THE CULTURE GOAL
FROM NECESSITY TO REALITY

ARTERIAL NETWORK
culture action europe
ICOM International council of museums
ICOMOS
INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF COALITIONS FOR CULTURAL DIVERSITY
IFLA
International Music Council
UCLG CGLU United Cities and Local Governments

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THE CULTURE GOAL
FROM NECESSITY TO REALITY

INTRODUCTION

The rationale for a Culture Goal has been well-established since the period (2013-2015) when the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were in their development phase.

It can be summarised by two simple arguments.

First, every aspect of inclusive and sustainable development, including in all the policy areas specifically covered by the 17 SDGs, has an essential cultural dimension, reflecting human knowledge, beliefs, values, skills and practices, as well as the changes brought about by global transformations and new understandings of interdependency.

Secondly, culture needs to be integrated into cross-cutting development frameworks, both as a goal in itself and as a pillar of wider sustainable development. It is of course true that culture – considered as a policy area – benefits from international cooperation no less than food systems, health, education or climate change. Indeed, there is a dense and long-standing web of cultural policy cooperation, often anchored in international conventions, such as those addressing heritage and diversity of cultural expressions. However, coordination across the various policy areas is inadequate, and not all important aspects of culture are well-covered. A Culture Goal, on the lines of the existing SDGs, offers a comprehensive policy cooperation framework for culture as a whole.

Could the ambitions underlying the rationale for a Culture Goal be achieved without a Culture Goal? Maybe. Would a Culture Goal make them more likely to be achieved? Undoubtedly.

So how can a Culture Goal be developed and established? How can the objection that culture is not "goalable" be overcome?[1]

The Culture2030Goal Campaign, which has developed the revised Culture Goal presented here, building on the Zero Draft contained in the 2022 report A Culture Goal is Essential for Our Common Future,[2] has consistently argued for a strong connection between the above two questions. The best and most practical way to show that culture is "goalable" is to draft a Culture Goal and document support for it, which in turn provides a focus for advocacy in favour of its adoption and thus a pathway to evidence of its real-world impact.

1 The term appears in the February 2014 Progress report of the Open Working Group of the General Assembly on Sustainable Development Goals, paragraph 83, which states that "Culture and cultural diversity are widely understood to be important to societies' creativity, cohesion and resilience, but it is not clear that culture per se is 'goalable'." It has often been cited since, invariably in reference to that report.

2 Available at https://culture2030goal.net/sites/default/files/2023-02/culture2030goal_Culture%20Goal%20-%20ENG.pdf.

The Zero Draft has achieved significant traction. The principle of a Culture Goal was included in the 2022 Mondiacult final declaration (paragraph 19),[3] and has subsequently been further reflected in outcome documents of the G20 culture ministers in 2023[4] and of the G7 Culture ministers in 2024.[5] In both cases, the explicit reference is to culture as a "standalone goal" with a commitment to "advance" or "promote" its inclusion in "future discussions" on the UN sustainable development framework beyond 2030. And while the UN Pact for The Future adopted in September 2024 did not contain a similar commitment,[6] the Campaign has judged that it constitutes "a step forwards" and published a 10 Point Plan for ongoing progress towards full inclusion of culture in sustainable development agendas at all levels and towards the conditions for adoption in due course of a Culture Goal.[7]

The Zero Draft has also provided a clear focus for subsequent work. Here, it is restated, amended, and equipped with an explicit indicator framework. The rationale for focusing on indicators – challenging though that may be in some important areas of culture – is precisely to demonstrate that culture is "goalable", not just in some abstract sense, but in the specific way required for inclusion in the SDG framework.

On this basis, the Steering Group of the Culture 2030 Goal Campaign designed a Roadmap 2025 with the "UNESCO World Conference on Cultural Policies and Sustainable Development - Mondiacult 2025" at its heart. Its strategic objectives are:

- Strengthening the technical relevance and credibility of the draft Culture Goal, in particular by developing a detailed indicator framework,
- Demonstrating its practical relevance, through broad consultation, by showing support for it both in principle and in terms of real-world take-up, and
- Building an action coalition in support of intergovernmental adoption of a Culture Goal and of voluntary adoption at other levels.

