CULTURE IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 2030 AGENDA:

A REPORT BY THE CULTURE 2030 GOAL CAMPAIGN

TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE
SUMMARY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Leading up to the adoption of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, several global cultural networks campaigned under the banner "The Future We Want Includes Culture" for the inclusion of one specific goal devoted to culture, or for the integration of cultural aspects across the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This campaign was also known as the **#culture2015goal campaign**. In the final document of this campaign (23 September 2015: "**Culture in the SDG Outcome Document: Progress Made, but Important Steps Remain Ahead**"), the networks committed to keep their cooperation active.

Building on this commitment, the members of the campaign have taken the occasion of the first UN SDG Summit that takes place in New York on 24-25 September 2019 as a perfect opportunity to re-energise the campaign, now updated as **#culture2030goal**. Through this, they will underline key messages on the role that culture is playing (and should play) in the implementation of the SDGs, with this report, entitled "Culture in the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda".

The report takes stock of the **first four years of the Sustainable Development Goals and the 2030 Agenda, from the perspective of culture**. It provides an analysis of the presence of culture and associated concepts in the annual progress reviews for the SDGs, focusing on the Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) submitted by State Parties to the UN for the High Level Political Forums (HLPFs) in 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019.

The report also explains the parallel developments of policy in the global conversation on culture in development, and includes an analysis of the Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs, submitted by cities and local governments). Finally, the report provides key recommendations for all parties involved in the next cycle of HLPF.

The report shows some interesting **evidence related to the existence of cultural policies and programmes** related to SDG11 (sustainable cities and communities, on cultural heritage and on the use of public spaces). There are also important cultural initiatives in SDG4 (quality education), SDG5 (gender equality), SDG8 (decent work and economic growth), SDG9 (infrastructures), SDG10 (reduced inequalities), SDG12 (sustainable production and consumption), SDG15 (life on land) and SDG16 (peace, justice and strong institutions).

However, the report expresses concern about the **limited presence of culture in the VNRs and in the broader documents emerging from the HLPF review process**, including the relevant Ministerial and Political Declarations. This is especially acute in SDG16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions) and SDG17 (Partnerships for the Goals), which fail to take advantage of the potential of citizen participation in cultural life and of local, national and international cultural collaborations.

The reality is that **references to culture in the SDGs are scarce** and do not sufficiently acknowledge the many ways in which cultural aspects influence and contribute to sustainable development. The keyword analysis of the VNRs research finds that the **cultural dimension of sustainable development lags significantly behind** (between one eighth to one fifth of) the other three recognized dimensions (the social, economic and environmental). We would like to see an increase in the share of the cultural dimension in the coming years, at least as much as the environmental dimension.

Taking into account the global "acquis" on culture in sustainable development and the body of existing knowledge and extremely relevant initiatives that are explicitly or implicitly connecting culture to the SDGs, it is sad to confirm that **the potential to relate culture to the SDGs appears to remain largely untapped in national strategies to implement the SDGs**. To a large extent, this results from the feeble presence of explicit references to culture in the text of the 2030 Agenda, but it is also because the implementation and reporting process does not necessarily include the communities, leaders and cultural networks who are most engaged in culture and who understand its impacts best.

In a sentence: there is a gap between existing expertise and on-the-ground practices engaging culture for sustainable development and the reflection and prioritization of this in documents emerging from the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

The Implementation of the 2030 Agenda with the Sustainable Development Goals at its heart is the most important shared agenda that the humanity has ever adopted. But, as the UN Secretary General has affirmed in his 2019 Report to the HLPF, the global response to the 2030 Agenda has not been ambitious enough. Four years after its approval in 2015, the challenges are even greater: growing inequalities, mistrust in policy systems, violence against vulnerable groups, military conflicts and climate emergency. **In the face of such urgency, culture should be at the heart of the response**.

We believe indeed that further awareness-raising must be done in order to convince all relevant actors that **culture is essential for the achievement of all Goals. The Implementation Decade (2020-2030) is about to begin. We are convinced that an explicit presence of culture in the "action and delivery" efforts to achieve the SDGs is more essential than ever**. This is because:

(a) the adaptation of the SDGs at the national or local level requires recognition of specific cultural contexts – what may be termed the '**cultural localisation**' of the SDGs, which involves translating the universal language of the SDGs into the individual and collective lives of citizens inhabiting specific communities, cities and regions; this is valid for all SDGs, but particularly salient in areas like health and wellbeing (SDG 3), cities and settlements (SDG11), education (SDG 4) or governance, peace and justice (SDG 16);

(b) in many areas, including zero hunger (SDG 2), sustainability education (SDG 4), sustainable use of environmental resources (SDGs 6, 7, 13, 14, 15), promotion of sustainable tourism (SDG 8), sustainable evolution of urban and rural settlements (SDG11), adoption of sustainable patterns of production and consumption (SDG 12) or mitigation of and adaptation to climate change (SDG13), **cultural knowledge and resources can act as enablers** of sustainable development; and

(c) cultural practices convey forms of **expression, creativity and identity building** that relate to the core of **human dignity**, and as such embody **people-centred**, sustainable development. Libraries, museums and community cultural centres can be seen as basic services (SDG 1), while the interrelation between gender equality and culture holds potential for positive social transformation (SDG 5) and the integration of the arts and cultural knowledge, diversity and creativity can be seen as integral to inclusive education (SDG 4). Cultural facilities may also be seen as part of resilient, quality infrastructures (SDG 9), cultural programmes contribute to reducing inequalities (SDG 10) and the protection of cultural heritage is key to sustainable cities and communities (SDG 11); last, but not least, Partnerships for the Goals (SDG 17) should foster more international cultural collaborations.

The report also proposes some **key avenues of action** for all actors, in order to accelerate implementation of the 2030 Agenda, as well as to prepare for an enhanced reflection of culture in future global agendas on sustainable development:

- All concerned parties should **consider culture from the outset in their national development planning frameworks for implementing the SDGs, as well as in their reporting through the VNR process**. In particular, they should use culture-related targets and their indicators more actively, and ensure that the role of culture is recognised in the plans for each relevant individual policy area.

- We encourage UN member states to foster **wider consultation and participatory exercises** in the elaboration of their VNRs and other planning, monitoring and evaluation mechanisms in the context of the 2030 Agenda. These exercises would be enriched by the engagement of cultural actors, who can help visualise how culture is, at the national and local level, relevant for the achievement of the SDGs, and to discuss what further opportunities may exist in this respect.

- We **commit to developing a coherent community around culture and sustainable development**. Such a community would build on and expand beyond each of our networks' scope of work, to mobilize the resources of international bodies, including UNESCO, governmental, non-governmental and business organisations that express their support. Thus, we will invite new networks to join in the #culture2030goal platform and to jointly explore the creation of a formal '**Major Group for Culture**'.

- We suggest that, taking the idea of convening high-impact meetings and taking the numerous UN resolutions on culture one step further, the UN devotes a **High-Level Meeting to Culture** within the next HLPF cycle of reporting (2020-2023), to create a global momentum for actors at all levels to coalesce.

- We require **better dissemination of already existing evidence and improved data** and call on governments and other organisations to support evidence-based research and the design and implementation of quantitative and qualitative indicators reflecting the place of culture in sustainable development, disaggregating the data wherever possible.

- We recognise the importance of cultural contexts in the **local implementation of the SDGs** and the crucial role played by local cultural actors, institutions and organisations. Therefore, in line with several cities' efforts to produce VLRs, we encourage the role of cities and local governments, as well as grassroots organisations and communities, in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the 2030 Agenda.

- We believe the **cultural sectors need to strengthen their own efforts towards the implementation of the SDGs**: cultural policies, institutions and organisations need to contribute to the response to our common challenges as one humanity, and be bolder and more explicit in annual and long-term programmes on issues such as human rights, gender equality, the fight against all inequalities and the struggle against climate change.

- We commit to continuing to **develop partnerships** at local, national, regional and global level to work with public authorities, civil society and communities to strengthen the integration of the cultural dimension in the SDGs.

We need parties involved in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs to consider culture as an invaluable driver and enabler to help communities thrive and be sustainable. We need the cultural communities, sectors, actors and agents, to come closer together for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1
BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

Leading up to the adoption of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, several global cultural networks campaigned under the banner "**The Future We Want Includes Culture**" for the inclusion of one specific goal devoted to culture, or for the integration of cultural aspects across the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This campaign was also known as the **#culture2015goal campaign**.

The nine networks involved in this campaign were (alphabetical order): Arterial Network, Culture Action Europe (CAE), International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), International Federation of Arts Councils and Culture Agencies (IFACCA), International Federation of Coalitions for Cultural Diversity (IFCCD), International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA), International Music Council (IMC), Latin American Network of Arts for Social Transformation, and United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) Culture Committee (Agenda 21 for culture/ AC21).

