



**A
CULTURE
GOAL**
IS ESSENTIAL FOR
OUR COMMON FUTURE

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Culture is effectively missing from the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Yet no one would argue that culture is irrelevant to the 2030 Agenda. Indeed, the United Nations General Assembly Declaration enshrining the 2030 Agenda refers to its importance, but there is no language specifying this “contribution” is, detracting from the Agenda’s supposedly “integrated and indivisible” character.

As reflection starts on the challenges and terms of reference of a post-2030 Agenda for the international community and for humanity as a whole, it is timely to consider how culture could, as early as possible, take its proper place in the commitments, goals and targets to be adopted in due course through the mechanisms of the United Nations.

Achieving this would help a sound consideration of the cultural shifts that are an essential aspect of the fulfilment, in dignity and equality, of the potential of all human beings, via explicit wording related to culture, as well as via education, gender equality, sustainable production and consumption, liveable cities, climate action, peace, justice, inclusion and beyond. It would also provide a means of avoiding artificial divisions between the social, economic and environmental pillars of sustainable development, as well as anchoring of the post-2030 Agenda in a culture of sustainability.

This document explores the structural absence of culture from the SDGs, and suggests the reasons for this, before turning to current issues, including the challenges that those leading the preparation of any post-2030 framework will need to address, including the framing of an agenda, the management of interconnections between goals, and a stronger implementation architecture, while also drawing on the successes that the current agenda has brought.

Next, it looks at the current landscape of debates around what development itself is, and the place of culture within it, noting a welcome move towards better consideration of cultural factors as part of a pluralistic definition. It argues that culture may also contribute to overcoming the ‘pillarisation’ of development, providing a new dimension that can help overcome tensions and unlocking transformation.

It also sets out the results of a survey of stakeholders around the place of culture in development, launched by the campaign in June 2022 with responses from all world regions. The results offer insights into the impact of a lack of a Culture Goal in the current Agenda, and the value of having one in future, as well as suggestions for ways forward on advocacy.

Finally, the paper presents a zero draft of a Culture Goal: to ensure cultural sustainability for the wellbeing of all. It offers ten potential targets, ranging from cultural rights and a culture of peace to the preservation of heritage and protection of diverse expressions. It also establishes the need to protect the rights of professionals and enhance legal frameworks, to empower indigenous peoples, and to develop a cultural approach in environmental protection and sustainable urbanisation.

The Culture 2030 Goal campaign looks forward to working with all relevant stakeholders, using this document as a basis, to advance efforts to realise the potential of culture to drive sustainable development.



5 REASONS WHY WE NEED A DEDICATED CULTURE GOAL

- 1** TO ENSURE ADEQUATE FOCUS ON CULTURE AT THE HIGHEST LEVEL OF GOVERNMENT.
- 2** TO ENSURE THAT THE RANGE OF CONNECTIONS BETWEEN CULTURE AND OTHER POLICY AREAS ARE FULLY ACCOUNTED FOR.
- 3** TO ENSURE THAT THE CULTURE SECTOR ITSELF FEELS A SENSE OF ENGAGEMENT IN AND OWNERSHIP OF THE GOALS.
- 4** TO ENSURE THAT ALL OTHER GOALS ARE ACTIVATED, AND THAT THEIR ACHIEVEMENT IS STRENGTHENED, THROUGH THE MOBILIZING POWER OF CULTURE.
- 5** TO ENSURE THAT THE ACHIEVEMENT OF ALL GOALS CAN BE PROTECTED FROM SYSTEMIC AND BEHAVIOURAL BARRIERS THAT CAN BE ADDRESSED THROUGH A CULTURAL LENS.



A CULTURE GOAL IS ESSENTIAL FOR OUR COMMON FUTURE

INTRODUCTION

Culture is effectively missing from the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Yet no one would argue that culture is irrelevant to the 2030 Agenda. Indeed, the United Nations General Assembly Declaration enshrining the 2030 Agenda mentions the importance of culture in paragraph 36: “We pledge to foster inter-cultural understanding, tolerance, mutual respect and an ethic of global citizenship and shared responsibility. We acknowledge the natural and cultural diversity of the world and recognize that all cultures and civilizations can contribute to, and are crucial enablers of, sustainable development.” But there is no language specifying this “contribution”, indicating what such an “ethic” might look like or giving an idea of what it might take to “foster” it.¹

There are both technical and political reasons for this gap, which is one of several detracting from the supposedly “integrated and indivisible” character of the Sustainable Development Goals. As reflection starts on the challenges and terms of reference of a post-2030 Agenda for the international community and for humanity as a whole, it is timely to consider how culture could, in future, take its proper place in the commitments, goals and targets to be adopted in due course through the mechanisms of the United Nations.