3 Available at https://www.unesco.org/sites/default/files/medias/fichiers/2022/10/6.MONDIACULT_EN_DRAFT%20FINAL%20DECLARATION_FINAL_1.pdf.
4 Available at https://www.g20.in/content/dam/gtwenty/gtwenty_new/document/2--new/G20_Culture_Ministers_Meeting_Outcome_Document_and_Chairs_summary.pdf.
5 Available at https://www.g7italy.it/wp-content/uploads/G7-Culture-Declaration-EN-DEF.pdf.
6 Available at https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/sotf-pact_for_the_future_adopted.pdf. It is noteworthy that earlier discussion drafts of the Pact had included such a commitment.
7 *From Summit to Substance: an Action Plan for Culture to Deliver on the Pact for the Future*. September 2024. Available at https://culture2030goal.net/sites/default/files/2024-09/EN_culture2030goal_Sep2024_Declaration.pdf.

Mondiacult 2025 will take place in Barcelona from 29 September to 1 October 2025. It is a shared wish by the Steering Group and the organisations and individuals involved in the activities of the Roadmap that debates during Mondiacult 2025 be guided by the sentence "The Culture Goal: from Necessity to Reality", which is precisely the title of the document you are now reading. The campaign has also published an exhaustive document, whose title is "The Analytical Report on the Culture Goal, its Targets and Indicators", with details of the stakeholder consultation, the survey, and the indicator mapping, as well as an "Easy Guide on the Culture Goal" with infographics.

The stakeholder consultations that have led to the revised Culture Goal presented here comprised a formal survey as well as a series of meetings, some specifically arranged to hear stakeholder views, and others taking advantage of prearranged events to engage particular stakeholder communities. The Campaign called two meetings of the "Agora" (on 24 March and 8 July 2025),[8] the closest "concentric circle" around the current leaders of the campaign, that is, the Steering Group, which allowed further views to be gathered.

The survey, which was open from late February to early May 2025, received a total of 262 responses, covering all regions (though Europe and Latin America were more strongly represented) and all areas of culture.[9] It showed strong support for the idea that a standalone Culture Goal will lead to better recognition of the importance of culture in sustainable development (85% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this view) and a clear consensus, across several related questions, that culture should be addressed both broadly and transversally in the Culture Goal (85-90% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this). Furthermore, respondents judged that a standalone Culture Goal would contribute positively to the achievement of each of the other SDGs. On the other hand, respondents were less sure whether capacity exists in their city, region or country to carry out a "shadow report", assessing current levels of support for cultural goals and mobilisation of culture to deliver on the wider 2030 Agenda, and expressed some scepticism as to the likely commitment of public authorities to this objective.

8 The reports of these meetings of the Agora are available here: https://culture2030goal.net/news.

9 Detailed analysis of the survey results is presented in the *Analytical Report on the Culture Goal, its Targets and Indicators*, Section 3.

In parallel with the survey, an indicator mapping process was conducted, based on stakeholder consultation and informal discussions with selected experts and analysis of various online resources. The objective was:

a. to review existing indicators to identify, for each Target of the Culture Goal, those that are ready for adoption under existing UN statistical standards.[10]

b. To identify key gaps and map possible strategies to address them, by experimentation in the context of voluntary adoption and, over time, development of harmonised indicators in new areas.

In the course of the consultation, 24 written responses were received, of which came 8 from cities or metropolitan areas, 3 from provinces, 1 from a state, and 12 from NGOs and networks. A range of documentary information and comments was also provided in this context and in the stakeholder meetings held in the first semester of 2025, both on existing policies and on expert analysis of indicator issues. The rich information received, analysed in detail in Section 4 of *The Analytical Report on the Culture Goal, its Targets and Indicators*, has identified numerous gaps, often related to the peculiar features of culture as a policy issue. At the same time, there is both a solid basis of existing harmonised quantitative indicators and significant experience, notably at city level, of developing indicators that could gradually be more widely adopted.

10 The UN classifies existing indicators into three "tiers":
Tier I: Indicator is conceptually clear, has an internationally established methodology and standards are available, and data are regularly produced by countries for at least 50 per cent of countries and of the population in every region where the indicator is relevant.
Tier II: Indicator is conceptually clear, has an internationally established methodology and standards are available, but data are not regularly produced by countries.
Tier III: Indicator has no established methodology. Methodologies are being developed/tested.
Indicators in Tier III are not included in the SDG framework.

