

**Discours de Madame Danielle Cliche
Secrétaire de la Convention sur la protection and promotion de la diversité des
expressions culturelles**

**Conférence interparlementaire sur la
diversité des expressions culturelles
2 février 2011**

Monsieur le Président de l'Assemblée nationale du Québec,
Monsieur le Premier ministre du Québec,
Monsieur le Secrétaire général de l'Organisation Internationale de la
Francophonie,
Monsieur le Maire de Québec,
Mesdames et Messieurs les parlementaires,
Chers collègues,

J'aimerais remercier les organisateurs de nous avoir rassemblés pour
cet événement qui suscitera des discussions et inspirera des idées et
des actions qui déboucheront sur une stratégie commune.

La Convention sur la protection et la promotion de la diversité des
expressions culturelle est singulière. Ce texte normatif est loin d'être
prescriptif. Il établit des normes sans pour autant chercher à imposer
des formats. Il signale la direction tout en proposant un nombre infini de
chemins pour y accéder.

Certains auraient préféré une Convention énumérant des règles spécifiques à tout un chacun. Néanmoins, les parents fondateurs de la Convention voulaient autre chose. Leur objectif était d'élaborer un cadre innovant et flexible à la portée de toutes les parties prenantes. L'ambition était de promouvoir un cadre de gouvernance basé sur la culture et le développement.

Pour tout dire, ce qui compte est ce que les Parties prenantes en font.

Ce défi permet de vraiment changer les choses, de mettre en place des mécanismes nécessaires à la croissance, au développement et à la prospérité du secteur de la culture. D'offrir aux créateurs l'opportunité que leur travail soit reconnu et récompensé. D'assurer au grand public l'accès à une diversité d'expressions culturelles.

Cette discussion que nous entamons aujourd'hui est très importante. Elle démontrera l'actualité du texte de la Convention qui ne cesse de s'imposer. Et nous allons partager nos expériences pour en tirer des leçons.

Madame Saouma-Forero a souligné et remercié les organisateurs d'autoriser, pour l'occasion, au nom de la diversité des expressions culturelles, l'utilisation de l'anglais et de l'espagnol! Je vais donc saisir cette opportunité pour continuer en anglais.

Operational Guidelines

Over the past three years, the decision making bodies of the Convention – namely the Conference of Parties and the Intergovernmental Committee – have been working hard to provide the framework needed to achieve concrete goals. To guide stakeholders in their work to turn theory into practice.

The operational guidelines provide a road map rather than a recipe for what to do next. They set boundaries but push others open. They leave space for countries to put in place policies, measures and activities that meet the needs of their stakeholders while at the same time providing common foundations for such action that can eventually facilitate international cooperation. This is especially important on issues of mobility of artists as well as the flow of cultural goods and services, particularly those from the global south. Reciprocity between countries is key.

The Guidelines break new ground in decoding what is meant by “the integration of culture in sustainable development” and call upon public authorities from the economic, environmental, social and cultural sectors to work together to establish and realize common goals.

These guidelines recognize the important contribution of the emergence of viable and independent cultural industries and enterprises, in particular those that are micro, small or medium in size in order to achieve sustainable development. They underline that long-term investment in infrastructure, institutions, and technologies are important components, but that investment in human capacities is also crucial.

New guidelines on education and raising public awareness have recently been adopted. They propose an integrated approach in the design and implementation of educational programmes that promote the objectives and principles of the Convention. This should involve strengthening the ties between culture and education at the policy, programme and institutional levels. The guidelines also recognize that professions in the field of the cultural industries have undergone rapid change and that training programmes for these professionals must reflect such changes. Building partnerships between training institutions and the relevant private sector companies has been suggested as one solution to bridge the gaps between skills required and education provided.

The quadriannual periodic reports on measures Parties have taken to promote the diversity of cultural expressions will be submitted in 2012. These reports should not just take up space on our computers or book shelves but become working tools and platforms for sharing experiences. The recently adopted Guidelines on the format and content of these reports call on Parties to provide qualitative and quantitative information and analyze how, why, when and with what impact, measures have been introduced. But that is not all. Parties, in particular from developed countries, are invited to report on measures they have taken to foster preferential treatment for developing countries. Parties from developing countries are invited to report on their specific priorities, needs and interests as well as on their operational action plan to optimize international cooperation.

Another crucial and unique feature of these periodic reports is that this is the first time that an expressed involvement is given to civil society in the

preparation of Convention reports. Each country can decide how this will work in practice, however, it does place the responsibility on both the Parties and civil society actors to ensure a participatory process.