Achieving the stated targets, in areas as diverse as education, gender equality, sustainable production and consumption, liveable cities, action to combat climate change and its impacts, and peace, justice and inclusion, requires cultural shifts, which are an essential aspect of the fulfilment, in dignity and equality, of the potential of all human beings. This follows directly from Article 27(1) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which states that “Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits.” This right is to be understood in terms of the principle, affirmed in the preamble of the Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity, that

culture should be regarded as the set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features of society or a social group, and that it encompasses, in addition to art and literature, lifestyles, ways of living together, value systems, traditions and beliefs.

The contribution to sustainable development of culture, in the singular, and of cultures and civilizations, in the plural, is thus not merely sectoral. It is integrative and cross-cutting, avoiding what any artificial division between the social, economic and environmental pillars of sustainable development, and pointing to the necessary anchoring of the post-2030 Agenda in a culture of sustainability.

1 Available at https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3923923/files/A_RES_70_1-EN.pdf.



THE STRUCTURAL ABSENCE OF CULTURE FROM THE SDGS

When the Sustainable Development Goals were being finalized, between the Rio+20 conference in 2012 and their adoption by the UN General Assembly in September 2015, the inclusion of a specific focus on culture was of major concern to interested parties in the culture sector and beyond.

During the process of creation and adoption of the UN 2030 Agenda and the SDGs, several cultural global networks campaigned, under the banner “The Future We Want Includes Culture”, for the inclusion of one specific Goal devoted to culture, and the integration of cultural aspects across the SDGs. In the context of this #Culture2015goal campaign, four documents were produced: a Manifesto – Proposal for a Goal (September 2013), a Declaration on the Inclusion of Culture in the SDGs (May 2014), a proposal for indicators to measure the cultural aspects of the SDGs (February 2015), and a Communiqué on the Final 2030 Agenda (September 2015) which highlighted “progress made” but also noticed that “important steps remain ahead”.

In 2013, UCLG, a member of the steering group of the #Culture2015goal campaign, stated the ambition very clearly, in terms that are still relevant in 2022, in its advocacy briefing prepared in advance of the UNESCO International Congress “Culture: Key to Sustainable Development” held in Hangzhou:²

Culture must be brought to the stage. A critical mass of the international community is convinced that, contrary to a view of culture as ‘decorative’ or secondary to sustainable development, mainstreaming and integrating culture within development efforts are crucial to tackle a large number of these global challenges more effectively and sustainably. We believe that a Development Agenda cannot be successfully implemented if only three pillars (economy, social inclusion and environment) are considered. This 20th century paradigm is not useful to understand the world of today: these three dimensions alone do not reflect the complexity of our current societies. Moreover, today it is fully acknowledged that a paradigm that aims to transform the world must provide operational tools to improve freedoms and welfare. A three-pillar paradigm fails because it lacks a soul, the values, practices and expressions providing coherence and meaning to development in cities, nations and in our existence as human beings: culture.

The essential contribution of culture, in all its manifestations, to the international development agenda was further elaborated in the document published by the #Culture2015goal campaign in May 2014, the “Declaration on the Inclusion of Culture in the Sustainable Development Goals”,³ which affirmed the belief that:

² Available at https://www.agenda21culture.net/sites/default/files/hangzhou_-_position_-_eng.pdf.

³ Available at http://culture2030goal.net/sites/default/files/2022-03/EN_2-declaration-culture-sdgs-post2015.pdf.



- a. strong cultural organizations and participation can play a key role in preventing conflict by promoting dialogue and a diversity of cultural expressions*
- b. development means participation in the cultural life of the community and access to the arts as fundamental human rights asserted in the Universal Declaration on Human Rights*
- c. as the fourth dimension of sustainable development, culture is as essential as the economic, social and environmental dimensions; and therefore, the safeguarding of heritage, diversity, creativity and the transmission of knowledge are integral to sustainable development*
- d. human development thrives on creativity, creative expression, the arts and cultural heritage as means of emotional and psychological catharsis, intellectual stimulation and the exploration, celebration and transformation of the human condition within given circumstances*
- e. social development requires creativity, a diversity of creative expressions, the arts and cultural heritage as means of education, social cohesion, intercultural dialogue and the building of national identity*

This ambitious framing and these solid arguments offered a strong analytical basis for the demand expressed in the #Culture2015goal campaign's 2013 Manifesto:⁴

Because culture is both a vector to foster other sustainable development goals and a development end in itself, a specific Goal is needed in order to reinforce the potential of cultural resources for sustainable development and to achieve their long-term sustainable use for current and future generations.

Yet, in the SDG framework as adopted in 2015, culture is specifically referred to only in passing, in targets relating to other goals:⁵

4.7 *By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a*

⁴ Available at http://culture2030goal.net/sites/default/files/2022-03/EN_1-culture-as-goal.pdf.

⁵ In addition, there are references to issues of cultural significance, though not to culture specifically, in certain other targets, such as:

2.5 By 2020, maintain the genetic diversity of seeds, cultivated plants and farmed and domesticated animals and their related wild species, including through soundly managed and diversified seed and plant banks at the national, regional and international levels, and promote access to and fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge, as internationally agreed.

8.3 Promote development-oriented policies that support productive activities, decent job creation, entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation, and encourage the formalization and growth of micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises, including through access to financial services.