THE REVISED CULTURE GOAL

Indicators in the SDG framework need to meet certain technical requirements. At the same time, the SDGs are about much more than harmonised state-level reporting. Any institution is free to adopt additional indicators consistent with its situation, and in fact it is a desirable feature of contextualized SDG implementation that local adaptations and innovations be set within common Targets. Furthermore, indicators that cannot be used now can in principle be developed for use in the future, whether universally or additionally, though the process for doing so is necessarily quite demanding.

In this spirit, the Culture 2030 Goal Campaign has adopted the following multilevel approach to indicator development:

- Balance across Targets to ensure that Targets that lack currently recognized and operational indicators do not appear undervalued compared to those that, for institutional and historical reasons, are currently better developed at indicator level. As in all the SDGs, each Target has equal value.
- A limited number of indicators for each Target, following the criteria of Tier I as far as possible.
- Suggestions for additional indicators, typically meeting Tier II criteria.
- Outline proposals for possible future indicator development in areas judged to be critical for the relevance and effective implementation of the Culture Goal.
- Suggestions for optional reporting in areas that are of critical importance but do not fit even in principle into the SDG framework.

The consultation process was also an opportunity to revisit the wording of the Goal and Targets.

The Goal itself is unchanged. It is concise and references the two-fold implications of the term "cultural sustainability". On the one hand, it relates to the *sustainability of culture* – its capacity to endure over time, in ever-changing forms. On the other hand, cultural sustainability refers to a certain way of thinking about and acting for sustainability, anchored in a *culture of sustainability*.

The Targets have been revised on a number of points compared to the Zero Draft, both to improve wording and to take account of issues that were felt to be inadequately reflected, including notably safety of artists and other cultural professionals, and artificial intelligence. Details of why and how the Targets have been revised are provided in Sections 4 and 5 of the *Analytical Report on the Culture Goal, its Targets and Indicators*.

The numbering scheme adopted in the Zero Draft has been retained. It is inspired by the established practice of SDG 16, distinguishing between numbered Targets 1-8, which are those specific to the cultural sector in a very broad sense, and lettered Targets a and b, representing the connection between the Culture Goal and other SDGs, which both contribute to and benefit from the achievement of cultural ambitions.

THE CULTURE GOAL
ENSURE CULTURAL SUSTAINABILITY FOR THE WELLBEING OF ALL

1. REALIZE CULTURAL RIGHTS FOR ALL, BY FOSTERING INCLUSIVE ACCESS TO AND PARTICIPATION IN CULTURAL LIFE, CREATIVITY AND DIVERSITY OF CULTURAL AND ARTISTIC EXPRESSIONS, IN PARTICULAR FOR WOMEN, CHILDREN, OLDER PERSONS, PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES AND VULNERABLE POPULATIONS.

2. PROMOTE A CULTURE OF PEACE AND NON-VIOLENCE, GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP AND APPRECIATION OF CULTURAL AND BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY.

3. PROTECT AND SAFEGUARD CULTURAL AND NATURAL HERITAGE AND LEVERAGE IT AS A RESOURCE AND ENABLER FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT.

4. PROTECT AND PROMOTE THE DIVERSITY OF CULTURAL EXPRESSIONS TO STRENGTHEN THE CREATIVITY, DEVELOPMENT CAPACITY, RESILIENCE, AND REGENERATIVE CAPACITY, OF INDIVIDUALS AND COMMUNITIES.

5. PROMOTE THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL RIGHTS OF ARTISTS AND CULTURAL PROFESSIONALS, ARTISTIC FREEDOM AND SAFETY, AS WELL AS LOCAL ART, CULTURE AND PRODUCTS, NOTABLY IN THE CONTEXT OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE.

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.

7. ENHANCE THE CONDITIONS FOR INDIGENOUS PEOPLES TO STRENGTHEN THEIR OWN INSTITUTIONS, CULTURES, AND LANGUAGES, AND TO PURSUE THEIR DEVELOPMENT IN KEEPING WITH THEIR SELF-DETERMINED NEEDS AND ASPIRATIONS.

8. IMPLEMENT A REGENERATIVE CULTURAL APPROACH TO ECOSYSTEMIC GOVERNANCE, INCLUDING ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION, SUSTAINABLE URBANIZATION, LAND PLANNING, LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT, BIODIVERSITY STEWARDSHIP, AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL AREAS MANAGEMENT.

