Dhaka Ministerial Declaration on the Diversity of Cultural Expressions

11 May 2012

Cultural Diversity Ministerial Forum of the Asia-Pacific Region
Dhaka Ministerial Declaration on the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, 2012

We, Ministers and Representatives of Governments from the Asia-Pacific region meeting in Dhaka, Bangladesh from 9 to 11 May 2012 for the ‘Diversity of Cultural Expressions: Ministerial Forum of the Asia-Pacific Region’,

Appreciating the initiative undertaken by the Government of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh for organizing this first regional event promoting the diversity of cultural expressions in the Asia-Pacific region, and thereby facilitating the expansion and enhancement of culture and development initiatives, exchange and collaboration,

Recalling the diversity of rich cultures in countries of the Asia-Pacific region with economies and population of different sizes,

Recognizing the growing economic contribution of cultural and creative industries in the Asia-Pacific region,

Taking note of:

1. The Intergovernmental Conference on Cultural Policies for Development, The Power of Culture (30 March – 2 April 1998, Stockholm, Sweden), which identified cultural policy as a means of ensuring sufficient scope for the flourishing of creative capacities and industry, as well as being a key component of endogenous and sustainable development;

2. The 2001 UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity, which built on messages emerging from the Power of Culture, recommending that cultural policies be developed to ensure the free circulation of ideas and works, thus encouraging the introduction of measures that would create conditions conducive to the production and dissemination of diversified cultural goods through the cultural industries at the local, regional and global level;

3. The 2005 UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (hereinafter referred to as “the Convention”), a legally binding instrument which for the first time identified culture and development as core issues, emphasising the rights of all states to enact their own cultural policies to protect and promote the diversity of cultural expressions and facilitating international cooperation for development through strengthening cultural industries in developing countries;

4. The strategy of ratification and action plan adopted by Parties to the Convention to increase the number of Parties, particularly in the Asia-Pacific region; and
5. UN General Assembly Resolution 65/166 of 20 December 2010 on Culture and Development, which again emphasized the importance of culture for development, its contribution to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and the mainstreaming of culture into development policies and strategies,

And underscoring:

The political will and engagement that exists in the Asia-Pacific region to strengthen regional cultural cooperation in order to bring forth sustainable and human development as expressed in various sub-regional commitments such as

- The ASEAN Declaration of ASEAN unity in Cultural diversity (2011),
- The Pacific Cultural and Education Strategy (2010-2015),
- The Joint Statement of the First BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting on Culture (2006),
- The SAARC agenda for Culture (2005).

Also taking note of the work of UNESCO in the region to raise awareness of the Convention and to provide technical assistance to governments for its implementation.

Recommend that States in the Asia-Pacific region, that have not yet done so, to consider ratifying the Convention expeditiously;

Decide to adopt the following policy objectives:

I. Integrate culture into sustainable development programmes

1. Recognize that the economic, social, cultural and environmental aspects of sustainable development are complementary;
2. Raise awareness through education about diversity of cultural expressions, including cultural dimension of sustainable development policies and activities;
3. Acknowledge that the diversity of cultural expressions contributes to strengthening identity and social cohesion, and building of inclusive societies that uphold the equal dignity of and respect for all cultures;
4. Integrate culture into national policies and plans as well as international cooperation strategies to achieve human development goals, notably poverty reduction;
5. Realize the full potential and contribution of cultural and creative industries to sustainable development, economic growth and the promotion of quality of life through the creation, production, distribution and dissemination of cultural expressions.
II. Promote participatory governance for culture

1. *Promote* policies and programmes that provide citizens with the knowledge and skills to understand and/or develop interests on diverse cultural expressions and increased literacy of diversity and its expressions;

2. *Develop* platforms for cross-sector dialogue and cooperation with civil society to ensure the active participation of a diversity of voices in policy-making and implementation processes;

3. *Implement* policies and measures that take into account the specific needs of individuals particularly, women, children, differently-abled persons, and different social and ethnic groups and the barriers they face in participating at different stages of the cultural production chain;

4. *Encourage* the formation of inter-ministerial working groups to allow various government ministries/departments to participate in formulating and implementing integrated policy strategies.

III. Collect and share information to promote the diversity of cultural expressions

1. *Develop* mapping studies, data collection and information infrastructure at the national level to measure the impact of culture on development;

2. *Encourage* creation of a national database of experts in the fields of cultural policies, cultural industries and culture for development and make that database available on the web by the concerned authorities;

3. *Strengthen* the required expertise, especially among young professionals, in the collection and analysis of information and data;

4. *Facilitate* the elaboration of statistical indicators, the exchange of information and the dissemination and sharing of best practices on policies and measures to promote the diversity of cultural expressions;

5. *Reinforce* cross-sector networks and regional and international platforms to exchange, analyse and disseminate information and data;

6. *Involve* civil society actors as information and data producers as well as distributors.

IV. Promote the cultural and creative industries

1. *Promote* legal and institutional frameworks to strengthen the emergence of viable local and regional cultural industry markets, especially with regard to capacity building programmes for cultural entrepreneurs;

2. *Provide* financial and technical assistance, as appropriate, to stimulate and support creative works and production of cultural expressions;

3. *Adopt* measures that promote skill development and training in the cultural industries to enhance economic empowerment and employment opportunities;
4. **Recognize** the importance of intellectual property rights in sustaining those involved in cultural creativity;
5. **Facilitate** the mobility of artists, creators, cultural entrepreneurs;
6. **Encourage** technology transfer through the introduction of appropriate incentive measures for the transfer of technology and its know-how;
7. **Facilitate** wider use of technology and access to international and regional distribution networks for cultural activities, goods and services.

V. **Encourage** cultural exchange and cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region

1. **Strengthen** bilateral, regional and international cooperation to create conditions conducive to the promotion of the diversity of cultural expressions;
2. **Encourage** North-South and South-South exchange programmes within the region;
3. **Facilitate** dialogue among people and States on cultural policies promoting and protecting the diversity of cultural expressions;
4. **Foster** co-production and co-distribution agreements among States, as well as facilitate market access for co-productions;
5. **Support** cultural diversity and cooperation for sustainable development and poverty reduction and encourage voluntary contribution to the International Fund for Cultural Diversity.

Calls upon UNESCO to assist efforts to implement the Dhaka Declaration throughout Asia and the Pacific, and specifically to:

1. **Raise** awareness of the Convention among Asia and Pacific countries aimed at increasing ratification as well as facilitating its implementation by the Parties;
2. **Facilitate** the collection and sharing of information and best practices on measures and activities to promote the diversity of cultural expressions;
3. **Continue** providing assistance to build national capacities aimed at informed, participatory and transparent governance in the field of cultural expressions;
4. **Foster** regional cooperation among networks of professionals working in the fields of cultural and creative industries.

**Decides** to take all appropriate measures to ensure the widest possible dissemination of this Declaration.

**Adopted at Dhaka, Bangladesh on 11 May 2012**
List of the participating countries:

1. Afghanistan
2. Bangladesh
3. Bhutan
4. Brunei Darussalam
5. Cambodia
6. China
7. Cook Islands
8. DPR Korea
9. Fiji
10. India
11. Indonesia
12. Iran
13. Japan
14. Kazakhstan
15. Kiribati
16. Maldives
17. Marshall Islands
18. Mongolia
19. Myanmar
20. Nepal
21. Pakistan
22. Palau
23. PDR Lao
24. Philippines
25. Papua New Guinea
26. Samoa
27. Singapore
28. Solomon Islands
29. Sri Lanka
30. Thailand
31. Timor-Leste
32. Vietnam