16.10 Ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and international agreements.



culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development.

8.9 *By 2030, devise and implement policies to promote sustainable tourism that creates jobs and promotes local culture and products.*

11.4 *Strengthen efforts to protect and safeguard the world's cultural and natural heritage*

12.b *Develop and implement tools to monitor sustainable development impacts for sustainable tourism that creates jobs and promotes local culture and products.*

These references obviously do not do justice to “culture’s contribution to sustainable development” nor, at a less ambitious level, do they even add up pragmatically to a reasonable reflection of the importance of culture or any kind of comprehensive agenda for policy action. Culture is indeed not unique in this regard. It is striking that science is equally poorly represented as a way of relating to the world and as a set of institutional processes of great cultural significance.⁶ Only limited aspects of science as a knowledge base supporting technology are effectively reflected in the SDG targets. On the other hand, the structural absence of science has been better recognized and is alleviated both by the nature of SDGs 13, 14 and 15 and by the key role assumed in achieving them by intergovernmental science bodies such as the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and the Intergovernmental Panel on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services.

While it is impossible to give a full answer to the question why an SDG focused on culture was not adopted in September 2015, and why global discussion on its existence was poor in the period 2012-15, some pointers emerge from analysis of the conditions in which the 2030 Agenda was developed. They are of significance in terms of planning future advocacy and mobilization. While circumstances have changed considerably in the intervening decade, they are not clearly more favourable, and many of the structural constraints are similar. For present purposes, four factors deserve specific comment:

1. Culture has, in certain areas, an established and well-structured set of intergovernmental mechanisms that could be perceived – however wrongly – as offering an alternative to incorporation within the SDGs. These mechanisms, mainly embedded in UNESCO, cover the various aspects of heritage as well as diversity of cultural expressions. This may have limited the commitment of state actors as well as the UN to specific incorporation of culture. Yet the formal incorporation of international climate policy in SDG 13, with an explicit indication that the UNFCCC constitutes the primary framework for international cooperation, is a reminder that the SDGs were intended to

⁶ The connection between science and culture in this regard has been in international discussion. Thus, an in-depth analysis of the place of science to achieve the SDGs also identifies “culture” as a “key missing issue”. See Independent Group of Scientists appointed by the Secretary-General, *Global Sustainable Development Report 2019: The Future is Now – Science for Achieving Sustainable Development*, United Nations, New York, 2019, p. 117.



pull together existing frameworks, not just create new ones. Furthermore, even in areas already covered by international legal instruments, inclusion in the SDGs serves to elevate issues, making clear that they should be on policy coordination agendas, not just under the purview of one ministry or agency. This suggests that future advocacy efforts should explicitly emphasize embedding existing cultural mechanisms within the international development framework.

2. Recognizing the relative autonomy of the existing culture conventions and their limitations, a tactical choice was made within UNESCO to focus on cultural industries in the elaboration of the SDGs. It appears that this choice was not explained or made accountable to the global cultural community.⁷ While there were sound economic arguments for a focus on cultural industries, and some political support for it, it was clearly at odds with the non-sectoral approach adopted in the elaboration and drafting process. Furthermore, this non-sectoral approach, while it has clear limitations and has not prevented silo'd thinking in SDG implementation, was undoubtedly a requirement of any agenda that wished to present itself as integrated and indivisible. For this reason, a cultural industries approach, even expanded to include non-market cultural institutions, is unlikely to gain traction in the future.

3. It is unclear whether, in 2012-2015, there was a sufficiently coherent coalition of non-state actors to create the conditions in which states would have been required to take account of advocacy for the inclusion of culture within the SDGs. Differences of opinion are entirely normal in early-stage development, and clearly no SDG drafting can satisfy all interested parties. But stakeholder disagreement at the high-level advocacy stage is likely to be highly counterproductive. Intergovernmental outcomes such as the SDGs depend crucially on consensus, which in turn depends on the capacity not to open everything to discussion.

4. It is clear that, while cultural ministries and agencies in many states may have been sympathetic in principle to the role of culture in creating the conditions for sustainable development – sympathetic enough to mention it explicitly in the UN General Assembly Declaration establishing the 2030 Agenda in September 2015 – there was insufficient traction for any particular state to demand inclusion. There are two lessons from this. The first is that agenda items in intergovernmental processes ultimately depend on state champions. And the second is that if the inclusion of an item is still open late in the intergovernmental process (in the case of the SDGs, after the end of the 2012 Rio Conference), then it is likely to be dropped in order to achieve consensus on the final package.

⁷ This has not yet been analysed in-depth. In fact, the most “explicit” conclusion of the UNESCO advocacy on the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda (at that time, the “post-2015 Development Agenda”) was the Hangzhou Declaration, approved in May 2013, whose final paragraph affirms: “We recommend, therefore, that a specific Goal focused on culture be included as part of the post-2015 UN development agenda, to be based on heritage, diversity, creativity and the transmission of knowledge and including clear targets and indicators that relate culture to all dimensions of sustainable development”. Why this clear statement was not openly promoted by UNESCO between May 2013 and July 2014 remains unexplained. See <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000221238>.



