openness and the protection of intellectual property rights.

A vibrant call to bridge the digital divide in the cultural sector was voiced, highlighting this topic as the “new face of inequality”. A number of examples shared pointed to countries investing strongly in digital literacy and skills building, notably for youth, in order to build resilience to misinformation and critical thinking. This necessity becomes more pressing as misinformation spreads and the need for critical thinking becomes more acute. The challenge that the digital divide invites to reshape international cooperation patterns and priorities was reiterated as important to be addressed.

Many speakers emphasized that support should be provided to countries from the Global South to develop their infrastructure and access equipment in view of their cost, but also to develop context-relevant cultural contents. The issue of language was equally highlighted as a critical barrier to inclusive access and learning in the digital environment, which requires more robust commitment in the future, notably ensuring that digital technologies encompass the diversity of languages in their development.

Overall, the need to enable an inclusive approach to culture and digital technologies was reiterated across the board. It was emphasized that inclusivity, equity and accessibility should be the key priorities to be upheld by public policies. Some stressed the need to prioritise free and open access to digital cultural heritage. As acknowledged by some speakers, while new technologies can democratise access to culture, they can also be instruments of exclusion if they are not properly framed. Providing equal access to cultural resources to be set as a fundamental principle, echoing a rights-based approach was therefore highlighted as significant. Engaging women on an equal footing, as well as the youth, as major drivers of content, was stressed as a critical endeavor. Similarly, promoting exposure to cultural diversity in the digital environment and protecting the cultural and linguistic diversity of online content were reaffirmed as crucial. Several speakers also underlined the need to adapt formats and contents to younger audiences, outlining innovative experiences in that regard.
Lokapala, a meticulously crafted game born in 2020, is the product of extensive research into historical sites, artefacts, inscriptions, and manuscripts. Drawing from this rich tapestry of knowledge, the game reintroduces eight leadership values once revered by ancient kings and still relevant in our modern era. Journeying through myth and history, players encounter legendary figures who embody these cherished virtues. What’s even more intriguing is that the game’s intellectual property is poised to promote history and cultural literacy through an array of derivative products.

Developing ethical guidelines to frame culture in the digital environment was highlighted as a major area of engagement in the coming years. The fact that AI mediates culture, and may thus perpetuate stereotypes and misrepresentation, was brought to the fore as a major source of concern by some speakers. Countries also underlined the need to develop frameworks for assessing bias and transparency, including ethical oversights. It was emphasized that the digital environment should be protected as an environment for free and safe expressions, supporting diversity and democracy more broadly. Some countries reported the development of dedicated national think tanks with a view to inform the shaping of national policies in the field of culture and digital technologies.

The ethical approach to scaling digital technologies was reiterated with regard to issues of security, privacy, and diversity, both in content and as regards languages. The need to strike a balance between openness and fairness on the one side, protection and privacy on the other, was brought to the fore. As summarized by one speaker, “the digital should be as open as possible and as closed as necessary”. While the tools exist, it is paramount to create the right framework. These ethical implications also relate to issues of copyright and intellectual property rights, as well as the commercial use of digital assets. In this regard, supporting standardization globally, addressing data security gaps, and strengthening copyright and intellectual property rights frameworks were highlighted as deserving urgent attention and concerted action at the international level, as these issues raise critical questions of ethics and governance. Notions of scale, interoperability, discoverability, and standardization were brought to the fore as important principles in the near future, particularly with regard to open data.

The Alan Turing Institute was founded as a charity in 2015 to support the country’s ambition to be a global leader in data science and AI. The institute seeks to transform high-profile, fast moving and complex developments in data science and AI into research-backed recommendations. Objectives include training people across sectors and career stages, using data science and AI to improve policymaking and the delivery of public services, and driving an informed public conversation on the technical, social and ethical aspects of data science and AI.
In 2019, the Digital Citizen Initiative commenced funding community-based activities and awareness initiatives as part of a comprehensive campaign to promote social inclusion and democracy. The primary objectives are to enhance citizen resilience against internet misinformation and foster collaborations that uphold a robust information ecosystem. Additionally, the initiative provides support to a community of Canadian researchers, enabling them to examine the impact of online disinformation and devise evidence-based strategies and policies to tackle this issue.

Collaboratively, the government and private entities have released comprehensive reference guidelines for stakeholders in the cultural sector seeking to digitize cultural assets, with a particular focus on addressing copyright implications.