A. STRENGTHEN CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS, INCLUDING THROUGH INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION, TO BUILD CAPACITY AT ALL LEVELS AND IN ALL POLICY AREAS TO REALIZE CULTURAL RIGHTS AND SUSTAIN CULTURAL PLURALISM.

B. ENSURE THAT CULTURAL CONSIDERATIONS ARE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT IN ALL INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT GOALS, AT THE OUTSET OF AND THROUGHOUT ALL POLICY-MAKING PROCESSES, WHETHER OR NOT ASSOCIATED WITH PRE-EXISTING CULTURAL TARGETS.

THE CULTURE GOAL
ENSURE CULTURAL SUSTAINABILITY FOR THE WELLBEING OF ALL

_TARGET 1

_REALIZE CULTURAL RIGHTS FOR ALL, BY FOSTERING INCLUSIVE ACCESS TO AND PARTICIPATION IN CULTURAL LIFE, CREATIVITY AND DIVERSITY OF CULTURAL AND ARTISTIC EXPRESSIONS, IN PARTICULAR FOR WOMEN, CHILDREN, OLDER PERSONS, PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES AND VULNERABLE POPULATIONS.

_Indicator	_Data source
Policies and measures to promote and protect freedom of creation and expression and participation in cultural life.	Monitoring frameworks of UNESCO 2005 and 2003 Conventions.
Share of culture in national budget.	National financial data.
Percentage of residents participating in cultural activities at least once a year (disaggregated by social categories).	UNESCO Culture|2030 Indicator 4.1.

_Additional indicators

Percentage of national policies referencing cultural rights and/or cultural diversity.

Number of cultural institutions per capita in various categories (libraries, archives, museums, theatres, cultural centres...).

_Priority areas for future indicator development

Identification of share of culture in national budget according to Culture Goal targets.

Access indicators disaggregated by area of culture and by social category.

Documented implementation measures and independent monitoring mechanisms for national policies referencing cultural rights and/or cultural diversity.

Percentage of cultural programmes implemented in socially deprived areas.

_Priority areas for qualitative reporting

Analysis of value accorded to cultural rights.

Analysis of satisfaction with state of inclusion and participation in cultural life.

THE CULTURE GOAL
ENSURE CULTURAL SUSTAINABILITY FOR THE WELLBEING OF ALL

_TARGET 2

_PROMOTE A CULTURE OF PEACE AND NON-VIOLENCE, GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP AND APPRECIATION OF CULTURAL AND BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY.

_Indicator	_Data source
Existence of education programmes on global citizenship, cultural and biological diversity, education for sustainable development, and peace.	National education data. 2003 Convention (Indicator 12, periodic reporting).
Reference in constitution to a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural and biological diversity.	National legal data. 2003 Convention (Indicators 13, 14 and 16, periodic reporting).

_Additional indicators

Percentage of students receiving education/training on a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural and biological diversity, disaggregated by age and social/geographical categories.

_Priority areas for future indicator development

Recognition of value of culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural and biological diversity, disaggregated by category.

_Priority areas for qualitative reporting

Impact of policies to promote a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural and biological diversity, disaggregated by category.

THE CULTURE GOAL
ENSURE CULTURAL SUSTAINABILITY FOR THE WELLBEING OF ALL

_TARGET 3

_PROTECT AND SAFEGUARD CULTURAL AND NATURAL HERITAGE AND LEVERAGE IT AS A RESOURCE AND ENABLER FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT.

_Indicator	_Data source
Percentage of UNESCO listed heritage with management plans (World Heritage - WH) or safeguarding plans (Intangible Cultural Heritage - ICH).	UNESCO WHC data. 2003 Convention (incl. Indicator 13 of periodic reporting).
National heritage protection and safeguarding budget.	UNESCO conventions / Culture|2030. 2003 Convention (Indicators 1 (at 1.2) and 11 at 11.3 of periodic reporting).
Number of heritage listings.	UNESCO conventions.

_Additional indicators

Ratification of 1954 Convention on protection of cultural property in time of war, including protocols.*

Ratification of 1972 World Heritage Convention.*

Ratification of 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.*

Ratification of 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of Cultural Diversity.*

Percentage of heritage management plans that explicitly include disaster risk reduction, climate adaptation, and Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) procedures.