OVERVIEW OF CURRENT ISSUES

In light of this well-studied real-world experience, the question of a dedicated sustainable development Goal for Culture needs to be sensitive not just to what was not achieved in the run-up to 2015, but also to the dynamics of change that will be reflected in the post-2030 development agenda, including the consideration of culture as a global public good, as envisaged in the elaboration of the UNESCO Mondiacult 2022 Final Declaration. In this respect, building on what had attracted wide non-state support in an earlier phase of work, it is important to have a vision that is sufficiently flexible to adapt over time to political agendas that are currently largely unknown, and at the same time sufficiently powerful to contribute to the shaping of those agendas.

With this in mind, it is helpful to seize the main limitations of the SDG framework as adopted and the implications of the uneven progress made in achieving it.

The first limitation is the (politically understandable) failure to give a clear, explicit account of why the 2030 Agenda was needed in the first place. Whereas the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were designed as a narrow, focused response to identified priorities, with well-defined urgency, and limited to “developing countries”, the SDGs were expanded to a comprehensive worldview, but without an analytical understanding of what world it was a view for. This does not necessarily hamper the definition or even the achievement of specific targets considered in isolation – e.g. in areas such as education or gender equality – but does make it challenging to frame broad cross-cutting approaches to issues that connect potentially to every aspect of the overall agenda. This is clearly the case of the idea of a “culture of sustainable development”.

The second limitation is the ineffective conceptualization and management of interconnections between the goals, despite clear recognition at UN level of their importance. In some cases – e.g. climate action as it relates to sustainable production and consumption or to energy access – this creates unresolved contradictions. In other cases, it may encourage states and non-state stakeholders to adopt a silo approach to goals that resonate considerably beyond their ostensible boundaries, notably with respect to gender equality, reduction of inequalities, and peace, justice and inclusion. This constitutes an additional barrier to any kind of comprehensive approach to culture as a dimension or component of sustainable development, encouraging precisely the kind of narrow “cultural industries” approach that failed in 2012-15.

The third limitation is the poor definition of the implementation architecture, whether in terms of political mobilization, financial resources or multistakeholder partnership. Efforts are thus devoted to raising resources for an agenda that was not constructed in any coherent way with resource mobilization requirements in mind – and tend for this reason to be ineffective. Any future inclusion of culture in the post-2030 agenda would need to consider this challenge in advance.



It is now moot whether the conditions for successful achievement of the 2030 Agenda were in place by, say, late 2019. The Covid-19 pandemic has fundamentally changed the parameters, derailing prior efforts towards established priorities while also calling into question whether an expansive, unprioritized agenda was the right approach in the first place. In addition, armed conflict and its systemic effects have further undercut the implicit assumption that fundamental progress could be made within the basic parameters of the existing global economic, trade and governance system – which often shades into the assumption that the existing system, given improved solidarity and redistribution, is actually the means through which progress can be achieved. In recognition of these transformed circumstances, there are some signs (e.g. the report *Our Common Agenda*,⁸ presented by the UN Secretary-General to the General Assembly in September 2021 in order to look ahead to the next 25 years, and the Summit of the Future to be held by the UN in September 2023) that steps are being considered to revisit, and possibly revise, the 2030 Agenda. This underlines the importance of a cultural lens for global progress, including one firmly anchored in a culture of peace, while also pointing to the obstacles in promoting such a lens. In particular, a cultural lens would help to interrogate, deconstruct and fundamentally ameliorate the entrenched problems that the current economic and governance system – defined in many parts of the world by the interplay between neo-liberal capitalism and populist authoritarianism – poses for the very idea of sustainability.

Nonetheless, critical as this perspective necessarily is, it should be stressed that the SDGs have had real and, in many ways, positive effects. Even when they have not been achieved, even when no clear pathway to achievement is identifiable, and even when indicators to assess achievement are absent, the SDGs have been adopted as a shared language shaping institutional strategic planning and management across a wide range of issues and levels. While this may sometimes be little more than box ticking, it has also fostered new partnerships and coalitions, as well as new enthusiasm and engagement, around SDG achievement, perhaps most noticeably in environmental policy areas, health, education, sustainable cities and gender equality. By contrast, SDGs covering e.g. sustainable production and consumption or peace, justice and inclusion are significantly less developed. This progress, limited though it is, underlines the downsides of the exclusion of culture from the original 2030 Agenda and emphasizes the forward-looking value of proposing and promoting a framework for culture, broadly understood, to be integrated in the international development framework. A shared language of development – taking account of the limits of the concept – cannot credibly exclude cultural considerations.

To put it simply, all of these critical assessments are both challenges and opportunities for the promotion of culture as a pillar or dimension of sustainable development, which was the “narrative” embraced by the Culture 2030 Goal campaign, among others, or, if one prefers, for a cultural understanding of sustainable development.