The need for international and regional regulatory and policy frameworks to address such disparities and challenges was also underlined. In that regard, some speakers emphasized the need to uphold a human rights approach. A strong call was voiced towards promoting open-data and open-access within the cultural sector, notably encouraging the expansion and maintenance of open-access resources in the digital culture. Several examples of such policy mechanisms were shared across the discussions. International organizations are increasingly joining efforts to engage in the development of guidelines intended to frame the digitization of cultural heritage or promoting data-sharing standards to guarantee universal access to cultural heritage data. Likewise, a number of regional organizations have issued specific strategies or policy frameworks intended to support their respective member states in addressing notably copyright issues. Some speakers called upon upholding, as applied to the cultural sector, the existing FAIR and CARE principles – guidelines intended to ensure the accessibility, interoperability, reusability, and sustainability of data, urging for a collaborative and participatory approach.

The EU Directive 2029/790 on Copyright and Related Rights in the Digital Single Market (2019) aims to achieve fairer remuneration for creators and right-holders, especially as regards online use of their works, while increasing transparency with online platforms. It also safeguards EU citizens’ freedom of expression online, allowing legitimate content sharing.
Specific concerns were also expressed over protecting the integrity of digital archives over time, particularly in the face of climate and cyber threats. Speakers notably discussed, across their presentations, the importance to enable the interoperability of tools, to ensure the validity and integrity of data, to support standardization, but also to address the ecological footprint of digital technologies in the long run. Some speakers recommended to avoid platform dependant solutions in favor of decentralised data sharing. Issues of maintenance and obsolescence were also put to the fore in a fast-evolving digital environment, requiring further policy attention as underlined by several speakers. Some speakers stressed the need to support cultural institutions in keeping pace with technological advances, notably ensuring that cultural data is still readable and accessible in the long run. Such challenge call for an enabling national policy framework, including guidelines as relevant.

SAUDI ARABIA

The Culture Archive centre: Safeguarding Saudi Cultural Heritage

In collaboration with relevant authorities, the Ministry of Culture initiated the establishment of the Culture Archive centre, aiming to bolster the culture sector’s endeavors and facilitate the preservation, protection, identification, and digitalisation of Saudi Arabia’s cultural heritage. To support cultural institutions and concerned bodies, the centre released a comprehensive guide encompassing essential guidelines and mandatory procedures. This guide serves to develop national standards, unify methodologies, enhance cooperation and coordination among involved parties, encourage public participation, and promote the intergenerational transmission of traditional and modern knowledge through formal and non-formal education.

TÜRKIYE

MUES Inventory System

The MUES Inventory System is a comprehensive database developed by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism (MoCT), designed to store information on 154 archaeological sites, 123 museums, and 3.5 million artefacts. It has resulted in standardized museum methodologies and the creation of digital twins for various operations like inventory management, conservation, and anti-smuggling actions. MUES functions as an information system catering to authorized users, researchers, scientists, and visitors, allowing querying, monitoring, and management of artefacts in line with museology concepts. The system has revolutionised conventional museum documentation, providing a fast, secure, reliable, and user-friendly solution for efficient management of inventories.

Looking forward, participating countries and organizations formulated possible pathways to inform public policies in the coming years.

Enhancing learning, knowledge, and skills in the area of digital technologies for culture was identified as critical, with a view to equipping younger generations with necessary skills to embrace the full potential of digital technologies, to enjoy and shape new cultures, and to develop new practices. The critical importance to address the skills gap, attract youth in culture-related occupation, and keep pace with the fast-evolving digital landscape, was recalled across the board, requiring sustained capacity building as well as technical and vocational training.
Several examples were shared, including cultural scholarship programs through digital technologies or specialized training targeting notably museum staff or professionals in the fight against illicit trafficking. The necessity to expand digital capacities with the aim to fully utilize the potential of digital technologies for cultural preservation and protection, while addressing persistent digital gaps, was highlighted. The necessity that the requirements of the Global South and SIDS should be particularly addressed was also emphasized as critical. Overall, speakers called for the need for a prospective approach and broader engagement in foresight, with a view to anticipate the necessary skills in a fast-evolving policy landscape.

