



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization



Diversity of  
Cultural Expressions

# Third Civil Society FORUM

**31** MONDAY  
MAY  
2021

**12:30 | 5:45 pm**  
(UTC + 2)  
**ONLINE**

**Register here:**

[https://unesco-org.zoom.us/meeting/register/  
tJ0ucuGgrTsrG9zE4ZqwqEYua6rPi5llmZ8h](https://unesco-org.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJ0ucuGgrTsrG9zE4ZqwqEYua6rPi5llmZ8h)





# Civil Society FORUM

## PROVISIONAL AGENDA

**12:00**

Zoom link opens

**12:30-1:30**

**Plenary I** (in EN/FR/SP/AR)

**12:30-12:40**

- Welcome by moderator(s)
- Introductory remarks by the Secretary of 2005 Convention

**12:40-1:30**

- Presentation of objectives of the Forum
- Presentation of outcome from preparatory work sessions, general remarks on transversal issues and topics

**1:30-1:45**

Coffee break

**1:45-3:45**

**Breakout sessions** (in EN/FR)

1. Culture and Sustainable Development
2. Sustainable Ecosystems for the Cultural and Creative Sectors
3. Civil Society Participation in the Implementation of the Convention
4. Digital Environment, Rights and Trade

*Discussion / Main conclusions and adoption of recommendations in each breakout session*

**3:45-4:00**

Coffee break

**4:00-5:30**

**Plenary II** (in EN/FR/SP/AR)

- Presentation of the recommendations from the breakout sessions and short discussion
- Discussion on the organisation of future editions of the Forum
- Adoption of the overall list of recommendations and decisions  
Identification of the civil society organisation(s) that will present the recommendations to the eighth session of the Conference of the Parties

**5:30-5:45**

Closing by moderator(s)

## Context

The Civil Society Forum is a biennial event that provides an interactive framework, with an adaptable agenda, to enable coordination amongst civil society actors that are active in the fields covered by the 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (hereinafter “the Convention”).<sup>1</sup>

At its tenth session, the Intergovernmental Committee for the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions invited Parties to the Convention, the Secretariat and civil society organisations to continue developing mechanisms to strengthen the participation of civil society in the implementation of the Convention, notably through the organisation of a biennial forum ([Decision 10.IGC.6](#)). The overarching goal of this Forum is to give civil society representatives a platform to share their experiences and discuss their common concerns, and to provide them with an opportunity to make proposals to the Conference of the Parties on issues or problems that they consider to be priorities and that they would like to see reflected in the work of the Convention’s governing bodies. The outcomes of this year’s edition of the Forum will be presented to the eighth session of the Conference of Parties on 2 June 2021.

The first edition of the Civil Society Forum took place on 12 June 2017 and the second on 3 June 2019. The third edition of the Forum will be held online on **Monday 31 May from 12:30 to 5.45 pm (UTC+2 hours)**, before the eighth session of the Conference of Parties (1-4 June 2021). In response to the challenges posed by the digital format of the event, preparations for the Forum will include preliminary sessions open to all interested civil society representatives (see Section 4 below for participation modalities), which will build on the work done by civil society representatives who volunteered to support the preparation of the Forum, in accordance with [Decision 14.IGC.15](#).<sup>2</sup>

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1 According to the Operational Guidelines related to Article 11 of the 2005 Convention on the “Role and Participation of Civil Society”, “for the purposes of this Convention, civil society means non-governmental organisations, non-profit organisations, professionals in the culture sector and associated sectors, groups that support the work of artists and cultural communities.”

2 The civil society organisations that volunteered to support the organisation of the third Civil Society Forum are: AC Eurovisioni, Arterial Network, Coalición chilena por la diversidad cultural, Coalition française pour la diversité culturelle, Coalition malienne pour la diversité culturelle, Coligação portuguesa para la diversidade cultural; Contact Base, Creatividad y Cultura Glocal A.C., Cultural contra conflict, Culture et développement, Culture Funding Watch, International Federation of Coalitions for Cultural Diversity (IFCCD), International Council for Film, Television and Audiovisual Communication (ICFT), International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA), International Music Council (IMC), International Theatre Institute (ITI).