Percentage of major projects subject to Cultural HIA.

Percentage of protected assets with legally defined buffer zones integrated into spatial plans.

_Priority areas for future indicator development

Existence of comprehensive heritage planning and monitoring framework, incorporating all aspects of heritage and involving participation and consent by communities, groups and individuals concerned.

Index measuring integration and intergenerational transmission of Indigenous knowledge and traditional knowledge in cultural heritage plans.

_Priority areas for qualitative reporting

Assessment of Indigenous Peoples' and community involvement in heritage governance, management, planning and protection.

Assessment of the conduct of Free Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) of Indigenous Peoples in the declaration of cultural heritage sites and inscription of ICH elements within Indigenous Peoples' territories.

Active involvement of Indigenous Peoples and bearer communities (communities, groups and individuals concerned) in preparing nomination files for inscriptions and in monitoring impact and follow-up after inscription.

*and reflection in national legislation.

THE CULTURE GOAL
ENSURE CULTURAL SUSTAINABILITY FOR THE WELLBEING OF ALL

_TARGET 4

_PROTECT AND PROMOTE THE DIVERSITY OF CULTURAL EXPRESSIONS TO STRENGTHEN THE CREATIVITY, DEVELOPMENT CAPACITY, RESILIENCE, AND REGENERATIVE CAPACITY, OF INDIVIDUALS AND COMMUNITIES.

_Indicator	_Data source
Policies and measures to support the development of dynamic cultural and creative sectors.	Monitoring framework of 2005 Convention. Periodic reporting to the 2003 Convention (Indicator 13)
Policies and measures to facilitate access to diverse cultural expressions in digital environments.	Monitoring framework of 2005 Convention, UNESCO 2003 Recommendation on Cyberspace, UNESCO 2021 Recommendation on Ethics in AI.
Number of intangible culture heritage elements safeguarded under 2003 UNESCO Convention.	UNESCO periodic reports.

_Additional indicators

Percentage of public cultural platforms meeting accessibility and interoperability standards.

Number of schools and educational initiatives, including vocational training, including creativity as part of the curriculum.

_Priority areas for future indicator development

Budget for cultural diversity and safeguarding intangible cultural heritage.

_Priority areas for qualitative reporting

Mapping of resources, infrastructures, groups and practices relevant to cultural diversity and intangible cultural heritage, including mapping of minority cultural expressions integrated into cultural policies, notably at the local level.

THE CULTURE GOAL
ENSURE CULTURAL SUSTAINABILITY FOR THE WELLBEING OF ALL

_TARGET 5

_PROMOTE THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL RIGHTS OF ARTISTS AND CULTURAL PROFESSIONALS, ARTISTIC FREEDOM AND SAFETY, AS WELL AS LOCAL ART, CULTURE AND PRODUCTS, NOTABLY IN THE CONTEXT OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE.

_Indicator	_Data source
Existence of national "status of the artist" legislation.	ILO/UNESCO.
Existence of policies promoting freedom of artistic expression.	UNESCO Culture|2030 Indicator 4.2.
Existence of policies protecting the economic and social rights of artists and cultural professionals.	ILO/UNESCO.

_Additional indicators

- Share of employment in cultural and creative industries (UNESCO Culture|2030 Indicator 2.1.).
- Economic value of cultural and creative industries (UNESCO Culture|2030 Indicator 2.2.).
- Reference in international agreements to 2005 Convention.
- Existence of national guidance for the responsible use of AI in cultural and heritage content management.

_Priority areas for future indicator development

- Safety of artists and cultural professionals.
- Percentage of population with opportunity to engage professionally in creative activities.
- Percentage of local sustainable tourism development strategies that integrate a cultural aspect.
- Qualitative assessment of social security and insurance provision for creative artists and artisans.
- Rights of artists and intangible heritage bearers in digital environments.

_Priority areas for qualitative reporting

- Impact of cultural activities on local populations and their well-being.

THE CULTURE GOAL
ENSURE CULTURAL SUSTAINABILITY FOR THE WELLBEING OF ALL

_TARGET 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.