Four documents, including a manifesto, a declaration, a proposal of possible indicators for measuring the cultural aspects of the SDGs, and an assessment of the final 2030 Agenda, were produced between 2013 and 2015. In the final document of this campaign (23 September 2015: "**Culture in the SDG Outcome Document: Progress Made, but Important Steps Remain Ahead**"), the networks committed to keep active.

The SDGs have completed the initial 4-year cycle of review within the High Level Political Forum (HLPF), the entity created by the UN, that in July every year monitors progress, generally by nation states, through the so-called Voluntary National Reports (VNR) on a selection of Goals. As of 19 July 2019, all SDGs have been analyzed at least once. Beside the annual HLPF, the UN is also convening an SDGs Summit on 24-25 September 2019 to focus attention on 2030 Agenda.

This report has been prepared to take stock of the **first four years of the Sustainable Development Goals and the 2030 Agenda, from the perspective of culture**. It provides a short analysis of the presence of culture and associated concepts in the annual progress reviews for the SDGs, focusing on the VNRs submitted by State Parties to the UN for the HLPF, but also based on the principles (the 5P's, of People, Planet, Prosperity, Peace and Partnerships), annual HLPF themes, Goals and Targets reviewed and compared to the parallel developments of policy in the Culture sector, through main Cultural actors such as UNESCO and other international organizations working for the inclusion of Culture in the sustainable development agenda. It also includes an analysis of the Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs, submitted by cities and local governments). Finally, it provides key recommendations for all parties involved in the next cycle of HLPF.

1.2
CULTURE IN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

A short overview is provided in this section of the main ideas about culture and development developed over the past decades, to set the context of the current status facing culture within the sustainable development agenda.

1.2.1_ How Culture is Defined

'Culture' is the whole complex of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features that characterise a community, society or social group. It includes not only arts and literature, but also modes of life, the fundamental rights of the human being, value systems, traditions and beliefs. Culture encompasses the living or contemporary characteristics and values of a community as well as those that have survived from the past.
(**Mexico City Declaration on Cultural Policies**, UNESCO, 1982)

Cultural rights protect the rights for each person, individually and in community with others, as well as groups of people, to develop and express their humanity, their world view and the meanings they give to their existence and their development through, inter alia, values, beliefs, convictions, languages, knowledge and the arts, institutions and ways of life. They also protect access to cultural heritage and resources that allow such identification and development processes to take place.
(**Report of the UN Independent Expert on Cultural Rights to UNGA**, 2010)

*"Culture is that complex whole which includes knowledge, beliefs, arts, morals, laws, customs, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by a human as a member of society. (…) The UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity elevates **cultural diversity** to the rank of common heritage of humanity, promotes the principle that "[c]ulture takes diverse forms across time and space. This diversity is embodied in the uniqueness and plurality of the identities of the groups and societies making up humankind. As a source of exchange, innovation and creativity, cultural diversity is as necessary for humankind as biodiversity is for nature. In this sense, it is the common heritage of humanity and should be recognized and affirmed for the benefit of present and future generations."*
(Article 1) **"Cultural diversity is a means to achieve a more satisfactory intellectual, emotional, moral and spiritual existence." (Article 3) (UNESCO)**

'Cultural heritage' is an expression of the ways of living developed by a community and passed on from generation to generation, including customs, practices, places, objects, artistic expression and values. Cultural Heritage is often expressed as either Intangible or Tangible Cultural Heritage.
(**ICOMOS International Cultural Tourism Charter**)

1.2.2_ Culture at Intergovernmental Level: UN and UNESCO Policies

Some of the most important policy documents of the United Nations in recent years have underscored the importance of culture. The analysis could begin in the outcome document of the UN Conference on Sustainable Development, **"The Future We Want"** (Rio de Janeiro, 2012), which highlighted the importance of **cultural diversity** and the need for a more holistic and integrated approach to sustainable development[1], and the UN General Assembly Resolution N. 65/1 (**"Keeping the Promise: United to Achieve the Millennium Development Goals"**, 2010). The Resolution states:

- "We acknowledge the diversity of the world and recognize that all cultures and civilizations contribute to the enrichment of humankind. We emphasize the importance of **culture for development** and its contribution to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals" (para 16);

- "States should (...) take concerted, positive steps to ensure respect for all human rights and fundamental freedoms of **indigenous people**, on the basis of equality and non-discrimination and recognizing the value and diversity of their distinctive identities, cultures and social organization" (para 55);

- "the **cultural dimension** is important for development. We encourage international cooperation in the cultural field, aimed at achieving development objectives" (para 66); and

- "prevention programmes should take into account **local circumstances, ethics and cultural values**, including information, education and communication in languages most understood by local communities and should be respectful of cultures" (MDG6: Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases).

The UN General Assembly has also issued **specific resolutions on "Culture and Development"** (N. 65/166, 2010 and N. 66/208, 2011) or "Culture and sustainable development" (N. 68/223, 2013, N. 69/230, 2014, N. 70/214, 2015 and N. 72/229, 2017), as well as those focusing on various aspect of cultural issues such as:

- "A **Culture of Peace**" and "interreligious and **intercultural dialogue** and tolerance, understanding and cooperation for peace" (N. 65/11, 2010, N. 65/138, 2010, N. 66/116, 2011, N. 66/226, 2011, N. 67/104, 2012, N. 67/106, 2012, N. 68/125, 2013, N. 68/126, 2013, N. 69/139, 2014, N. 69/140, 2014, N. 70/19, 2015, N. 70/20, 2015, 71/249, 2015, N. 71/252, 2016 and N. 73/126, 2018, N. 73/129, 2018 and N. 73/328, 2018)

- "Human **rights** and cultural **diversity**" (N. 66/154, 2011, N. 68/159, 2013, N. 70/156, 2015 and N. 72/170, 2017)

- "Illicit **trafficking** and restitution of cultural property" (N. 67/80, 2012, N. 68/186, 2013, N. 69/196, 2014, N. 70/76, 2015 and N. 73/130, 2018)

- "**Terrorist** acts against cultural heritage", including "the cultural heritage of Iraq" (N. 69/281, 2014 and N. 72/17, 2017)

A particularly important milestone in UN policy regarding cultural heritage was the March 2017 UN Security Council resolution, S/RES/2347, which "condemns the unlawful destruction of cultural heritage, including the destruction of religious sites and artefacts, and the looting and smuggling of cultural property from archaeological sites, museums, libraries, archives, and other sites, notably by terrorist groups". The Resolution features a decisive statement, in affirming "that directing unlawful attacks against sites and buildings dedicated to religion, education, art, science or charitable purposes, or historic monuments may constitute, under certain circumstances and pursuant to international law **a war crime** and that perpetrators of such attacks must be brought to justice".

---

1. The Hangzhou Declaration on Placing Culture at the Heart of Sustainable Development Policies Adopted in Hangzhou, People's Republic of China, on 17 May 2013.

Most recently, the connection between cultural heritage and **climate change** has also been emphasized by key UN figures, on the occasion of relevant events on the topic.

"The impact of climate change on cultural heritage is an **urgent human rights question**; cultural heritage represents a **powerful resource** to prevent and address the challenges caused by climate change in a human rights respecting manner." Karima Bennoune, UN Special Rapporteur on Cultural Rights, Address in Climate Heritage Mobilization, September 2018

"Culture is a powerful source of identity and resilience – and can guide us in responding to the global climate emergency. Cultural heritage offers environment-friendly building techniques and agricultural practices. Intangible cultural heritage also includes knowledge about the environment, weather, atmosphere and biodiversity – all underpinning our capacity to adapt. As we strive for the transformation we need, **it is time to include cultural heritage in our discussions of climate change**." Antonio Guterres, UN Secretary General, message to the International Conference "Climate Change Impacts on Cultural Heritage: Facing the Challenge", June 2019

The **United Nations Education, Science and Culture Organization (UNESCO)** has a history spanning more than five decades of developing policies to link 'culture', beside its other crucial mandates of 'education' and 'science', with 'development'.