The Ministry of Culture and Sports initiated the Project for Technologies Applied to Cultural Heritage, aiming to train 10,000 professionals in utilizing technological tools for digitalisation, conservation, documentation, management, dissemination, and enhancement of cultural heritage. As part of the Recovery, Transformation, and Resilience Plan, the 375-hour training project in collaboration with Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia (UNED) offers free access to various degree holders and individuals from low-density areas. Besides facilitating the digitalisation of cultural heritage, the programme addresses educational exclusion and fosters economic innovation within the culture sector.

**JAPAN**

**Project to Support Emerging Media Arts Creators**

As part of the “Project to Support Nurturing of Media Arts Creators”, the Agency for Cultural Affairs and the Government of Japan have launched the programme “Emerging Media Arts Creators” with the aim of supporting the talents of tomorrow. During their stay in Tokyo, artists and creators discover the Japanese Media Arts sector. This programme provides an opportunity for participants from all around the world to discuss and exchange with Japanese artists to discover new perspectives, thus encouraging multicultural dialogue.

**SINGAPORE**

**Training on Digital Technologies for Heritage Professionals: Towards an Inclusive Cultural Sector**

The Singapore Traditional Arts Centre developed an opera app that provided educational materials and also served as a platform for arts groups, schools and opera lovers to share information on performances. The app was enhanced using augmented reality technology and gaming features.

The issue of research and knowledge building was equally emphasized. A number of speakers put forth the importance of documenting the application of digital technologies for culture in more systemic ways to foster the understanding of trends and inform public policies. It was also stressed that interdisciplinary approaches and experimentation should be encouraged, as well as cross-collaborations across the academic world. A number of examples were introduced in this regard, including digital heritage labs and research programs on the use of prototype VR technology in
the cultural heritage sector. Some speakers brought to the fore the importance for public authorities to engage with the private sector in more sustained, systemic ways. Looking forward, some speakers called for public policies to strongly encourage such engagement in knowledge building, notably by rewarding innovative approaches that have a long-term impact and facilitating widespread knowledge transfer.

Finally, a determined commitment to international cooperation was strongly called for, as a matter of urgency in view of the fast pace of the digital landscape and the imperative to establish common standards that would meet the needs for continued expansion and open access, while also providing adequate protection frameworks. The importance of policy dialogue to bring together public authorities, international organizations, research entities, and the private sector, more broadly, was highlighted as crucial. In that regard, sustaining the conversation on culture and the digital technologies as part of the G20 Culture workstream, including through strengthened linkages with other relevant workstreams, was firmly called upon. The need to design more systemic and sustainable funding mechanisms was also consistently underlined.

Speakers shared several examples of regional or international policy frameworks or mechanisms. Some speakers shared that the recent adoption by UNESCO of a Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence in 2021 – the first of its kind – could provide a basis for the development of international guidelines, policy guidance, and frameworks to protect and promote culture. North/South and South/South cooperation was further called upon, in view of the persisting digital divide, towards supporting countries in digitalising cultural contents and fostering capacity building. Assessing good practices in the use of digital technologies and their application to culture was also strongly advocated, including by networking existing digital platforms.

**EUROPEAN UNION**

Promoting a coherent and sustainable digital transformation across the cultural and creative sectors, as well as supporting the discoverability of diverse cultural content in the digital environment, are among the core components of the EU Work Plan for Culture 2023–2026.

**AFRICAN UNION (AU)**

The AU Plan of Action on Cultural and Creative Industries focuses notably on leveraging digital technologies in the cultural and creative industries. The plan aims to develop and improve ICT infrastructure for equitable access, educate citizens on ICT utilization, strengthen policies to safeguard cultural goods, and promote technology-based schemes for commercialisation purposes as well. It also emphasizes integrating cultural infrastructure planning, encouraging partnerships for infrastructure funding, and promoting creative activities on virtual platforms for increased accessibility.
The government has taken a significant step towards fostering international cooperation by sharing its advanced system of documentation and information register of collections with other countries in Latin America. This initiative aims to promote collaboration and harness synergies among nations in the cultural sphere. By allowing access to digital solutions, countries can now exchange valuable insights and knowledge, enhancing their collective efforts in preserving and promoting cultural heritage. This shared endeavor underscores the importance of mutual cooperation and the power of technology in strengthening cultural ties across borders.
List of participants

Leveraging Digital Technologies for the Protection and Promotion of Culture

G20 Members

Dr. Lisa Slade, Assistant Director, Artistic Programs, Art Gallery of South Australia, Australia

Mr. Laio Veloso, Coordinator of bilateral and multilateral affairs of the Ministry of Culture, Brazil