## The role and participation of civil society in the monitoring and implementation of the 2005 Convention

Civil society actors played an important role in building support for the Convention. Article 11 of the Convention acknowledges the fundamental role played by civil society in the protection and promotion of the diversity of cultural expressions. The Operational Guidelines related to this article further define this role, specifying that civil society is called upon to "(...) bring citizens', associations' and enterprises' concerns to public authorities, monitor policies and programmes implementation, play a watchdog role, serve as value-guardian and innovator, as well as contribute to the achievement of greater transparency and accountability in governance."

The Guidelines state that the potential of civil society to act as an innovator and change-agent can be exercised in the following areas:

- ▶ support to Parties, as appropriate, in the elaboration and implementation of cultural policies;
- ▶ capacity-building in specific domains linked to the implementation of the Convention and carrying out data collection in the field of the protection and promotion of the diversity of cultural expressions;
- ▶ promotion of specific cultural expressions by giving voice to groups such as women, persons belonging to minorities, and indigenous peoples, so as to ensure that all stakeholders' special circumstances and needs are taken into account when formulating cultural policies;
- ▶ advocating the widespread ratification of the Convention and its implementation by governments, as well as in assisting Parties to promote the objectives and principles of the Convention in other international forums;
- ▶ input in the establishment of periodical reports of Parties, within their field of competence. This input would give more responsibility to civil society and would encourage transparency in the elaboration of the reports;
- ▶ cooperation for development at local, national and international levels, by initiating, creating or being associated to innovative partnerships with the public and private sectors as well as with civil society of other regions of the world (Article 15 of the Convention).



# Civil Society FORUM

In addition, the Guidelines provide considerable scope for civil society organisations to participate in the work of the governing bodies of the Convention at the international level, notably by:

- ▶ maintaining the dialogue with Parties in an interactive manner with regard to their positive contribution to the implementation of the Convention, preferably, as appropriate, before the sessions of the organs;
- ▶ participating in the meetings of these bodies;
- ▶ be given the floor by the Chairperson of the respective body;
- ▶ submitting written contributions relevant to the work of the respective bodies when authorized by the Chairperson, to be circulated to all delegations and observers by the Secretariat to the Convention as information documents.

The involvement of civil society organisations in the work of the governing bodies has significantly improved over the last years. *Ad hoc* flexible and effective mechanisms have been put in place through the Decisions and Resolutions of the governing bodies, in particular since 2015. These mechanisms, which have been further enriched by increased coordination among civil society representatives and dialogue between civil society, Parties to the Convention, and the Secretariat, include:

- ▶ The Civil Society Forum, held biennially before each session of the Conference of Parties (2017, 2019, 2021);
- ▶ Civil society activity reports, requested by Parties on a regular basis (2017, 2019, 2022);
- ▶ Working meetings between the Bureau of the Intergovernmental Committee and civil society representatives before each session of the Committee session since 2017;
- ▶ The inclusion of an item concerning civil society on the agenda of each meeting of the governing bodies;
- ▶ The framework for Quadrennial Periodic Reports on Measures to Protect and Promote the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, as adopted by the seventh session of the Conference of Parties in June 2019 including a section – which is the subject of a separate form – for measures and initiatives reported by civil society organisations.

These decisions and actions underline the importance given by the governing bodies of the Convention to the role and participation of civil society. They contribute to ensuring that the diverse voices of civil society are heard in the implementation of the Convention and taken into account in the debates, decisions and resolutions taken during statutory meetings. Through their active participation in the work of the Convention's governing bodies, civil society representatives can bring important challenges to the attention of Parties, make concrete recommendations for the ongoing improvement of the implementation of the Convention at the local, national and global level, and monitor the implementation of their recommendations.

## The third Civil Society Forum

### *Main goals of the third edition of the Civil Society Forum:*

- ▶ To provide a space for civil society organisations and professionals interested and/or operating in the fields covered by the 2005 Convention to exchange on challenges and solutions relevant for the protection and promotion of the diversity of cultural expressions;
- ▶ To enable civil society representatives to formulate joint recommendations to inform the work of the governing bodies of the Convention, and in particular the future activities of the Committee for the 2022-2023 period;
- ▶ To raise awareness on the objectives of the Convention and encourage its implementation amongst a larger community of civil society representatives.