_Indicator	_Data source
Agreements to encourage exchange of cultural goods and services respecting appropriate normative standards.	State inventories of international agreements / periodic reports to UNESCO thereon.
Policies, measures and operational programmes to support the mobility of artists and cultural professionals, especially from the global South.	Monitoring framework of 2005 Convention. ECOSOC monitoring of Article 15(1) of the Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. Monitoring and Periodic Reporting to the 2003 Convention (Indicator 25 and particularly 25.2).

_Additional indicators

Proportion of artists and cultural professionals benefitting from programmes to promote mobility of cultural professionals and cross-border creativity.

Cultural collaboration, mobility, creative economy in bilateral or multilateral trade agreements.

_Priority areas for future indicator development

Experience of facilitation of barriers to international mobility among cultural professionals.

_Priority areas for qualitative reporting

Analysis of effects of enhanced mobility on international cultural cooperation.

THE CULTURE GOAL
ENSURE CULTURAL SUSTAINABILITY FOR THE WELLBEING OF ALL

_TARGET 7

_ENHANCE THE CONDITIONS FOR INDIGENOUS PEOPLES TO STRENGTHEN THEIR OWN INSTITUTIONS, CULTURES, AND LANGUAGES, AND TO PURSUE THEIR DEVELOPMENT IN KEEPING WITH THEIR SELF-DETERMINED NEEDS AND ASPIRATIONS.

_Indicator	_Data source
Number of cultural heritage sites under Indigenous management and inscribed intangible cultural heritage elements identified as indigenous.	UNESCO/ICOMOS.
Budget allocated for Indigenous Peoples-led initiatives towards conservation of their cultural practices and heritage sites, as a percentage of total culture and heritage budgets.	UNESCO/ICOMOS.
Proportion of cultural policy documentation translated into Indigenous languages.	National legal databases.

_Additional indicators

Number of cultural activities linked to Indigenous traditions.

Number of Indigenous communities with community radio stations.

Number of Indigenous-established cultural and educational institutions.

_Priority areas for future indicator development

Recognition of indigenous cultures and languages in national legislation.

Teaching of culturally appropriate content in Indigenous languages to Indigenous children.

_Priority areas for qualitative reporting

Participation of indigenous communities in heritage decision-making processes.

THE CULTURE GOAL
ENSURE CULTURAL SUSTAINABILITY FOR THE WELLBEING OF ALL

_TARGET 8

_IMPLEMENT A REGENERATIVE CULTURAL APPROACH TO ECOSYSTEMIC GOVERNANCE, INCLUDING ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION, SUSTAINABLE URBANIZATION, LAND PLANNING, LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT, BIODIVERSITY STEWARDSHIP, AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL AREAS MANAGEMENT.

_Indicator	_Data source
Number of environmental plans integrating heritage impact assessments.	WHC Sustainable Development Policy. 2003 Convention periodic reporting (Indicators 13 and A.7)
Percentage of urban and regional planning strategies that integrate cultural and heritage considerations.	UNESCO Culture|2030 Indicators, Leading and Pilot Cities. 2003 Convention periodic reporting (Indicator 13).

_Additional indicators

Existence of policy framework for environmental sustainability of cultural events.

Legal recognition of customary regulation of land title and natural resources (e.g. fisheries and forests).

Percentage of Environmental Impact Assessments and Socio-Economic Assessments that include a Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment.

Percentage of cities over 100,000 population adopting a Historic Urban Landscape approach.

Percentage of heritage sites applying cultural carrying-capacity metrics and visitor-management measures to foster sustainable tourism.

_Priority areas for future indicator development

Cultural dimension of agricultural and fisheries policies and practices.

Recognition of Indigenous Peoples natural resource management and traditional occupation.

_Priority areas for qualitative reporting

Application of local cultures and knowledge to ecosystems and environmental protection, in both urban and rural settings.

THE CULTURE GOAL
ENSURE CULTURAL SUSTAINABILITY FOR THE WELLBEING OF ALL

_TARGET A

_STRENGTHEN CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS, INCLUDING THROUGH INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION, TO BUILD CAPACITY AT ALL LEVELS AND IN ALL POLICY AREAS TO REALIZE CULTURAL RIGHTS AND SUSTAIN CULTURAL PLURALISM.

_Indicator

Per capita budget to support cultural institutions.

_Data source

National financial data.

_Additional indicators

Existence of comprehensive plan to strengthen cultural institutions.

