



THE MISSING LINK: STILL TIME TO CORRECT THE FAILURE OF THE SDG SUMMIT DECLARATION TO MENTION CULTURE

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The Zero Draft of the SDG Summit Declaration aims to set out an agenda for boosting work to implement the 2030 Agenda. However, in its drive to identify key accelerators of sustainable development, there is one glaring omission: culture.

Since its creation, the [Culture2030Goal campaign](#) has underlined the essential enabling role of culture as a pillar of sustainable development, setting out the contribution it can make if it is properly integrated into development policy planning and implementation.

Over this time, we have seen an increasingly widespread recognition of this role. For example, the [Report of the Secretary General](#) on Progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals underlines how culture is a 'source of knowledge, values and communication, as a contributor to environmental sustainability and as a generator of economic activity and jobs. Respect for cultural diversity and the diversity of religions and beliefs as well as intercultural dialogue and understanding are also crucial to strengthening social cohesion and sustaining peace'.

It calls for 'greater consideration of culture's role in supporting SDG achievement – including within relevant SDG indicators [as] an important boost for SDG implementation between now and 2030'.

Similarly, the Declaration of the [UNESCO MONDIACULT Declaration](#) in September 2022 saw the assembled governments affirm culture as a public good, and called for the recognition of culture as an explicit goal in development frameworks.



It is therefore concerning that culture is not mentioned at all in the Zero Draft of the Declaration of the SDG Summit. Its absence increases the chances of repeating the mistakes of 2015, when culture was not adequately recognised, leading to a situation where, as the Secretary General has indicated, 'culture and respect for cultural diversity, however, remain undervalued and underutilised in the push for SDG progress'.

Including culture more effectively into development planning and implementation promises to mobilise new energies, creativity and resources for development, boost policy effectiveness by ensuring better integration of cultural insights, and support a more inclusive, equitable development model going forwards.

If the leaders meeting at the SDG Summit in September 2023 are consistent in their desire to turn around efforts to deliver on the SDGs, the SDG Summit Declaration needs to include culture.



BACKGROUND

During the process of creation and adoption of the UN 2030 Agenda and the SDGs, several cultural global networks campaigned, under the banner '[The Future We Want Includes Culture](#)', for the inclusion of one specific Goal devoted to Culture, and the integration of cultural aspects across the SDGs. In the context of this #Culture2015goal campaign, 4 documents were produced: a [Manifesto – Proposal for a Goal](#) (September 2013), a [Declaration on the inclusion of culture in the 2030 Agenda](#) (May 2014), a [proposal of indicators for measuring the cultural aspects of the SDGs](#) (February 2015), and a [Communiqué on the final 2030 Agenda](#) (September 2015) which highlighted "progress made" but also noticed that "important steps remain ahead".

In the context of the Covid-19 pandemic, the #Culture2030goal campaign released on 20 April 2020 a Statement entitled "[Ensuring culture fulfils its potential in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic](#)", which was [officially launched](#) on 21 May 2020, on the occasion of the World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development. The Statement has been [endorsed by the President of the United Nations General Assembly](#) and signed by more than 280 individuals and organisations worldwide.

The campaign has published two analytical (and critical) reports on the cultural dimension of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda: "[Culture in the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda](#)", analysing the National Voluntary Reviews, in 2019, and "[Culture in the Localization of the SDGs: An Analysis of the Voluntary Local Reviews \(VLRs\)](#)", in 2021. The campaign has also promoted several discussions in the context of the [2020](#) and [2021](#) United Nations High-Level Political Fora (HLPF).

In 2021, the campaign published its [strategic vision](#). The campaign wants a stronger place for culture throughout the implementation of the current UN 2030 Agenda, the adoption of an explicit Goal for Culture in the Post-2030 Development Agenda, and the adoption of an ambitious and comprehensive Global Agenda for Culture.

In 2022, in the context of the UNESCO Global Conference on Cultural Policies organised in Mexico City, Mondiacult 2022, the campaign launched a [Zerodraft of a future Culture Goal](#), and welcomed the undertaking in the Final Declaration of the Conference to integrate a specific Culture Goal in the post-2030 development agenda, with the Statement "[Commitment to an explicit culture goal in MONDIACULT Declaration welcome: now is the time to deliver](#)".



Arterial Network
Web: www.arterialafrica.org



Culture Action Europe
Web: www.cultureactioneurope.org



ICOMOS - International Council on Monuments and Sites
Web: www.icomos.org



IFCCD - International Federation of Coalitions for Cultural Diversity
Web: www.ficdc.org



IFLA - International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions
Web: www.ifla.org



IMC - International Music Council
Web: www.imc-cim.org



UCLG (United Cities and Local Governments) Culture Committee - Agenda 21 for culture
Web: www.agenda21culture.net

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#CULTURE2030GOAL



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