



UK Coalition for Cultural Diversity

**UKCCD Observations on the UK Quadrennial Report,
communicated to the DCMS, Oct 1, 2012,**

We are pleased that the UK has submitted its report and in the interest of strengthening the implementation of the Convention and the reporting process we would like to make the following observations:

- There is a general tendency to interpret the Convention through the lens of multiculturalism or cultural diversity, whereas the Convention specifically addresses "diversity of cultural expressions" to embrace a far wider normative framework, including fairness of access to the skills and products of contemporary media and expression, diversity of languages and international cooperation and exchange. One consequence is that the assessment of "challenges to cultural diversity" focuses almost entirely on problems between the muslim and other members of society. Whatever the evidence for this argument, it is far too narrow a response. The impact of digital technologies and ownership, the consequences of trade agreements, regulations affecting the mobility of artists, the future of public broadcasting, obstructions to international development initiatives.... these and other important challenges to implementation of the Convention's operational guidelines, are marginalised.

- Significantly, it is a right and obligation for all signatories of the Convention to support north-south and south-south exchange. Whilst the UK's strong international arts programme, and film co-production treaties can be taken as indicators, there is little evidence to support broader UK intervention to support infrastructure and capacitation in emerging economies themselves. DFID's "understanding of the socio-economic and cultural context in its work" does not necessarily translate into their programmes of action to support articles 13-17 of the Convention. A more systematic and outward looking approach both in our national arts and development programmes would not only contribute to stronger governance, social justice and civil society, but

would also promote our future business interest where emerging economies are becoming stronger players in the marketplace for creative industries.

- The evidence in the report is largely anecdotal. In order to benefit from this quadrennial reporting process, the UKCCD would recommend a far more systematic approach taking into account the suite of indicators being developed by UNESCO's Secretariat and involving a cross departmental approach. Baselines could thus be agreed to monitor diversity of cultural expressions and to provide a comparative basis on which to assess the implementation of the Convention from one periodic report to another. Whilst the statistics available for film have benefited from the research and statistics programme developed by the UK Film Council, the same cannot be said for other arts sectors. Furthermore, in this report there is mention of the nations, but little indication of the huge regional variations which exists particularly between London and elsewhere. There is also little evidence-based material to measure activity related to certain articles, for example articles 14 and 16 as mentioned above.

The International Federation of Coalitions (of which UKCCD is a founder member) continues to represent civil society at the International Government Committee, and evidence from our recent congress demonstrates the impact which the Convention is having in different regions of the world. We hope that the UK Government will continue to support the Convention by contributing to the International Cultural Fund and enabling countries whose cultural policy and infrastructure is weaker than ours to benefit from the UK's exceptional expertise.