Number of national heritage agencies established or reformed.

Number of designated bodies for intangible cultural heritage safeguarding (2003 Convention periodic reporting, at Indicator 1).

Existence of comprehensive legislation and/or policies covering libraries, archives and museums.

_Priority areas for future indicator development

Engagement of cultural institutions in delivering on different policy goals (education, social cohesion, skills etc.).

Improved access to collections and documentation held in cultural institutions, respecting customary protocols that limit access and also aspects of access issues in digital environments.

_Priority areas for qualitative reporting

Quality and inclusivity of cultural governance.

THE CULTURE GOAL
ENSURE CULTURAL SUSTAINABILITY FOR THE WELLBEING OF ALL

_TARGET B

_ENSURE THAT CULTURAL CONSIDERATIONS ARE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT IN ALL INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT GOALS, AT THE OUTSET OF AND THROUGHOUT ALL POLICY-MAKING PROCESSES, WHETHER OR NOT ASSOCIATED WITH PRE-EXISTING CULTURAL TARGETS.

_Indicator	_Data source
Existence of policy framework for transversal design and delivery of SDG implementation policies.	Official national documentation.
References to culture in national development plans/strategies.	Voluntary National Reports. Periodic reporting to the UNESCO 2003 and 2005 Conventions.

_Additional indicators

National sustainable development plans and policies include action lines to support diverse cultural expressions (Monitoring framework of 2005 Convention and periodic reporting to the 2003 Convention).

Presence of a mandatory cultural heritage screening step in national SDG policy toolkits.

Percentage of flagship policies that include a cultural or heritage section.

_Priority areas for future indicator development

SDG-specific analysis of inclusion of cultural considerations.

_Priority areas for qualitative reporting

Participation of cultural entities / institutions in urban, mobility, health, security and other areas of national and urban development.

CONCLUSIONS AND PROSPECTS

In 2024-25, the Culture 2030 Goal Campaign has made significant progress against its three strategic objectives:

- Strengthening the technical relevance and credibility of the draft Culture Goal,
- Demonstrating its practical relevance by showing support for it both in principle and in terms of real-world take-up, and
- Building an action coalition in support of intergovernmental adoption of a Culture Goal and of voluntary adoption at other levels.

This progress has been made in a shifting and uncertain international climate. In order to continue to advance towards the Culture Goal, building on the revised draft proposed here, the Campaign is taking an agile and robust approach, putting strong short-term emphasis on voluntary adoption by countries and cities as an immediate way of achieving overall objectives. In present circumstances, this ambition is more important than ever. The politicisation of culture and the "culturalisation" of politics, which characterise the 21st century in many parts of the world, reflect, among other things, the absence of a shared, positive vision for culture firmly rooted in human rights and international cooperation. In other words, precisely, the absence of the Culture Goal.

In terms of the Campaign's strategic objectives, the medium-term outlook can be sketched as follows.

a. The technical relevance and credibility of the draft Culture Goal will remain work in progress beyond 2025. Relevance and credibility need to be monitored on an ongoing basis, drawing on the lessons from voluntary adoption. The conditions of relevance and credibility are likely themselves to evolve as the context changes.

b. Support and take-up too are work in progress. It cannot be taken for granted that putting a revised draft Culture Goal on the table in 2025 will, by 2027, lead to an increase in support and take-up, in particular in the form of shadow reporting. At the same time, because intergovernmental negotiations will put aside issues that are unfamiliar, putting a credible Culture Goal proposal on the table in 2025 is crucial in accelerating recognition, support and take-up.

c. Maintaining and expanding the coalition calling for a Culture Goal is mission-critical with respect to the prospects for intergovernmental adoption, a strong and geographically well-distributed dynamic of voluntary adoption, including among governments, and further methodological development and information-sharing.

Everyone convinced by the rationale for the Culture Goal will see this medium-term outlook as a call to action. Others might be more sceptical. Even those who agree on the desirability of a shared, positive vision for culture firmly rooted in human rights and international cooperation might feel that it is unlikely to be achieved and that there are other, higher priorities. But this invites the question: which of those priorities can be achieved without taking account of their cultural dimensions? The track record of ignoring or downplaying culture has not been one of striking success. The time has come to take culture seriously as an essential aspect of international development in all its forms.