Two major conferences have defined the agenda up to the 1980s: the International Conference on Institutional, Administrative and Financial Aspects of Cultural Policies (Venice, 1970) centered on the emerging perspectives of decolonization, national identity and endogenous socio-economic development, and the World Conference on Cultural Policies (Mondiacult) (Mexico City, 1982), which focused on the needs of the developing world, strengthening cultural identity and cultural policies. The **World Decade for Cultural Development** (1988-97) was subsequently declared, to clarify the links between culture and development, with an added focus on a culture of peace and intercultural dialogue. The key outcome of the decade, "**Our Creative Diversity**" (1996), was issued with an ambition to have a similar impact that "Our Common Future" (the Brundtland Report) (1987) did for the environment agenda. Efforts were made, unsuccessfully, to have the UNGA include culture among the MDGs. Challenges in this processes are cited by some as lack of clear understanding on how culture contributes to development, and differences in understandings of culture. Other, more positive initiatives were the inclusion of 'Culture and Development' as one of the thematic areas funded by the UNDP's MDG Achievement Fund (2006-12), and UNESCO's own The Silk Roads: Roads of Dialogue (1997).[2]

UNESCO is the guardian of a body of international law where Member States have underlined the importance of culture and committed to taking actions to ensure its safeguarding. These revolve around UNESCO's "**Six Culture Conventions**", for "Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict" (The Hague, 1954), "Fighting against the Illicit Trafficking of Cultural Property" (Paris, 1970), "Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage" (Paris, 1972), "Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage" (Paris, 2001), "Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage" (Paris, 2003), and "Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions" (2005). Among these, UNESCO is most popularly known for the 1972 Convention, whereby **World Heritage** listing has become a coveted brand for States Parties, and finds a reflection in Target 11.4 under Sustainable Development Goal 11.

In the process leading up to the end of the MDGs and adoption of the SDGs, the motto adopted was "**Culture: Driver and Enabler of Development**". This comes across in the organisation's statement: "Culture is who we are and what shapes our identity. No development can be sustainable without including culture. (...) From cultural heritage to cultural and creative industries, Culture is both an enabler and a driver of the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development."[3]

In particular, cultural heritage and creativity have been highlighted as UNESCO's two main cultural entry points into the sustainable development debate: "**Heritage** constitutes a source of identity and cohesion for communities disrupted by bewildering change and economic instability. **Creativity** contributes to building open, inclusive and pluralistic societies. Both heritage and creativity lay the foundations for vibrant, innovative and prosperous knowledge societies. (...) UNESCO is convinced that no development can be sustainable without a strong culture component. Indeed only a human-centred approach to development based on mutual respect and open dialogue among cultures can lead to lasting, inclusive and equitable results. **Yet until recently, culture has been missing from the development equation**."[4]

Former DG Irina Bokova, at her statement at the 6th World Urban Forum in 2012, emphasized the point that 'we need a greater focus on dialogue, inclusiveness and participation, to make the most of rising diversity. These are sources for creativity and innovation that are essential for urban renewal, for more liveable, safer and productive cities. (...) Tangible and intangible heritage are sources of social cohesion, factors of diversity and drivers of creativity, innovation and urban regeneration – we must do more to harness this power."

Just as with the MDGs, there were efforts by UNESCO to have a single goal on Culture in the SDGs. The **Hangzhou Declaration on Placing Culture at the Heart of Sustainable Development Policies** explicitly stated that: "**the time has come for the full integration of culture (...) into agreed development strategies, programmes and practices at global, regional, national and local levels** (...). Only such a concrete political and operational framework can ensure that all development initiatives lead to truly sustainable benefits for all, while securing the right of future generations to benefit from the wealth of cultural assets built up by previous generations." (...) "We therefore call on governments and policy-makers, (..) to integrate culture within all development policies and programmes; mobilize culture and mutual understanding to foster peace and reconciliation; ensure cultural rights for all to promote inclusive social development; leverage culture for poverty reduction and inclusive economic development; build on culture to promote environmental sustainability; strengthen resilience to disasters and combat climate change through culture; value, safeguard and transmit culture to future generations; harness culture as a resource for achieving sustainable urban development and management; and capitalize on culture to foster innovative and sustainable models of cooperation. (...) **We recommend, therefore, that a specific Goal focused on culture be included as part of the post-2015 UN development agenda**, to be based on heritage, diversity, creativity and the transmission of knowledge and including clear targets and indicators that relate culture to all dimensions of sustainable development."

While such a clear position was expressed for Culture, the outcome of advocacy efforts **fell short of a single Goal**, instead yielding **one Target (11.4) dedicated to heritage under the 'Urban Goal'** (SDG11), and several mentions of cultural issues under other Goals (to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education (SDG4); sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth (SDG8); sustainable consumption and production patterns (SDG12); and peaceful and inclusive societies (SDG16). Some explanations offered for the outcome falling short of a Goal include the sense that culture was considered a lower priority by several State Parties, which in turn led UNESCO to focus its advocacy elsewhere, i.e. on an Education Goal, as well as insufficient understanding of the links between culture and development, beyond tourism.[5]

---

3. Culture for Sustainable Development: https://en.unesco.org/themes/culture-sustainable-development
4. Protecting Our Heritage and Fostering Creativity: https://en.unesco.org/themes/protecting-our-heritage-and-fostering-creativity
5. Workshop notes within the scope of the project 'Rethinking Heritage for Development: International Framework, Local Impacts' conducted by Sophia Labadi at the University of Kent.

With the lack of a Goal dedicated to culture, UNESCO policy appears focused on capitalizing on the results that have been achieved, particularly with Target 11.4. The Culture for Sustainable Urban Development initiative was launched in 2015, "to demonstrate the link between the implementation of the UNESCO Culture Conventions and the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development". The International Conference on "Culture for Sustainable Cities" (Hangzhou, December 2015) was held to explore the prominent role of culture in the urban context, adopting the "Hangzhou Outcomes", with nine key recommendations to contribute to the elaboration of a "New Urban Agenda" and in view of the Habitat-III Conference (Quito, 2016)." Under Francesco Bandarin, UNESCO's Assistant DG for Culture who spearheaded the urban heritage effort, the **Global Report on Culture and Sustainable Urban Development [Culture: Urban Future]** was launched in the framework of the UNESCO culture conventions, based on data and strategic highlights collected from key actors in the areas of cultural heritage and creative industries. Several other UNESCO initiatives help to reinforce the urban heritage connection: the World Heritage Cities Programme, aiming to support cities in the integration of environmental, social and cultural concerns into the planning, design and implementation of urban development; and the Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape (2011), a non-binding agreement of international 'soft-law' with international guidelines for addressing urban conservation as part of strategies for regeneration and development. Former UNESCO DG Irina Bokova described **culture as the right 'software'** needed for the 'hardware' – i.e. infrastructure planning, mobility, water and energy supply – to work for more sustainable and just cities, and offered "alliances" within the UN system, between the international and municipal level, between cities, with civil society and the private sector".[6]

"None of the major challenges facing the world today can be met by any one country on its own without relying on the fundamental pillars of science, education and culture. Thus, UNESCO can and must fully participate in a world order based on multilateralism and humanist values." Audrey Azoulay, Director-General of UNESCO

In the frame of UNESCO's 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (that leads UNESCO's efforts to strengthen capacities for the creation, production and dissemination of cultural goods, services and activities) the report Re|Shaping Cultural Policies: Advancing Creativity for Development was published in 2018; in the frame of the 2030 Agenda, this publication provides examples of innovative cultural policies with a positive impact on the whole of cultural governance. The connection between the 2030 Agenda and this Convention has also been explored, among others, in several public debates known as 'Create 2030'.

Another important programme of UNESCO connected to the 2030 Agenda is the Creative Cities Network established in 2004, bringing together cities recognized in the fields of literature, film, music, crafts, design, media art or gastronomy; in 2019, UNESCO published the document "Voices of the City", a compendium of concrete experiences taken from the activities of this programme.

UNESCO is also working in the elaboration of Thematic Indicators for Culture in the frame of the 2030 Agenda, in collaboration with the UNESCO Institute for Statistics. It is also important to mention the Forum of Ministers of Culture, which will take place in November 2019, and will discuss UNESCO's support for its Member States in the development and implementation of cultural policies, drawing on UNESCO's conventions and programmes, as well as actions to firmly place cultural policies in perspectives relating to the 2030 Agenda.

---

6. Address by Irina Bokova, former Director-General of UNESCO, At the High Level Inter-Agency Meeting at the 6th World Urban Forum "The Opportunity of Urbanization in the 21st Century: The Role of the United Nations", Naples, 3 September 2012.

1.2.3_ We Are All Committed: Policies and Activities of the Members of this Campaign

While UNESCO, as the intergovernmental agency mandated by the UN to deal with cultural affairs, provides the fundamental framework for integrating culture and development, other international organizations working in culture-related fields, notably the members of the Culture Goal Campaign (the declaration of which was endorsed by over 900 organizations and thousands of citizens from 120 countries), are fully committed to cultural development and are making important contributions to the body of cultural policy and advocacy. Some of these are highlighted below.

United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) has been a major actor in the cultural policy field, through activities of its Culture Committee (Agenda 21 for Culture). The work of the UCLG Committee on Culture builds on its founding documents, the **Agenda 21 for culture** (2004) and **Culture 21 Actions** (2015). Both these documents connect culture and sustainable development at the local level and may be seen to provide guidance for cities aiming to understand how cultural aspects may be aligned with the SDGs.