8 Available at <https://www.un.org/en/un75/common-agenda>.



They present substantial challenges to fitting culture within the existing framework. And they offer important opportunities to use culture as a lever to reshape the framework – for the period beyond 2030, and perhaps even earlier.

CULTURE AND “SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT”

In this respect, consideration of the implications of culture as a fourth pillar of sustainable development, alongside the social, economic and environmental pillars framed in Rio in 2012, goes to the heart of turning the challenges into opportunities.

First, long-standing criticism of the coupling of “sustainability” with “development” has achieved greater traction, notably as a result of the social and economic impacts of the pandemic. The politics of “sustainable development” were traditionally framed by the demand by developing countries that their right to development not be restricted by social and environmental standards set by developed countries effectively “kicking away the ladder” by which they themselves had historically developed.⁹ From the perspective of global justice, this concern has not changed, and has even been sharpened in some respects, as negotiations under e.g. the UNFCCC have shown. However, the idea of “development” as a well-defined, unitary notion for which broadly adequate proxies are available and universally applicable has evolved. The traction achieved by “beyond GDP (Gross domestic product)” approaches (led by the United Nations Development Programme – UNDP – in its Human Development Report series, and including recent initiatives under the aegis of the World Bank and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development – OECD) and “natural capital” and “social/human capital” methodologies (including by the United Nations Environment Programme – UNEP, the OECD and the International Union for Conservation of Nature – IUCN) has sharpened long-standing debates about the nature of development and opened a space in which more pluralistic ideas of development, embedded in distinctive cultures at national or subnational level, can be considered. Of particular significance in this regard is improved recognition of the cultural perspectives of Indigenous peoples.¹⁰

Secondly, the “pillarization” of sustainable development creates potential oppositions and thus trade-offs between the “social”, the “environmental” and the “economic”. Indeed, policy discourse about environmental protection within the limits of economic feasibility have attained renewed prominence in 2022 as concerns about post-pandemic macro-economic imbalances and the energy

⁹ Ha-Joon Chang, *Kicking Away the Ladder: Development Strategy in Historical Perspective*, Anthem Press, 2002.

¹⁰ “Summary for policymakers of the methodological assessment of the diverse values and valuation of nature of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES)”, as released on 9 July 2022.



crisis have bitten into national political debate in many countries. As for the idea of social and economic issues being somehow separate, and perhaps even in tension, it is arguably at the heart of the structural issues that make the 2030 Agenda both important and hard to achieve. Some actors would argue that enshrining the “cultural” as something distinct from the “social” and the “environmental” might prove equally counterproductive, while other actors would suggest that only a culture pillar would re-connect the other three and empower the connecting actors. Perhaps, proposing culture as an overarching framework or dimension to tie together and articulate the three existing pillars could become a compromise and would have the advantage of transformative ambition combined with pragmatic acceptance of the initial baseline.¹¹

Pulling together these preliminary considerations about flexibility and transformative power suggests that the most pragmatic approach could be to imagine a Goal for culture, as if it were fitting into the existing framework, but to draft it and above all frame and defend it as a challenge to the limitations emphasized above. In addition, it would appear appropriate to present the Goal in terms of the strategic desirability of a culture of sustainable development (understood pluralistically), while ensuring that specific Targets address the concerns of the cultural sectors and actors broadly understood and that Indicators can be proposed based on existing statistical information. At the same time – as in the case of some existing SDGs – transversal targets (numbered X.a rather than X.1) can be suggested as a way of capturing the necessarily strong cross-cutting connections between culture and other goals.

INDICATIONS FROM THE STAKEHOLDER SURVEY

In order to supplement the analytical information summarized in the previous section, and to canvass the views of various categories of stakeholders as to the connections between culture and sustainable development, an online survey was conducted by the #Culture2030Goal campaign in June 2022 on the significance of the current SDGs and the rationale for a future Culture Goal.

A total of 128 responses were received, covering a balanced range of different sectors as well as all regions. The regional distribution was however significantly skewed, with Western Europe and North America significantly over-represented and Africa, and particularly the Arab States, quite poorly represented.¹²

11 On this see further British Council, “The Missing Pillar. Culture’s Contribution to the UN Sustainable Development Goals”, 2020.

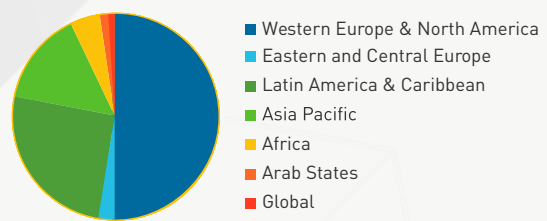
12 The nomenclature of the sectors was self-attributed by respondents following the selection proposed in the survey. For convenience, the regional nomenclature follows UNESCO’s established groupings.