We first must make sure that there is a level playing field as to the availability of information, data and expertise in all countries required to produce well documented periodic reports. We must therefore work together so that all Parties have the means to do so. Operational guidelines on information and knowledge sharing activities were also recently adopted. In addition to ensuring that the relevant information and data collection infrastructure is in place, the guidelines encourage Parties to provide support for the exchange or mentoring of professionals, especially young professionals as part of a larger and globally networked capacity building exercise. This is a process that will take time and great effort from all involved including from the Secretariat.

Moving to Implementation

With the operational guidelines in hand, we can now build on the secure foundations that have been laid by many people in this room and enter into a new phase of implementation with confidence as well as with some pressure to live up to the expectations that are placed on all of us.

The Operational Guidelines are indeed explicit about the roles and responsibilities not only of the Parties and the UNESCO Secretariat, but also for public institutions, civil society, the private sector as well as parliamentarians. Everyone is encouraged to read them carefully and develop their own “to do list” on what steps can be taken in the short to medium term in order to achieve longer term goals.

Parliamentarians are in fact uniquely positioned to promote the Convention, to inspire and to educate on the domestic front, and to connect, exchange and learn on an international platform. These roles are mutually reinforcing, allowing domestic constituencies to benefit from the experiences of the international community and vice versa.

So what concretely can parliamentarians do today? And tomorrow?

There are at least 8 different ways Parliamentarians can contribute:

1. approve / ratify the Convention;
2. take a leadership role in setting priorities from among the main thematic pillars of the Convention whether they are related to the introduction of cultural policies and measures that nurture creativity, to the integration of culture into sustainable development strategies or to the promotion of international cooperation to facilitate the mobility of artists and their works
3. allocate / adopt budgets to support both domestic priorities and those supporting international priorities such as contributing to the International Fund for Cultural Diversity;
4. adopt new legislation or modify existing laws that reflect the principles and objectives of the Convention;
5. hold policy debates with public authorities but also with civil society, private sector and small and medium-sized cultural

enterprises who have indeed a lot to gain from the Convention and its implementation;

6. adapt and disseminate the Convention's legal text in easy to understand language that responds to the needs and contexts of their constituencies;
7. act as a catalyst or convener to ensure high level visibility of the Convention on the ground by organizing, for example, cultural events, performances, audio-visual productions, flashmobs, or communication campaigns;
8. act as a channel that connects to the international community and brings new ideas back to the domestic level.

The question remains, how does the Secretariat support your work?

In September of 2010, UNESCO launched a two-year project that is funded by the European Union to strengthen the system of governance for culture in developing countries. Targeted at national and local authorities, specific technical assistance missions are carried out by top experts in the field of cultural policies. They are designed to provide expert support for implementing the 2005 Convention on the legislative, policy and programme level.

UNESCO is also finalizing a set of tools that set out an approach on how to develop policies that can support different stages of the value chain

spelled out in the Convention from creation to production, distribution to exhibition, enjoyment and participation. The “Policy Guides” will be published in Spanish and in French before the end of this year.

One of the most important ways in which the Convention Secretariat can support stakeholders’ initiatives is through its function as a clearinghouse for information – and this can only be achieved if you share your initiatives with us. We can not invent stories nor the challenges and lessons learned that you would like to share with us and your colleagues around the world. We need your input.

Conclusion

Yes, the Convention is an international law that was adopted five years ago and entered into force almost three years ago. Let us remember that a tremendous amount of work has been achieved to first secure the future of the Convention, to ensure that decision-making is carried out in all transparency, to prepare the operational guidelines that decode the Convention’s legal text and that define the roles and responsibilities of each stakeholder to implement the Convention. The pilot phase of the International Fund for Cultural Diversity has been launched. This work has been achieved at unprecedented speed in the normal process of international standard-setting instruments and mechanisms.

This demonstrates the urgency of stakeholders around the world and their commitment to constantly move forward.

Today, there are new urgent voices that call for us all to enter quickly into a new phase in the life of the Convention, to take action to apply its

principles and objectives in real life. The success of this action will come down to political will and cooperation among all stakeholders to engage with the ideas in the Convention and bring them to life.

As we now move together into this new phase, I would like to end my intervention with a familiar voice to many in this room - that of Professor Kadar Asmal who when talking about the new generations taking forward the values and principles embedded in the Convention usually quoted the playwright and author Ben Okri:

“They are only the exhausted
Who think that they have arrived
At their final destination
The end of the road

With all their dreams achieved and no new dreams to hold.”

Let us now use this opportunity today to share our experiences and continue down the road full of energy because the Convention holds an infinitely large chest of new dreams to realize.