Furthermore, the policy statement Culture: Fourth Pillar of Sustainable Development (2010), adopted by the UCLG World Congress, entails the engagement of local governments across the world with the integration of cultural aspects in all approaches to sustainable development. This involves both the adoption of solid cultural policies and the inclusion of a cultural dimension in all public policies and development strategies.

Following its involvement in the #culture2015goal campaign, the UCLG Committee on Culture placed the issue of culture in the 2030 Agenda and beyond in the programme of the last two **UCLG Culture Summits**, held in Jeju in 2017 and Buenos Aires in 2019, involving several of the networks that had taken part in the previous campaign, but also trying to build bridges with civil society networks in other areas (e.g. gender, housing, environment). Plenary and parallel sessions were held to discuss how to strengthen the consideration of culture in the 2030 Agenda and ensure that future sustainable development agendas devote more attention to culture explicitly (using the #culture2030goal hashtag to this end).

In 2018, UCLG published the document **Culture in the Sustainable Development Goals: A Guide for Local Action**, which argues that cultural aspects will be essential to achieve the SDGs, even if this is not made explicit ("cultural aspects will play a pivotal role for the overall 2030 Agenda to be successful, including in areas where connections may only be implicit"), and that it is particularly at the local level where this connection can be observed. To this end, the Guide explains how culture is relevant to each of the 17 SDGs and what measures may be adopted to contribute to the SDGs at the local level, providing many good practices. The Guide was made available as a draft in mid 2017 and open for consultation, which served to identify more examples. Several of the examples included in the Guide come from the **Obs database of good practices on culture and sustainable development**, an online repository of examples from across the world on how local cultural policies are related to sustainable development. Since 2018, projects available in this database can be searched on the basis of several criteria, including the connection with each of the 17 SDGs. The database currently includes over 140 projects, with many more in preparation - it is expected to reach 200 by late 2019. Many of the good practices included in the 'Obs' are drawn from successive editions of the biennial **International Award UCLG - Mexico City - Culture 21**, an initiative that aims to recognize cities and individuals who have contributed to the appreciation of the place of culture in sustainable development. Recent editions of the Award require candidate cities to explain how the projects they submit are related to global agendas, including the SDGs. This serves, among others, to raise awareness of the connections between culture and the SDGs.

More specifically for the HLPF, the Committee on Culture has contributed to broader reports of the Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments (GTF) on SDG monitoring (see 2018 and 2019 reports), and produced individual reports addressing the targets with an explicit cultural dimension that came under review at the HLPF: see the reports for targets 11.4 (2018), 4.7 and 8.9 (2019) here.

The **International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS)** has been another active member of the Culture Goal campaign. The global network of cultural heritage experts, which also advises UNESCO on World Heritage affairs, has increasingly shifted its global policy for cultural heritage toward a focus on sustainable development and mainstreaming the contribution of culture and heritage to achieve the 2030 Agenda. Through advocacy and knowledge production, ICOMOS is working for the effective integration of culture and heritage into sustainable urban-rural development, tourism, climate action, disaster preparedness and other related policy areas. A milestone in ICOMOS doctrine was the 2011 Paris Declaration, "Heritage as a Driver of Development", which emphasised that "cultural heritage is not just monuments. It is identity, memory and sense of place. Heritage has a crucial role within the urban development process". ICOMOS is committed to the implementation and localizing of the 2030 Agenda , through Target 11.4 and companion Global Goals, the New Urban Agenda and other global mechanisms, having both adopted its own 'Action Plan for Localizing Cultural Heritage and the SDGs' (2017) and supported other roadmaps such as the 'Action Plan for World Heritage, Sustainable Development, and Civil Society' (2019), which focuses on how civil society organizations can support the implementation of UNESCO's Policy on the Integration of a Sustainable Development Perspective into the Processes of the World Heritage Convention (2015). In addition to the ICOMOS Concept Note on 'Cultural Heritage, SDGs and New Urban Agenda' (2016), ICOMOS released the report 'Future of Our Pasts: Engaging Cultural Heritage in Climate Action' in July 2019.

Through its working groups on the SDGs, Climate Change, Rights-Based Approaches, and the Culture-Nature Journey, among others, ICOMOS has been developing a transversal approach to support synergies among its 100+ national committees and 28 international scientific committees (ISCs) focusing on various cultural heritage themes[7], in the silo-breaking spirit of the SDGs. Building external partnerships has also been a priority for ICOMOS, which has supported UNESCO not only through the processes of the World Heritage Convention and the Historic Urban Landscape recommendation, but also in the work of the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) and the World Heritage Centre for developing Thematic Indicators for Culture in Sustainable Development and developing Sustainable Tourism and Visitor Management Assessment Tool, within the scope of UNESCO's Focus Area "Integration of Culture into the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development". Other key partners that ICOMOS collaborates with, on the basis of joint events and Memoranda of Understanding, include the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), UN-Habitat, Organization of World Heritage Cities (OWHC) and UCLG among others. Part of the contributions ICOMOS makes to global policy is through inputs to various documents to partner international bodies; the compilation of inputs for 2019 include those for the Environmental and Social Standards for UN Programming, the UN Special Rapporteur in the field of Cultural Rights report on Public Spaces, and the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction (GPDRR).

---

7. Among these, some ICOMOS scientific committees actively contributing to the ICOMOS SDG work have been on Cultural Tourism (ICTC), Interpretation and Presentation (ICIP), Cultural Landscapes (ISCCL), Historic Towns and Villages (CIVVIH), Energy, Sustainability and Climate Change (ISCES+CC) and Economics of Conservation (ISCEC) and Risk Preparedness (ICORP).

ICOMOS attended the HLPF in 2018 and 2019, organizing a side event in HLPF 2018 on 'SDG11.4: Heritage for Sustainability' (also featured as a World Urban Campaign web story) with co-sponsors UNESCO, UN-Habitat, IUCN, Global Ecovillage Network (GEN), UCLG and American Planning Association (APA); issuing the Statement "Is Heritage Left behind in the HLPF Ministerial Declaration?" with partners UCLG, GPN (Global Planners Network), IFLA and Europa Nostra to advocate for inclusion of cultural and natural Heritage in the HLPF 2018 Ministerial Declaration; and speaking on "Building Rural-Urban Equity through Cultural Tourism" on a HLPF 2019 side event "SDG 8, Leave No One Behind: The 2030 GDP Target - Vulnerable People and the Regions Where They Live". ICOMOS is a member of the NGO Major Group, and has contributed to its Position Statements in 2018 and 2019.

The **International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA),** yet another active member of the Culture Goal Campaign, has placed a major emphasis on the 2030 Agenda, engaging from early on in the post-2015 process. This is in keeping with the mission of libraries to support individuals and societies better to achieve their goals by providing access to the right information, at the right time, in the right way. This work long pre-dates the SDGs, and includes work such as promoting literacy and reading, supporting research and innovation, and preserving and giving access to heritage. The SDGs have also proved a powerful thought tool within IFLA's field of work. The premises behind them – that they apply everywhere, that they are interlinked, that everyone has a role in delivering them – have meant that they also resonate with libraries. The framework they provide has helped libraries think methodically through how they are contributing to their communities, as well as engage more effectively with governments.

While most of IFLA's work around the SDGs takes place on a day-to-day basis and at a national level, the organization has sought to make the most of the HLPF as a place to advocate for the role of libraries in delivering the SDGs, including in their delegations some national representatives with strong stories to tell (notably Serbia, Mexico, the Philippines, Senegal and Ghana in 2017 and Tunisia in 2019). IFLA issued a coherent summary of the issue of culture in its July 2018 blog piece 'Culture on the Agenda: Heritage in the Sustainable Development Goals'.

A key focus of IFLA's engagement has been the biennial Development and Access to Information (DA2I) reports, the result of a commitment in the Lyon Declaration on Access to Information and Development. This major effort, undertaken in collaboration with the Technology and Social Change Group at the University of Washington, sets out a basket of indicators which allow for the measurement of progress towards meaningful access to information for all (Target 16.10). It also draws on expert authors to underline the contribution of access to information to the focus SDGs at that year's HLPF. Each year that it has published these reports (2017, 2019), IFLA has organised side-events, exploring different aspects of the findings (this and this in 2017, and this and this in 2019). We have been honoured to count member state and UN secretariat speakers among the panellists. The report underlines the need to address cross-cutting drivers of development, such as access to information, to unlock and accelerate progress elsewhere.

Additionally, IFLA is also member of the NGO Major Group, and exploring possibilities to work more closely with the Education and Academia and Science and Research Stakeholder Groups. In this, we feed into statements, both on thematic sessions and increasingly in VNRs, drawing on the experience and views of our members to shape commentary. Throughout HLPF sessions, IFLA communicates with our own community through blogs, social media and news stories, as well as reporting at their annual congress.