### *Expected outputs:*

- ▶ Recommendations are elaborated to inform the future work plan of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (2022-2023), on the basis of the key challenges and opportunities encountered by civil society in its contribution to the implementation and monitoring of the 2005 Convention;
- ▶ The methodology for the organisation of future editions of the Forum is adopted, based *inter alia* on good practice and previous Forum editions;
- ▶ The objectives and principles of the 2005 Convention are understood and acknowledged by a larger number of civil society representatives.



## Methodology

In order to capitalize on the opportunities and challenges posed by the online format of this year's Forum, and to ensure adequate time to exchange on the selected themes and topics, **non-mandatory preparatory working meetings will take place between May 17 and 30** to kick-off discussions and identify possible recommendations. All civil society representatives wishing to take part in the preparatory meetings are invited to **express their interest by May 16 at the latest** by sending an email to the email address set up for this purpose by civil society representatives in charge of the preparation of the third Civil Society Forum, in accordance with [Decision 14.IGC 15: \*contact@csforum2005convention.org\*](#).

The topics to be discussed during the Forum will be grouped under four main thematic clusters (see Section 5 below), which will be the basis for the break-out sessions that will be held between the two plenary sessions.

To accommodate participants from various time zones, the Forum itself will be held on 31 May, from 12:30 to 5.45 pm (UTC+2 hours). It will be divided in three sessions (see the provisional Agenda below for more details):

- 12:30-1:30 pm**      **Opening, presentation of the objectives of the Forum and summary of the preparatory work (in plenary)**
- 1:45-3:45 pm**      **Four parallel thematic sessions, during which participants will discuss distinct topics and adopt recommendations (break-out groups)**
- 4:00-5:45 pm**      **Presentation of the work of the break-out groups, discussion regarding the procedures to organize future editions of the Forum, adoption of the recommendations (in plenary)**

Each session will be introduced by two or three speakers and facilitated by a moderator, who will introduce the main findings and tentative recommendations that emerged during the preparatory working meetings and encourage discussions among participants. The full programme, including the names of the speakers, will be made available on the Convention's website <https://en.unesco.org/creativity/> at a later date. The preparatory working meetings will serve, *inter alia*, to draw up the final terms of reference for each thematic session.

Simultaneous interpretation will be provided in French, English, Spanish and Arabic for the plenary sessions and in French and English for the thematic sessions.



## Topics and Transversal Issues

The third edition of the Civil Society Forum will build on lessons learned from previous editions of the Forum, as well as on civil society activity reports submitted in [2017](#) and [2019](#). Considering the broad spectrum of civil society's activities to protect and promote the diversity of cultural expressions, as well as the limited discussion time available during the Forum, presentations and debates will aim to lead to concrete recommendations on key areas covered by the Convention, which will be transmitted to the eighth session of the Conference of Parties on 2 June 2021. While the Forum will be organised around the four main topics outlined below, the **COVID-19 pandemic** and the challenge of **inclusion** will be transversal themes.

### 1 Culture and sustainable development

Indicative topics for this thematic cluster are: issues such as artistic freedom, freedom of expression, gender equality, social cohesion and well-being, the recognition of culture as the 4th pillar of sustainable development

### 2 Sustainable ecosystems in the cultural and creative sectors

Indicative topics for this thematic cluster are: the working conditions and social protection of professionals in the cultural and creative sectors; current challenges and good practices in the design of programmes and funding schemes to support a conducive environment for securing the production and dissemination of a diversity of cultural expressions; discussion about the 1980 Recommendation concerning the Status of the Artist in view of identifying provisions that UNESCO Member States may wish to consider revising.

### 3 Civil society participation in the monitoring and implementation of the 2005 Convention, as well as in the work of its governing bodies

Indicative topics for this thematic cluster are: improving dialogue at national & regional level with UNESCO Field Offices (c.f. recommendations made in civil society activity reports submitted in [2017](#) and [2019](#)); measures to support the active participation of civil society in the work of the governing bodies; suggestions for regular follow-up spaces and tools for the implementation of recommendations emerging from the Civil Society Forum and civil society activity reports.

### 4 Digital environment, rights, and trade

Indicative topics for this thematic cluster are: the value chain disruption and unfair redistribution of income among actors; digital trade; recommendation for closer monitoring role of the governing bodies to make sure that the objectives of the Convention are upheld in trade negotiations; preferential treatment for goods and services in the digital environment; digital rights and the threats posed by the digital divide to equal access to a diversity of cultural expressions.



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