Ms. Michel Sabbagh, Director General, Broadcasting, Copyright, and Creative Marketplace Branch, Canada

Mr. Yuan Tianxiu, Research fellow, deputy chief of the Conservation and Research Division, director of the Cultural Heritage Digitalisation Institute, Dunhuang Academy, China

Mr. Olivier Fontaine, Team Leader International Cultural Relations, European Union

Ms. Anne Dubile, Assistant to the Head of the National Museums Steering Office, in charge of prospecting at the French Museums Department, Directorate General of Heritage, Ministry of Culture, France

Dr. Roman Luckscheiter, Secretary-General, German Commission for UNESCO, Germany

Mr. Anand Mahindra, Chairman of the Mahindra Group, India

Mr. Ivan Chen Sui Liang, Chief of CAKRA Association and CEO of Anantarupa, Indonesia

Ms. Debjani Ghosh, President of the National Association of Software & Services Companies (NASSCOM), India

Mr. Masaya Seki, Lawyer, Japan

Mr. Daniel Escamilla, Coordinator for Editorial Content and Radio, Digital Culture centre (CCD), Mexico

Mr. Eunju Shin, Assistant Director of the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism, Republic of Korea

Mr. Vadim Duda, Director of the Russian State Library Vadim Duda, Russia

Mr. Assel Sayer Aljaied, Cultural Archive Senior Specialist, Saudi Arabia

Mr. Moleleki Ledimo, Director: Arts and Youth Development, South Africa

Ms. Irmak Güneş Yüceil, Restorator, Türkiye

Mr. Ed Fay, Director of Library Services & University Librarian, United Kingdom

Ms. Elizabeth Lee, CyArk, Vice President of Programs and Development, United States of America

Guest Nations

Mr. Md. Sakhawat Hossain, System Analyst, Ministry of Cultural Affairs, Bangladesh

Ms. Nahla Emam, Advisor of the Minister of Culture for Intangible Cultural Heritage, Egypt
Mr. Vikram Neeraj Boodhun, Director of Culture, Ministry of Arts and Cultural Heritage, Mauritius

Ms. Eef Masson, Ministry of Education, Science and Culture, Netherlands

Ms. Maryam Nasser Alkhrooshi, Director of the cultural identity department, Oman

Mr. Victor Ang, Chief Information Officer, National Arts Council, Singapore

Ms. Pilar Rubiales, General Directorate of Cultural Heritage and Fine Arts, Ministry of Culture and Sport, Spain

Mr. Mahmood Al Najjar, Chief Project Manager at the Ministry of Culture and Youth, United Arab Emirates

**International Organizations**

Ms. Vicensia Shule, Senior Cultural Officer, Department of Health, Humanitarian Affairs and Social Development, African Union

Mr. Joseph King, Senior Director, Office of the Director-General, International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM)

Ms. Sophie Delepierre, Head of Heritage Protection Department, International Council of Museums (ICOM)

Mr. Gai Jorajev, President of the ICOMOS International Scientific Committee on Aerospace Heritage International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS)

Ms. Marisa Henderson, Chief of the Creative Economy and Development Programme, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)

Mr. Lazare Eloundou Assomo, Director of UNESCO World Heritage, UNESCO

Ms. Heba Aziz, Director of the Arab Regional Centre for World Heritage, UNESCO Chair for World Heritage Management and Sustainable Tourism

Dr. Michelle de Gruchy, Analyst – Archaeology & Cultural Heritage, United Nations Satellite Centre (UNOSAT)
List of references


G20 CULTURE

Shaping the Global Narrative for Inclusive Growth

In the framework of the Culture Working Group (CWG), under India’s G20 Presidency, a series of four Global Thematic Webinars were organized between March and April 2023 to foster an inclusive dialogue and facilitate an in-depth discussion from an expert driven perspective on the four priority areas articulated by the G20 CWG - Protection and Restitution of Cultural Property; Harnessing Living Heritage for a Sustainable Future; Promotion of Cultural and Creative Industries and Creative Economy; and, Leveraging Digital Technologies for the Protection and Promotion of Culture.

The Global Thematic Webinars were intended to inform the proceedings of the CWG with a view to shape the action-oriented outcomes of the Culture Workstream across four meetings. Organised by the Ministry of Culture, Government of India, the webinars were hosted and facilitated by UNESCO as a knowledge partner of G20 CWG.

www.unesco.org/en/sustainable-development/culture/G20