In 2016, IFLA decided to re-orientate its pre-existing International Advocacy Programme around the Sustainable Development Goals. Instead of looking at a range of issues, it instead now focused uniquely on the SDGs, organizing train-the-trainers workshops around the world, whereby participants were empowered to raise awareness of the SDGs among colleagues and communities, and to build up stronger relationships with decision-makers, with a view to creating partnerships for development. To support this work, IFLA developed a suite of tools, including guides to advocating around the SDGs, briefings on key parts of the 2030 Agenda, and background research and other papers that can be used in discussion. The results of this work have been impressive. People from 70 countries took part in the original workshops, and representatives of a further six then committed to promote the SDGs. Through further sub-regional workshops, another thirty countries were engaged. Overall, over 20 000 librarians learned about the SDGs, and almost 70 000 citizens.

IFLA have published summaries of the activities carried out by our participants so far and will develop a further one in the autumn. The programme has also been independently evaluated and judged to be a success, and we continue to see impacts in the work of our members to join official committees and activities around the Agenda.

IFLA has also looked to mobilise at the regional level, using regional forums on sustainable development and organising the Forum of Ministers of Culture of Latin America and the Caribbean with the kind support of the Library of Congress of Argentina on 22 May 2019. There, ministers and representatives from 13 countries explained how they were, through libraries and culture, delivering on the SDGs, and set out their commitment both to the 2030 Agenda, and the libraries as partners for development. They shared this engagement with the world through the Buenos Aires Declaration. IFLA has seen initiatives by libraries regionally, notably in Africa (the Durban Communiqué, the result of work by the African Library and Information Association with ministers), and the Santiago Declaration (which has been signed by almost 200 libraries and library associations in Latin America and the Caribbean).

The **International Federation of Coalitions for Cultural Diversity (IFCCD)**, as member of the Culture Goal Campaign, has undertaken actions at international and regional level in line with the goals of the 2030 Agenda. The IFCCD was founded in Seville on 19 September 2007 to replace the International Liaison Committee of Coalitions for Cultural Diversity (ILC). This Committee was created in 2003 at the initiative of the Coalitions for Cultural Diversity to facilitate cooperation and the development of common positions and actions. In particular, the ILC encouraged the elaboration of UNESCO's Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions by coordinating the participation of civil society representatives and professionals from the cultural sector in international negotiation sessions. Since then, the IFCCD takes part to the discussions and work to implement the 2005 UNESCO Convention mentioned above. The Federation has namely contributed as Civil Society to the drafting of the Operational Guidelines on the implementation of the Convention in the digital environment to ensure that creators and cultural professionals can sustain in the digital world.

Further, the German Commission for UNESCO, founder and coordinator of the German Coalition for Cultural Diversity and member of the IFCCD has started in 2018 a reflection on "Fair Trade for Culture". Its purpose is to strengthen the principles of the Convention and to help the implementation of SDGs (e.g. 8 and 10) by taking into account the concept of "fair trade" and sustainable supply chains in other sectors to understand the benefits, as well as the specificities and challenges for the cultural sector. The IFCCD will also organise a congress in Togo in October 2019 to assess and formulate how cultural policies could be developed and improved in the region, in the light of the principle of the 2005 UNESCO Convention and the SDGs.

Culture Action Europe (CAE) actively campaigned for the inclusion of one specific goal devoted to culture, or for the integration of cultural aspects across the Sustainable Development Goals in the period of 2013-15.After the acceptance of the SDGs, CAE joined the SDG Watch Europe, a European, cross-sectoral, civil society alliance committed to supporting the implementation, monitoring and follow up of the 2030 Agenda by the EU and its member states. As an active member in the #culture2015goal campaign, CAE repeatedly stressed the role of culture for sustainable development, the need for more efficient collaboration at all levels of EU policy making and a new cross-cutting approach to addressing the different dimensions of sustainability. CAE called for coordination between, and timely action on the part of the EU and its member states in light of the failures of today's policies to tackle poverty, and their direct contribution to rising inequality, the destruction of the environment, threats to health, the concentration of wealth and political power in fewer and fewer hands, and the disaffection of many people across Europe with the European Union, its institutions and policies. In particular, CAE recommended coherence with the perspective of culture as a transversal element of sustainable development.

CAE also works on the ground to foster increased local and European understanding of the connection between culture and local sustainable development in cities, on the basis of the issues raised by the Agenda 21 for culture and Culture 21 Actions. Together with the UCLG Committee on culture, CAE is implementing the project 'Culture in Sustainable Cities- Learning with Culture 21 actions in Europe' (first launched in 2015, still on-going) in sixteen European cities. These cities participate in this learning process, to evaluate, design and implement cultural policies contributing to local sustainable development. The objectives of the program are to enable the design, implementation and evaluation of innovative pilot measures in areas relevant to culture and sustainable cities, through collaboration between public, private and civil society actors. The programme facilitates exchanges, evaluation, peer-learning and capacity-building among European cities concerned with culture and sustainable development, on the basis of the thematic areas identified in Culture 21 Actions.

Evidences on the transversal role of culture in the SDGs have been collected in the Value and Values of Culture (2018), build upon a specific CAE's impact review and the inputs from CAE membership and partners. The review collects relevant evidence substantiating the impact of culture across a range of EU policy fields. The evidence included in this impact review demonstrates, without doubt, the EU added value of culture and the subsequent need to properly support the cultural ecosystem.

Peaceful, inclusive and just societies celebrate freedom of expression, including **freedom of artistic expression**. This has become a mounting issue both internationally and within Europe. Since 2016 CAE has been actively engaged to protect freedom of artistic expression as part of guaranteeing fundamental human rights. For the period of 2017 to 2020, together with Arts Rights and Justice working group, two main activities were developed: First the ARJ Public Toolkit, the more theoretical background and guide to artists rights, and its Companion. Together they inform the solid framework within which we supported the sector to learn to read and respond to human rights violations and to advocate for freedom of expression in the arts. In close collaboration with the Cultural Rights Special Rapporteur at the UN, CAE, ARJ together with a handful of other Civil Society Organisations, collected cases of human rights violations in the arts in Europe in order to help substantiate the current Special Rapporteur's work and influence the Universal Periodic Review with the material collected and ultimately the public sphere.

On September 4th, 2018, Culture Action Europe (CAE), together with Freemuse and MEP Julie Ward (S&D) organised a debate on the state of artistic freedom in Europe. Held in the European Parliament, the event was based on Freemuse's The State of Artistic Freedom report, 2018, which exposes how freedom of expression of artists and art communities are being violated in Europe at an alarming scale. Representatives from the arts community and policy and decision-makers presented arguments for why and how Europe must do more to protect artistic freedom.

Within the scope of the UN Sustainable Development Goal 13, and to better understand the impact of cultural digital production and services on the planet, CAE 's annual conference Beyond the Obvious 2018 in Timisoara entitled *Ctrl+Shift HUMAN, Arts Sciences and Technologies in Coded Societies* included a workshop from Joana Moll focusing on the circulation and distribution of non-material data and their carbon footprint. Considering that the cultural industries are the biggest content producers and uploaders, this issue is particularly relevant to ensure a more sustainable and responsible approach to content creation and distribution.

Given the European Parliamentary election results in 2019 and the Green Deal negotiated by the European Commission President, CAE sees an opportunity to revive the discussion on linking culture with the SDG agenda. A policy document with concrete actions and recommendations by SDGs is currently being consulted with the membership and will be completed at the end of September 2019.

1.2.4_ The 'Culture Goal Campaign' Re-energized

The Communiqué of the #culture2015goal Campaign, "Culture in the SDG Outcome Document: Progress Made, but Important Steps Remain ahead" identified, in 2015, some next steps for the campaign, stating that ""The Future We Want Includes Culture" campaign has set a new global agenda for culture by gathering and presenting – for the first time ever in a unified way – the voices of peoples and civil society on the importance of culture in sustainable development.

A global initiative such as this will continue to be necessary, in order to advocate for the inclusion of culture in development frameworks and strategies, operate as a watchdog, raise awareness and bring together local, national and regional perspectives and initiatives."

Building on this commitment, the members of the campaign have taken the occasion of the September 2019 SDG Summit as a perfect opportunity to re-energise the campaign, now updated as **#culture2030goal**, and send our key messages on the role that culture is playing- and should play- in the implementation of the SDGs.

2

REVIEW OF PROGRESS TO ACHIEVE THE SDGS, 2015–19

2.1
OVERVIEW AND METHODOLOGY

A breakdown is provided below of each year's major events related to the SDGs, including the UN General Assembly (UNGA) and the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF), with their overarching theme, SDGs selected for review, Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) (in terms of exemplary content, and keyword analysis), as well as other key documents and activities, including the outcome declarations and the presence of culture sector actors, analysing these with a critical cultural perspective.