Distribution of respondent by sector

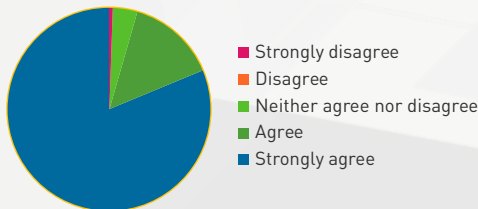


Distribution of respondent by region

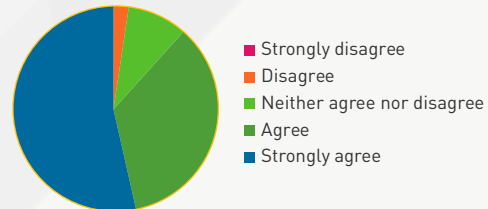


A broad consensus emerges from the responses as to the significance of culture as a driver of sustainable development. Furthermore, respondents report that this is anchored in their own professional experience, albeit with a slightly lower degree of agreement.

To what extent do you agree that culture is a driver of sustainable development?

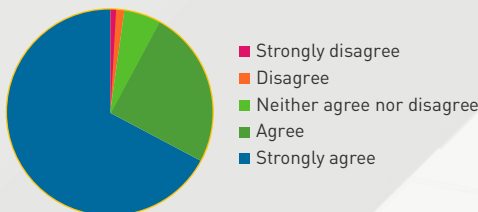


To what extent do you, in your work, witness or help deliver on the potential of culture to drive development?

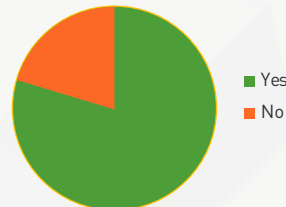


The connection between the general commitment to culture as a driver of sustainable development and the SDGs is also clearly made by a large majority of respondents. Furthermore, 80% report using the SDGs in their work.

Are you familiar with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the UN 2030 Agenda?



Do you use this global framework in your work?



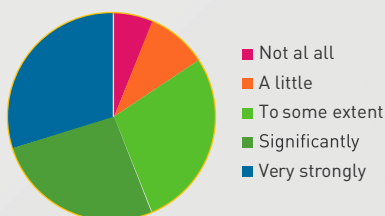


Among the SDGs, those most commonly referred to as important for the work of the respondents were SDG 4 (Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all) and SDG 11 (Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable). Numerous references were also made to the SDGs addressing equality in its various dimensions, notably SDG 5 (Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls), SDG 10 (Reduce inequality within and among countries) and SDG 16 (Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels). The vision of culture as contributing to a more equal society is clearly combined in this respect with the concern that access to culture, cultural life and cultural institutions should itself be inclusive. This is underlined by frequent reference to SDG 3 (Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages), participation in cultural life being perceived as an essential component of well-being.

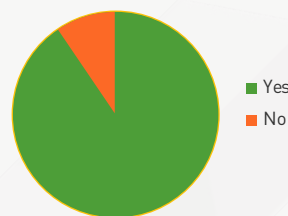
Responses to questions relating to the future development of a Culture Goal in the SDGs or in a follow-up framework should thus be seen in light of a broadly shared understanding of, and commitment, to the principle that culture is, as indicated from the origins of the 2030 Agenda, a driver of sustainable development.

Most respondents stated that the current place of culture in the SDGs – i.e. its structural absence – affects their work, with the implication that the effect is negative. However, detailed analysis of the responses suggests that the question may have been interpreted in different ways, with some low scores being explained by regret at the absence of a place for culture, and conversely, some high scores glossed in terms of well-established SDG-related planning within the relevant institution. The largely accidental character of these disparities is underlined by the very strong consensus around the place of culture in the SDGs – both looking backwards and looking forwards.

How does the current place of culture in the SDGs affect your work?



Would you have preferred there to have been an explicit Culture Goal within the SDGs and the UN 2030 Agenda?



A very large majority of respondents would have preferred an explicit Culture Goal in the SDGs, and an equally large majority considered it important or very important that such a Goal be incorporated in the post-2030 Agenda. The few dissenting voices – all from European respondents – suggested



that recognition of the importance of culture is already sufficient, and that a specific goal might be counter-productive in terms of “isolating” culture as a standalone issue.

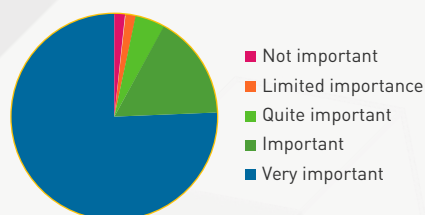
With respect to the desirable features of such a Goal, the picture is much less clear, with a significant number of respondents suggesting that further consultation and reflection is required. Nonetheless, three broad groups of concerns emerge from the responses:

- I An emphasis on culture as an essential aspect of a vibrant, dynamic society, implying inter alia promotion of human rights and freedom of speech as conditions both for creativity and for circulation of cultural productions.
- I An emphasis on the vitality and viability of cultural institutions, including reference to funding and conditions of employment within the cultural sector.
- I An emphasis on the transversal connection between culture and other policy areas – notably education – and on the need for a cultural lens to be adopted in a wide range of policy processes.

