

Report on 6^t IGC – December 2012

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Sixth ordinary session of the Intergovernmental Committee

This was an important meeting and certainly one of the key turning points for the Convention. It takes place in context of general funding crisis where Secretariat funds for Convention reduced by 80% and executive funds put in place for activities and monitoring come to an end this year. Currently making assessment of budgetary implications for application to emergency funds. Convention funds identified as priority by Conference and UNESCO Secretariat

On the one hand, members of the Committee were given a chance to appreciate the impressive amount of work that has been accomplished in setting the Convention in motion during these last three years considered to be the “pilot phase”.

International Fund for Cultural Development (IFCD)

The head of the Experts Panel, Ferdinand Richard, gave an overview of the fund’s achievements and was on hand to answer questions

Experts involved in the technical assistance program - Francisco D’Almeida (Togo), Bernard Boucher (Canada), Avril Joffe (South Africa) and Milena Dragičević-Šešić (Serbia) - were also in Paris to present the outcomes and challenges.

48 projects supported for re-enforcement of cultural policy and infrastructure for cultural industries, in 36 developing countries, especially Africa

It was stressed that IFCD is now established as a signature partnership and seen as global advocate for Convention

IFCD respected and regular support from at least ½ members

IFCD get approx 6 key private partnerships bringing 30% resources

82% of monies allocated directly for funding

- UNESCO’s internal evaluation of the International Fund led to some worthy adjustments to its operational guidelines, namely to give priority to initiatives resulting in structuring effects EXPAND – is this addressing view that capacitation projects should have additional aspect of culture in governance or capacitation for building infrastructure. The need to improve the selection process of projects especially the procedures of the national UNESCO commissions was also recognized.
- The timeframe should be adjusted to encourage projects to have a 2 year timeframe

It was decided to continue the 3 year evaluation programme on fund

The Secretariat has set up effective results based monitoring with field officers in place where practicable to ensure communication between International

Cultural fund and local projects

EU is funding UNESCO experts to school applications so that those failed in earlier rounds will learn through the process

The next funding deadline is June 2013

Quadrennial Reviews by Member States

48 reports received

- The analytical summary of the first quadrennial periodic reports was also discussed, leading to a decision to convene a discussion on issues of common interest to be included in the Committee's work plan during the next Conference of Parties in June.

The Independent assessment of the Quadrennial Reviews was presented as well as the Secretariat assessment and key points –

- need for distinction between policies already in place and policies specifically set up or adjusted for implementation of Convention;
- breadth of material / categories of information included needs focusing in next reports; need to standardize statistical evidence included?

The five-year fundraising strategy developed by Small World Stories was approved, with a goal to triple the IFCD's annual income over five years, from an annual average of approximately USD 800,000 to USD 2.8 million, with at least 30% of income coming from private sector sources. The Committee requested the Secretariat to submit a detailed report on the use of the IFCD funds for fundraising activities at its next ordinary session.

On the other hand, many delegations noted that the energy level that marked the first years after the adoption of the Convention was fading. For one, civil groups were much less present and prepared to intervene (apart from our Federation). Of intergovernmental organizations, only the Francophonie and United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) made statements.

Some members and observers pleaded that this was due to the fact that Parties were losing sight of the Convention's main raison d'être i.e. the trade-culture issues falling under article 20 and 21.

Article 20

On this, it was decided that civil society would in future be invited to participate in the annual survey of initiatives undertaken by Parties to

promote the Convention in other international forums.

Survey results are now available on a dedicated web site which, we suggested, could in due time serve as a basis of an analytical report – similar to the one just completed for the periodic reports – to identify common challenges and areas of cooperation for civil society representation?

Parties to inform Secretariat of actions viz Art 20 and Secretariat will make a report to 4th Congress

The Canadian delegation was successful in getting the Committee to approve its proposal to study the impact of the digital era on cultural measures and policies. Civil society and Parties to Convention will be invited to report to the Committee during its seventh session on aspects of the development of digital technologies that have an impact on the Convention and proposals for future action. The Federation certainly welcomes this initiative as a way to engage all parties on a this high priority issue that will clarify the unique scope of the 2005 Convention in comparison with the other UNESCO instruments on tangible and intangible heritage. Consideration must be given however to work already being done by other UN agencies, such as WIPO and ITU, to avoid duplication and ensure that the broad scope of the digital transition is narrowed down in a way that is relevant and manageable.

On a final note, this sixth ordinary session of the IGC marks yet another change of guard as this was the last meeting of some of the most active delegations such as Brazil, Canada, China, France, Laos and Tunisia whose mandate cannot be renewed after having served two full terms on the Committee. Fortunately we have witnessed other countries such as Honduras, St Vincent and the Grenadines, Switzerland and Sweden being well motivated to keep pushing ahead.

IGC coincided with Congress of International NGOs at which in a special session addressing the field of culture, Francesco Bandarin, assist director-general of UNESCO affirmed the urgency of putting culture into the political agendas for development, especially the MDGs, the importance of making links between cultural instruments and those for human rights and education, and UNESCO's commitment to giving its cultural strategies high priority in the coming decade. The significance of the Convention was emphasised and IFCCD was invited to share this platform.

Work of IFCCD recommended

The work of the national Coalitions and the IFCCD has been described as pivotal for the Convention in several Parties' reports. With its wide international network, the IFCCD produces an inestimable synergy in terms of expert knowledge and resources, which it uses to further international cooperation for development

Additional Points

Integrate Culture in development agendas after 2015 and will start in next edition of the Creative Economy Report which will now be edited by UNESCO

UNESCO/EU special project to support 13 countries with expert assistance for development of national policies and creative industries at local level
Also pilot programme in Africa to build expertise in cultural strategies and deepen S – S cooperation (Funded through emergency fund)

Diego Gradis elected for next 2 years to Liaison Committee of International Conference of NGOs

Some Key Questions

How to advance North – South cooperation/partnerships

Cf Swedish Arts Council implementing a SIDA-funded programme in field of culture to strengthen cooperation on cultural projects to reduce poverty and achieve sustainable development. Long term results relevant to both developing countries and Swedish interests and replacement for Donor led support

How to position the agenda of culture and diversity of cultural expression post 2015 MDGs?

Cf Quebec – Agenda 21 for Culture. Plans for sustainable use of cultural resources, promotion of creativity and involving all government departments, civil society and private sector

How to achieve greater involvement of civil society?

Eg ARGE – Austrian Working Group on Cultural Diversity – network of networks – representatives from all government departments attend meetings