To recall the basic characteristics of the process, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, as part of its follow-up and review mechanisms, encourages member states to "conduct regular and inclusive reviews of progress at the national and sub-national levels, which are country-led and country-driven". These national reviews are expected to serve as a basis for the regular reviews by the HLPF. The VNRs aim to facilitate the sharing of experiences, including successes, challenges and lessons learned, with a view to accelerating the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The VNRs also seek to strengthen policies and institutions of governments and to mobilize multi-stakeholder support and partnerships for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.[8]

The HLPF, which adopts a Ministerial Declaration, is expected to provide political leadership, guidance and recommendations on the 2030 Agenda's implementation and follow-up; keep track of progress of the SDGs; spur coherent policies informed by evidence, science and country experiences; as well as address new and emerging issues.[9]

A **special analytical exercise** has been conducted for this report, comprising the measurement of **frequency for certain keywords**, both for culture and related concepts, and for other concepts with particular affinity with, or mentioned in conjunction with culture in the VNRs prepared for all HLPF, 2016-19.[10]

To make the keyword counts meaningful, we have set them as **comparable analyses**, including:

- the distribution of terms within the culture field,
- the comparison of the 'cultural' with the other three dimensions of sustainable development, i.e. 'social', 'economic' and 'environmental',
- the comparison of culture-related terms when used directly in cultural contexts and when used with other, more generic meanings,
- the comparison of countries in terms of their level of usage of the terms 'culture' and 'cultural'.

The '**culture-related terms**', numbering 21 as main headings (in bold) and 100 as broken down into sub-terms, include:

8. https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/vnrs/
9. https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/hlpf/2016
10. Only full VNR reports (with the exception of China's Executive Summary), in the English, French and Spanish languages, were taken into account, due to resource constraints.

- **archaeology/ archaeological, architecture/ architectural*, archive/ archival*, art(s)/ artist(ic)*, buildings, character (of culture, areas), conserve/ conservation*, creativity/ creative industry(ies)/ creative economy/ creative professionals/ creators*, cultural**, cultural activity(es), cultural area(s)/ site(s), cultural background/ character(istics), cultural change, cultural development, cultural dimension/ field, cultural diversity(es), cultural education, cultural environment, cultural experiences, cultural expression(s), cultural heritage(s) / historic heritage, cultural industry(es), cultural institution(s)/ organization(s), cultural landscape ('cultural heritage and landscape'), cultural life, cultural management, communication and animation, cultural ministry (or equivalent), cultural objective(s), cultural offer, cultural pertinence, cultural practice(s), cultural program(me)(s), cultural relations/ cooperation, cultural resource(s), cultural rights, cultural segment, cultural sensitivity, cultural skills, cultural space, cultural theme(s), cultural tourism, cultural values (inc. socio-cultural values), **culture(s),** culture (stand-alone) (including of national, ethnic, social groups), cultures (stand-alone), culture(s) with descriptive adjective (organizational, business, etc), culture(s) of (green entrepreneurship, cycling, sustainability, peace, recreation, understanding of rights, preservation of life, etc), local culture(s), **local products, design/ designer(s),** design*, product/ interior/ architectural/ city/ urban/ eco-/re- design, designer(s), **designation (status to areas), folk/ folklore, heritage (stand-alone, architectural, sustainable, national), historic buildings, historic records, identity* (national, sexual, indigenous), indigenous** , indigenous community(es), indigenous people(s), indigenous traditional knowledge (itk) , indigenous status, sami, **intangible*, knowledge, language, library/ libraries, literature*, monument, museum(s), music, preserve/ preservation*, protect/ protection* (environmental, social), recreation(al), restore/ restoration*, rehabilitate/ rehabilitation*, safeguard* (environmental, social), tradition(s)/ traditional*,** tradition(s), traditional buildings/ settlements/ neighbo(ur)hoods, traditional/ tribal chiefs/ chieftancy, traditional knowledge, traditional seed, traditional skills, traditional way of life/ livelihood (fisheries), **UNESCO, World Heritage (or equivalent)**

The terms with asterisks (*) denote those that are used both directly in cultural contexts and with other meanings. The use of the latter has also been examined.

The '**other terms**' from fields having affinity with culture, numbering 33, include: social/ society, social, society (stand-alone), civil society, economic/ economy (stand-alone), socio-economic, environment/ environmental, agriculture/ agricultural/ aquaculture(al), biodiversity, capital (social/ natural), social capital, natural capital, city/ cities/ urban, city/ cities, urban/ urbanization/ urbanism/ sub-urban, climate change, education/ educate/ educational, gender/ women, landscape(s), local, peace/ peaceful/ peacekeeping, resource(s) , natural heritage, nature (relevant to the environment), quality(es)/ qualitative, quality(es), qualitative, rural, tourism, value(s), well-being/ happiness, well-being, happiness

We have also identified that many VNR reports use **visual material** (photographic or schematic images) of cultural elements, on their covers or internal pages, and thus examined how and to what level this is done.

2.2
2015: ADOPTION OF THE 2030 AGENDA AND THE SDGS

"Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development", i.e. Resolution RES/70/1 adopted at the 70th UN General Assemby (UNGA) on September 25, 2015, ushered in the post-2015 development agenda and with it, the new era of the SDGs.

This new agenda continues to build on the vision of sustainable development with three dimensions, developed in the second half of the 1980s, namely: economic growth, social inclusion and environmental balance. The report Our Common Future, also known as the Brundtland Report (1987), enshrined these **three dimensions** as the pattern to be used in local, national and global strategies for development. The Rio de Janeiro Earth Summit of 1992 consolidated these three pillars as the paradigm of sustainable development.

However, **these dimensions alone do not reflect the complexity of current society**. Many voices have been calling for the inclusion of **culture** in the sustainable development model, since culture ultimately shapes what we mean by development and determines how people act in the world. The world is not only facing economic, social, or environmental challenges. Creativity, knowledge, diversity, and beauty are the unavoidable bases for dialogue for peace and progress, as these values are intrinsically connected to human development and freedoms. The **world's cultural challenges are too important not to receive an equal amount of attention** to that accorded to the original three dimensions of sustainable development (the economy, social equality and environmental balance). This fourth pillar [now increasingly referred to as 'dimension'] creates solid bridges with the other three dimensions of development.[11] Indeed, among the many debates within the culture sector on how this dimension should be formulated (e.g. an identical pillar, an intersection of the three spheres, a brace encircling the three, etc.), what seems to be agreed on is that **culture needs to be explicitly added to sustainability**.

The current economic development models, which prey excessively on natural resources and common goods of humanity, are the cause of increasing concern for the environment. Rio de Janeiro 1992, Aalborg 1994, and Johannesburg 2002, have been the milestones in a process of answering one of the most important challenges facing humanity: environmental sustainability. Both culture and the environment are common assets of all humanity. The current situation also provides sufficient evidence that cultural diversity in the world is in danger due to a globalization that standardizes and excludes.[12] There is also a growing awareness of a need to act to protect the cultural diversity that enables progress in so many other areas. Just as there is now a clear understanding of the need to act to preserve the environment, we need the same investment for culture.

The nature of the process leading to the adoption of Transforming Our World, with wide consultations involving regional, national and local organizations and civil society actors, should be welcomed. A global community has been able to discuss its vision for sustainable development in a broad forum of relevant stakeholders. Such participatory exercises should also be applied in the future, not least when preparing National Development Plans, which will implement the 2030 Agenda on a national level.

---

11. UCLG 2010, 'Culture: Fourth Pillar of Sustainable Development'
12. UCLG 2004, Agenda 21 for Culture.

When compared to their predecessors, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the **SDGs represent a significant step** forward with regard to the acknowledgment of the role of culture in development processes. The following elements are noteworthy:

- The **Preamble** refers to the need to respect cultural diversity (para. 8) and pledges member states to foster inter-cultural understanding, tolerance and mutual respect, while acknowledging the natural and cultural diversity of the world and recognizing that all cultures and civilizations can contribute to, and are crucial enablers of, sustainable development (para. 36). Other aspects highlighted by the Preamble, such as the vision of enabling a world of universal literacy (para. 7), are also essential to foster access to culture and promote cultural understanding.

- **Target 2.5** touches on the need to ensure "access to and fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge", in order to achieve the goal of ending hunger and achieving food security.

- **Target 4.7** stresses the need for education to promote "a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development".

- **Target 8.3** suggests that "creativity and innovation" should be encouraged by development-oriented policies together with productive activities, decent job creation and entrepreneurship.