Clearly, there is no contradiction between these emphases, and no indication that those who chose to focus on one would necessarily disagree with the others. On the contrary, in combination, creativity, institutions and policies add up to a mapping of the terrain that a Culture Goal would need to address.

The survey also asked respondents to give their views on how advocacy might be conducted and what modalities might favour its success. There was little convergence in the responses, and indeed many respondents were explicit that they don’t know how best to proceed. Three ideas, nonetheless, came up in quite a few responses and point to the lessons that some have drawn from previous campaigns. First, the importance of a broad-based approach, involving a wide range of stakeholders on an inclusive basis, with a number of specific references to indigenous peoples. Secondly, respondents referred to the importance of connecting advocacy to action potentials, particularly at grassroots level, in order to guard against possible failures at political/diplomatic level, which are necessarily outside the control of an advocacy-based dynamic. And thirdly, a number of respondents made the point that building on existing frameworks – such as the culture conventions – could provide valuable leverage for advocacy to go beyond them.

How important do you think is to have an explicit Culture Goal in the post-2030 Global Agenda for Development?





INDICATIVE FRAMEWORK FOR DRAFTING A CULTURE GOAL

Consideration of drafting needs to take account of certain lessons – both positive and negative – from the SDGs in their current form. Clear ownership of targets and indicators is beneficial in terms of ensuring tangible commitment and follow-up, but may also risk isolating such targets and indicators from others with which they need to be closely connected. Framing differentiated ownership within a shared transversal agenda is thus an important bridge between drafting and advocacy. Another lesson – for example from targets SDG 16.6 and 16.7 – is that targets with vague or otherwise inadequate indicators tend to be neglected as institutional efforts focus on what can be effectively measured and reported against.

CULTURE GOAL

Ensure cultural sustainability for the wellbeing of all

POSSIBLE TARGETS

1. Realize cultural rights for all, by fostering inclusive access to and participation in cultural life, creativity and diversity of cultural expressions, in particular for women, children, older persons, persons with disabilities and vulnerable populations. [*Ideally, indicators could report both on frameworks and outcomes, and be based on the works of the UN Special rapporteur on Cultural Rights and the UNESCO Thematic Indicators for Culture.*]
2. Promote a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity. [*Indicators could be developed by analogy with those for education, but focusing on the broader social and cultural context and providing a basis for reporting on national initiatives and their outcomes.*]
3. Protect and safeguard all forms of heritage, harness them as a resource for sustainable development, through existing conventions and other policy frameworks, as well as such new mechanisms as may be appropriate. [*With respect to existing conventions, indicators are already available through UNESCO. They could helpfully be recognized as post-2030 development indicators.*]
4. Protect and promote the diversity of cultural expressions to strengthen the creativity and development capacity of individuals and communities, through existing conventions and



such new mechanisms as may be appropriate. [*Indicators using the UNESCO Thematic Indicators for Culture 2019 and the relevant conventions' own monitoring tools.*]

- 5.** In devising and implementing policies on cultural and creative industries, sustainable tourism and digital technologies, promote local culture and products, the economic and social rights of artists and cultural professionals and artistic freedom, and develop and implement appropriate monitoring tools. [*Important here that indicators should not merely register initiatives – which may have little effect on the ground – but also assess outcomes, ideally framed in the terms already internationally recognized under the Convention on the Diversity of Cultural Expressions.*]
 - 6.** Enhance legal conditions and practical opportunities for mobility of cultural professionals and cross-border creativity in the creation of cultural goods, services and practices through international multi-stakeholder collaboration. [*Indicators should ideally report both on frameworks – including such issues as visa requirements etc. – and outcomes.*]
 - 7.** Empower indigenous peoples to strengthen their own institutions, cultures and languages, and to pursue their development in keeping with their own needs and aspirations [*Ideally, indicators could report both on frameworks and outcomes.*]
 - 8.** Develop a cultural approach in environmental protection and sustainable urbanization, including land planning, landscape management, protection of biodiversity, agriculture and natural areas management, through heritage, local cultures and knowledge, creativity and arts. [*Ideally, indicators could report both on frameworks and outcomes, and be based on the frames provided by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change – IPCC and the Intergovernmental Panel on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services – IPBES.*]
- a.** Strengthen cultural institutions, including through international cooperation, to build capacity at all levels to realize cultural rights and sustain cultural pluralism. [*Indicators should include reference to specific institutions/mechanisms as well as to funding and employment issues and to issues around freedom of expression as anchored in existing human rights instruments.*]
 - b.** Ensure, through transversal, multi-stakeholder collaboration, that cultural considerations are taken into account in all international development goals, at the outset of and throughout all policy-making processes, through engaging cultural sector actors, whether or not associated with pre-existing cultural targets. [*An important and challenging area, which requires creative and dynamic international leadership – perhaps under the aegis of UNESCO – and well-defined indicators that connect clearly with those already defined under targets relating e.g. to poverty eradication, elimination of hunger, gender equality, climate action, and peace, justice and inclusion.*]