With this in mind, anyone supportive of the principle of a Culture Goal can subscribe to the following:

- Continue to advance discussion around the shape of a Culture Goal, using the draft presented here as a starting point for open-ended, ongoing public review. The option of publicly setting a date for prospective publication of a revised and updated Culture Goal (say in autumn 2026) could be considered.

- Contribute to broad and ambitious communication about the Culture Goal, its rationale and the issues of future monitoring and reporting frameworks it raises, with a particular focus on regional balance, on stakeholders outside the culture sector as generally understood, and on public authorities at various levels.

- Join work towards the establishment of a formal Culture Goal Coalition of committed states that is willing in due course to declare collectively and publicly its support for the principle of a Culture Goal and for the draft (this document) as relevant preliminary input.

- Consider supporting the Campaign, which will need new economic (philanthropic sources, research funding, corporate sponsorship and possibly crowdfunding) and in-kind resources to continue its technical and political work towards the planned 2027 SDG Summit.

- Recognise the Culture Goal as a solid basis for voluntary adoption, collective learning, and gradual improvement over time, from which intergovernmental adoption will follow – in some form that, given the medium-term uncertainties, is hard to anticipate from the vantage point of 2025.

With these ambitions in mind, it is helpful to draw some conclusions from the important work already accomplished by the Campaign between September 2024 and June 2025, building on its earlier track record.

a. The technical relevance and credibility of the zero draft of the Culture Goal (2022) has been enhanced through the Campaign dynamic by critical analysis of the 10 targets, leading to the amendments and additions proposed in Section 2 of this document.

   The iterative process of revision since the original drafting work in 2022 has been of great value firstly in taking account of a broad range of opinions about the practical circumstances of implementation – which frame the relevance of the Goal in terms of the necessary connections between culture and sustainable development – and the emerging issues that may have been neglected or underplayed, and secondly in expanding buy-in on the part of relevant stakeholders.

   Furthermore, the work on indicators is essential in establishing the technical credibility of the Culture Goal in the context of the SDGs. While many important areas of policy and action addressed by the draft Culture Goal currently lack the technical basis for universal quantitative indicators, the outreach efforts of the Campaign have created the conditions in which this technical basis can be developed.

b. Support in principle for the Culture Goal, which had been demonstrated by the survey conducted in 2022, has been reaffirmed, both formally through the 2025 survey and more informally through the range of consultation and outreach events held by the Campaign in 2024-25. Even the objections to the idea of a Culture Goal or to the specific approach adopted by the Campaign are anchored in the importance of culture for sustainable development. Furthermore, the potential for adoption of the Culture Goal, including at the level of cities, provinces and other territorial entities, has been strongly demonstrated and constitutes a particularly valuable outcome of the Campaign. On the one hand, there are clear examples of ongoing action on these lines, which would likely benefit from a shared global reference point in the form of the Culture Goal. On the other hand, there are strong indications of interest in such a reference point among actors committed to the importance of culture in sustainable development, but currently lacking an adequate policy framework for it.

c. With respect to the action coalition to support adoption of the Culture Goal, the intergovernmental climate seems less favourable than in 2022. On the other hand, the consultation process conducted by the Culture 2030 Goal Campaign in 2024-25, including the work on indicators, strengthens the case for voluntary adoption of the Culture Goal as a policy framework, independently of the uncertain intergovernmental process. And this is important not just as an alternative or second-best outcome, but also because voluntary adoption – so long as it is well reported – contributes to the conditions of intergovernmental adoption.

To sum up, voluntary adoption of the Culture Goal proposed here can start immediately. And documented evidence of voluntary adoption will be important in creating the conditions for intergovernmental adoption and also produce direct benefits both for culture and for inclusive and sustainable development.

CREDITS

This document can be reproduced and translated (with due note of translators) for free as long as the authorship is mentioned. We recommend the following quote: Culture 2030 Goal campaign (2025). "The Culture Goal, from Necessity to Reality", released on 27 September 2025, in Barcelona, at the UCLG Culture Summit, in the frame of UNESCO's Mondiacult 2025 Conference and its Civic Agora.

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The document expresses the consensus of the members of the Steering Group of the campaign and does not necessarily reflect the exact views of each one of its members; please refer to each one of the members of the campaign for these individual views. The same statement applies to the members of the Agora and the other persons and organisations listed below.

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