- **Targets 8.9** and **12.b** refer to the need to devise and implement "policies to promote sustainable tourism, including through local culture and products", and to the need to develop suitable monitoring tools in this area.

- **Target 11.4**, the only Target dedicated to a cultural theme, highlights the need to "strengthen efforts to protect and safeguard the world's cultural and natural heritage", in the context of Goal 11's aim to "make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable".

- **Target 16.4** refers to the need to "strengthen the recovery and return of stolen assets", while **Target 16.10** commits to ensuring "public access to information and protecting fundamental freedoms", which should involve recognizing the importance of libraries, archives and other cultural institutions.

Despite these minor advances, organizations involved in the "The Future We Want Includes Culture" campaign expressed their concern that the 2030 Agenda document **fell short of a full understanding and affirmation of the importance of culture to sustainable development**. Whilst the document integrates some references to cultural aspects, it fails to fully take into account the evidence gathered by the international community over the past two decades, of the positive role of culture in development.

Attempts to explicitly relate culture to the SDGs include UNESCO's publication **Culture for the 2030 Agenda** (it explains the relation between the SDGs and UNESCO's Culture Conventions, recommendations and programmes), UCLG's publication **Culture in the Sustainable Development Goals: A Guide for Local Action** (it explains in detail how culture is relevant in the localisation of each of the 17 SDGs) as well as IFLA's activities on **Libraries, Development and the United Nations 2030 Agenda** and ICOMOS' activities on **Heritage and the SDGs**.

In the four years since their adoption, the annual HLPF sessions for review of progress on achieving the SDGs have offered a path, albeit constrained by the above-mentioned shortcomings, for nation states and other actors to **use 'culture' as a perspective in their reviews**. The following sections highlight some of the ways this path has been taken over the cycle 2016-19.

2.3
PRESENCE OF CULTURE IN SDG REVIEWS AT NATIONAL (VNR) AND INTERNATIONAL LEVEL, 2016–19

2.3.1_ 2016: Leaving No One Behind

a_ Overview of HLPF 2016

The HLPF 2016, the first since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, was held on July 11-20, 2016, with the overarching theme: "Ensuring that no one is left behind". The session included voluntary reviews of 22 countries and thematic reviews of progress on the Sustainable Development Goals, including cross-cutting issues, supported by reviews by the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) functional commissions and other inter-governmental bodies and forums.

The HLPF also included a range of side events and special events. No particular Goals were selected in this HLPF, with all Goals under review, and the session programme was designed according to other thematic clusters.

The 22 countries that presented VNRs in 2016 were China, Colombia, Egypt, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Madagascar, Mexico, Montenegro, Morocco, Norway, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Samoa, Sierra Leone, Switzerland, Togo, Turkey, Uganda and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of).[13]

---

13. Countries not included in the analysis due to full reports not being available: Samoa, China

b_ Keyword Analysis of 2016 VNRs

The 2016 analysis reveals that the 5 countries out of 22 with the most frequent references to 'culture' and 'cultural', in terms of number of keyword occurrence proportional to total number of pages, were Montenegro, Estonia, Mexico, Philippines and Morocco (see Table 1: Use of keywords 'culture' and 'cultural' in VNRs by country, 2016–19.)

Figure 1: The use of keywords reflecting the 'three dimensions' of sustainable development and the 'fourth' ('culture'), in VNRs of 2016. [14]

VNR Reports 2016

212 5%
920 21%
1971 45%
1281 29%

■ Society/Social   ■ Economy/Economic   ■ Environment/Environmental   ■ Culture/Cultural
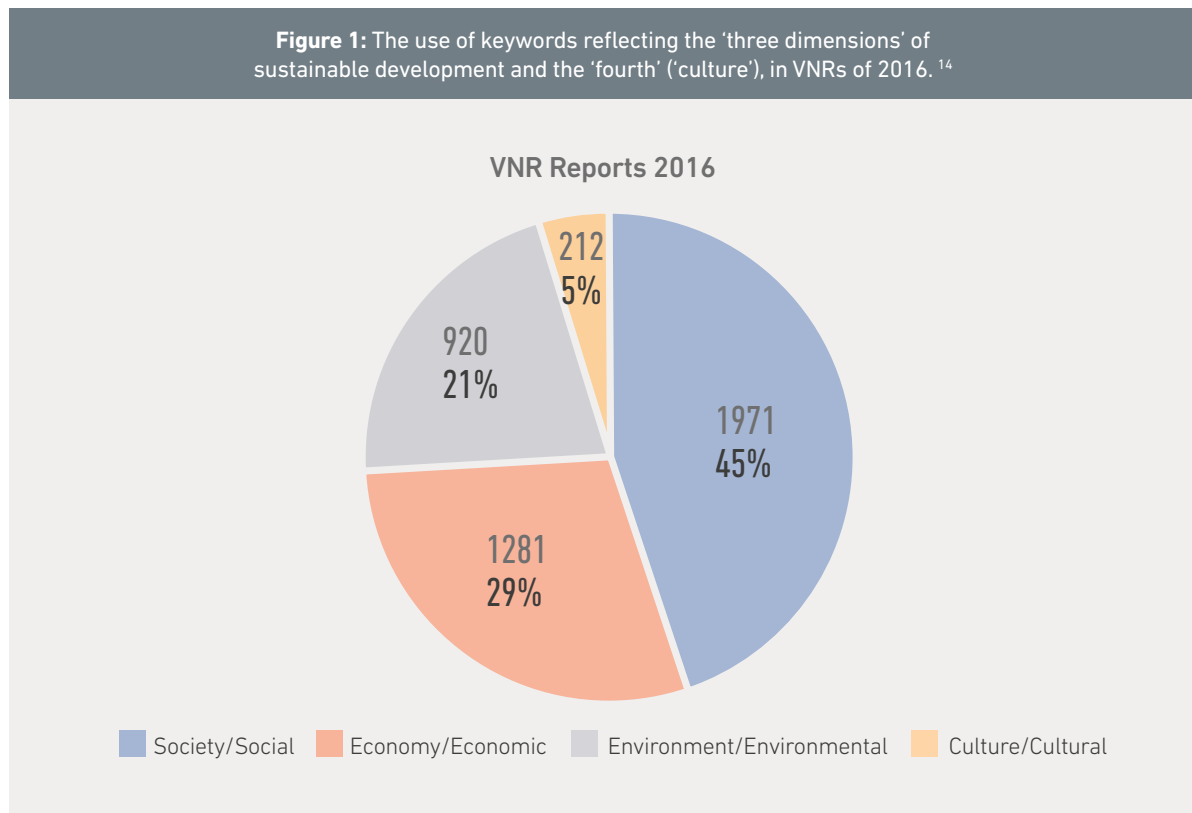
c_ Selections of Exemplary Content on Culture in 2016 VNRs

Below are excerpts from the VNRs with exemplary approaches to engaging with culture for the SDGs, focusing on the five highest scorers in the Keyword Analysis, followed by other reports with noteworthy approaches.

Montenegro:

- Introduction: the **vision** of sustainable development of Montenegro until 2030 consists of ten key elements: (...) "5) Montenegro is a community that is based on **openness and diversity of culture**, both in terms of preservation of all forms of **heritage** created in the different periods in history, and coexistence with modern forms of **cultural expression**, with areas of prominent natural, **landscape** and cultural values preserved and used in support of sustainable development."

- Public consultations: "Meeting with the entities responsible for the issues in the area of culture – the Ministry of Culture and the Directorate for the protection of cultural resources was held on 17 February 2016"

---

14. Note: The frequency of the term 'socio-economic' has been equally divided and added to those of 'social' and 'economic'.

- Policies and Enabling Environment: Baseline: Main trends for Targets 4.7, 8.9, 11.4: "**Strategic goals** (...) to "Improve the importance of **culture as fundamental value of spiritual, social and economic development** which enhances significantly **citizens' quality of life",** "Establish efficient and contemporary system of integral protection, management and sustainable use of **cultural heritage** and landscape".

- Policies and Enabling Environment: Areas of success and milestones: key issues of national development sustainability determined: "There is an unsustainable relation of the key social actors towards development, caused by inadequate educational and value system, (...) inadequate relation towards healthy lifestyle, **culture and cultural heritage** (...). The consequence of all this is low level of human and social capital, and social cohesion"

- Policies and Enabling Environment: Thematic analysis: "Culture must be based on the principles of open society, tolerance, innovation, progress and **multiculturalism**. Although there are positive moves with regards to the visibility and quantity of **cultural activities** of marginalized and/or vulnerable groups, the NSSD promotes the importance of the development of that kind of **subculture** as a significant element of contemporary **cultural offer** in Montenegro."

- Next steps: Harmonization of sectoral strategies with the NSSD 2030: Among human, social, natural and economic resources, the heading "social resources" includes: "full political and any other support is necessary in the process of building the country governed by the rule of law; preservation of national **identity, culture and cultural heritage**; integration of the measures of employment growth: dignified work for all."