The outline considerations on indicators under the various suggested targets should be read in terms of the well-recognized limitations of the suite of indicators developed under the authority of the UN Statistical Commission. First, not all issues can be adequately captured by national statistics. Scope therefore needs to exist for alternative approaches, but within an international framework of comparability. Secondly, defining indicators once and for all at the adoption of the agenda eliminates gradual learning from real-world reporting experience. Such learning is in principle built into the High Level Political Forum process, but has been little used so far. Given the specificities of culture, it would be desirable to emphasize it. And thirdly, the UN-level indicators should be seen as a baseline for international comparison, but not as a restriction on more ambitious approaches at national or subnational level. On the contrary, especially in the area of culture, stakeholders at all levels should be encouraged to contribute to enrichment and pluralization over time of indicators, within a shared framework of targets.

INCORPORATING CULTURE IN THE POST-2030 DEVELOPMENT AGENDA

The above drafting suggestion is not designed to be necessarily adopted in its current form, which would obviously be premature. Rather, it sets a concrete agenda and creates the conditions for political and institutional buy-in. It needs to become obvious that, when the international development agenda is revised (whether beyond 2030 or at an earlier date), culture should be included, recognizing uncertainty, as of 2022, with regard to the form of the future agenda. If a process is initiated to revise the SDGs before 2030, culture will need to slot into a basically unchanged agenda, which might be the best achievable in real-world conditions. On the basis of a goal such as proposed in the previous section, along with its associated targets, such an outcome would incorporate culture in the shared language, including at transnational and subnational level, that has been one of the most productive outcomes of the 2030 Agenda.

On the basis of indications as to the outcome of UNESCO Mondiacult 2022, there appears to be broad support for the recognition of culture as an effective goal, in its own right, for sustainable development beyond 2030. In particular, states appear willing to call for strengthening of the contribution of culture on all the dimensions of development, encompassing employment, education and skills development, social justice, environmental sustainability, and sustainable urban development. Nonetheless, there is a risk that states may not be prepared to act intergovernmentally, pushing the burden of commitment onto civil society, while giving it inadequate space to act towards development of the agenda. UNESCO has a particular responsibility to ensure that such a risk does not materialize.



Advocacy to build a coalition of state “champions”, which is a crucial mechanism through which shared objectives can be pursued, needs to recognize diverse but not incompatible views among culture stakeholders. Thus, in the survey conducted by the #Culture2030Goal campaign in June 2022, a small minority of respondents expressed the view that, given the existence of a well-recognized framework of international cultural conventions, priority could be given to ensuring inclusion of cultural considerations in SDGs (such as 1, 2, 5, 13 and 16) from which they are currently absent. However, there is no contradiction between better inclusion of cultural concerns in non-culture SDGs and supplementing the existing SDGs – or their successor framework – by a Culture Goal. Flexible drafting, including transversal targets in the Culture Goal, will facilitate consensus-building in this regard.

At the same time, advocacy needs to structure the stakeholder space. On the one hand, to accommodate the many governmental and intergovernmental actors with specific competence and strong vested interests in cultural issues – notably UNESCO and the respective Ministries of Culture or their equivalents. But also mobilizing commitment to culture – and to the idea of a Culture Goal – outside the traditional stakeholder space at a time when the culture sector is under financial and other pressures in many parts of the world. The ability to build bridges – for instance with environmental agendas, which have a strong cultural dimension – will be crucial to the success of advocacy towards a Culture Goal.



CREDITS

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MEMBERS OF THE CAMPAIGN



Arterial Network | Mr Kane Limam Monza.



Culture Action Europe | Ms Tere Badia, Ms Natalie Giordageze.



ICOMOS | Ms Teresa Patricio, Dr Mario Santana, Ms Marie-Laure Lavenir, Ms Gaia Jungeblodt, Mr Gabriel Caballero, Dr Ege Yildirim.



IFCCD | Ms Nathalie Guay, Ms Marie-Julie Desrochers, Ms Céline de Dianous.



IFLA | Ms Barbara Lison, Mr Stephen Wyber.



IMC | Mr Alfons Karabuda, Ms Silja Fischer.



UCLG – United Cities and Local Governments' Culture Committee | Ms Claudia Curiel, Mr Enrique Avogadro, Mr Diogo Moura, Mr Jordi Pascual, Ms Sarah Vieux, Ms Marta Llobet, Ms Agnès Ruiz.

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UN Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural rights: Ms Alexandra Xanthaki, and the team: Ms Johanne Bouchard and Ms Mylene Bidault, the members of the Climate Heritage Network, with the coordinator Mr Andrew Potts, as well as Ms Sylvia Amann, Mr Jordi Baltà, Ms Catherine Cullen, Mr Antoine Guibert, Mr Navin Piplani, Ms Clarisa Ruiz-Correal and Ms Farida Shaheed.

Culture 2030 Goal Campaign:
Contact: info@culture2030goal.net
www.culture2030goal.net

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