Estonia:

- Executive Summary: The Estonian Sustainable Development Commission consists of nongovernmental roof-organizations, which cover different fields of sustainable development (for example education, environmental protection, **culture**, children, health, local government, academy, companies, agriculture, etc).

- SDG11 Implementation, includes two dedicated items, a) "**Heritage** protection reform is being prepared, the aim of which is the long-term preservation of the key parts of Estonian culture. (...)" b) "Tallinn's Old Town is part of the **UNESCO global cultural heritage list**.(...)"

Mexico (translated from Spanish):

- Transition from the MDGs to the SDGs: "Emphasize the importance of coordination, technical knowledge and **culture** on the roles and responsibilities of each instance part of the Specialized Technical Committee of the SDGs (CTEODS)"

- Annex: National Review of Compliance with the 2030 Agenda: "The 2030 Agenda can only be truly sustainable if the **sectors that have so far been excluded and marginalized** are included. In this sense, the implementation, monitoring and monitoring of the Agenda must occur within the framework of human rights and be endowed with a gender, youth and intercultural perspective."

Philippines:

- Introduction: National Priorities: Consultations: Five pillars or themes identified where progress is most needed: (...) Peace and security, **indigenous** peoples concerns; **culture of peace**

Morocco (translated from French):

- "The United Nations country team with **UNESCO**, as lead agency, and the **Ministry of Culture** led, in 2014, a series of national consultations to gather the views of the Moroccan population on the link between **culture** and sustainable development, analyzing expectations and making recommendations."

Finland:

- Policy Measures: Thematic analysis: "**Culture** has an important impact on promoting equality, inclusion, wellbeing (including regional wellbeing) and human rights. Finland is active in the protection of both material and immaterial **cultural heritages** and supports creative **artistic activities, cultural diversity and all forms of culture**."

France:

- Implementing SDGs, Accomplishments and Challenges: A high-quality social solidarity system: "Any person residing legally in France is also guaranteed a minimum income and essential services (education, housing benefit, power supply, **culture**, etc.) as social inclusion and poverty exit mechanisms." (...) "France also promotes **access to culture and national heritage** for all population groups, in particular with programmes for young people from disadvantaged areas."

- Implementing SDG1: "the poor have greater **access to culture**, sport, holidays and nature with the help of the French network of associations.".

- Implementing SDG10: "United Against Hatred: The 2015-17 plan to combat racism and anti-Semitism is based on four main initiatives: (...) education of the population through teaching and **culture**."

Norway:

- Policy and Enabling Environment: SDG15: "The protection, restoration and sustainable use of ecosystems can also safeguard the basis for a sustainable **Sami culture**. There are procedures in place for consulting Sami representatives in cases that are of direct importance to the Sami people in Norway."

Republic of Korea:

- Policy and Enabling Environment: Thematic Analysis: "The '140 Government Policy and Governance Tasks' lays out four visions, which include the revitalization of the economy, the happiness of the people, the **prosperity of the culture** and the establishment of the foundation for peaceful unification."

Uganda:

- Galvanising National Ownership for Localisation of the 2030 Agenda: "The youth, media and members of the community will play a major role in supporting government deliver these messages through **harnessing the power of local culture**."

Venezuela (translated from Spanish):

- Policy and its Environment: Our Baseline for the SDGs: Ensure quality inclusive and equitable education: "In relation to the **Mission Culture Heart**, we have 102,823 people trained in artistic units and 10,180 people **trained in arts** and knowledge of **traditional and popular expressions**. In addition, 509 training workshops of the Diploma in Management, Communication and **Cultural Animation**."

- Policy and its Environment: Our Baseline for the SDGs: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls: "The result of these consultations resulted in the inclusion of five strategic dimensions: the ideological political (...); the economic (...); the social dimension (...); the **cultural dimension**, which seeks to raise awareness gender perspective in all sectors of society; and, the environmental dimension, which watch over the preservation of the Pachamama (Madre Tierra) (Mother Earth).)"

- National Priorities and Integration of the Three Sustainable Development Dimensions: **Cultural diversity** is mentioned as a key element along with biological diversity, in context of **indigenous** seeds. Also, the **continuity of historical records** is prioritized for climate data.

- Means of Implementation, Challenges and Opportunities: "A policy, in the process of measuring its impact of having constitutional status for Environmental Education (EA), has had a significant impact on awareness related to nature and the impacts that it causes human activity, and how that transforms **culture** and institutions to advance on these issues."

Culture [is a] fundamental value of spiritual, social and economic development, which enhances significantly citizens' quality of life.
(Montenegro)

Figure 2: Togo, diagram of thematic priorities, including culture
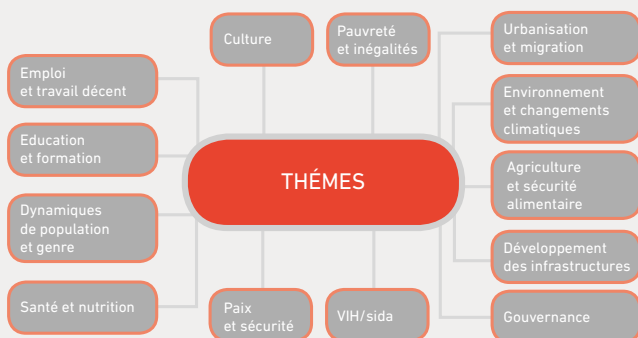
Figure 3: Venezuela, cultural investment graph

Venezuela. Inversión pública en cultura y comunicación social, 1999-2013

Entre 1999 y 2013 la inversión pública destinada a Cultura y Comunicación Social se incrementó en 78 veces.

Miles de Bolívares

118.098,3 · 240.700,8 · 220.396,1 · 212.530,4 · 488.027,0 · 705.934,0 · 1.070.855,0 · 1.538.831,7 · 2.009.265,6 · 2.859.974,5 · 2.944.859,0 · 3.242.290,0 · 4.637.624,0 · 6.268.404,0 · 9.262.765,0

1999 2000 2001 2002 2003 2004 2005 2006 2007 2008 2009 2010 2011 2012 2013

Nota: Incluye modificaciones al 23 de septiembre de 2013 Gobierno Central incluye cifras estimadas al 31/12/2013
Fuente: - Oficina Central de Presupuesto (ONAPRE). - Banco Central de Venezuela (BCV). - Instituto Nacional de Estadística (INE). Cálculos propios.
- Ministerio del Poder popular de Planificación (MPPP). Cálculos propios.

Some noteworthy covers and pictures from the 2016 VNRs are given below.

Figures 4-9: Estonia 2016 VNR, cover, photos of traditional dress (intangible heritage), libraries; Turkey 2016 VNR, cover, skyline with historic monuments; Montenegro, 2016 VNR, internal pages of cultural and natural heritage sites; Turkey, 2016 VNR, last pages of each section, corner stylized graphic of a cultural symbol

d_ Other Documents and Activities of 2016

The HLPF 2016 Ministerial Declaration was adopted on July 22, 2016, consisting of 23 paragraphs that frame the ambitions, commitments, priorities, progress and challenges of the 2030 Agenda around the theme of 'leaving no one behind', touching on the various programmes in process for the SDGs.

As for the presence of culture, there is no dedicated paragraph to the theme, with two mentions in paragraph 8 related to "human rights and human dignity, peace, justice, equality and non-discrimination": "Our commitment also includes respect for race, ethnicity and **cultural diversity**, and equal opportunity, permitting the full realization of human potential and contributing to shared prosperity. (…) We will strive for a world where young women and young men are key agents of change, supported by a **culture of innovation, sustainability and inclusiveness**, to enable a better future for themselves and their communities". In the annex to the declaration, regarding the Global Sustainable Development Report, it is requested that an independent drafting group is supported by a task team including UNESCO.

Among the 169 inputs made to HLPF 2016, beside the 22 national inputs (VNRs), there are 50 from Intergovernmental Forums and Bodies, 20 from Major Groups and Other Stakeholders (MGoS), 77 from Partnerships and Voluntary Commitments. Some inputs with noteworthy culture references among the 57 results yielded by a 'culture' keyword search (based on the summary page, unless only the full report is available) include:

- Aloha+ Challenge: A Culture of Sustainability - He Nohona 'Ae'oia (title)
- Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (Addition) (references to trafficking of cultural goods)
- Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) (multiple minor references to culture)
- ECLUB Community Development (Indonesian network, grouping all activities into five pillars, including Culture)
- Education and Academia Stakeholder Group (multiple minor references to culture)
- EU-ACP Enhancing the Pacific Cultural Industries: Fiji, Samoa and Solomon Islands (aiming to enhance Pacific cultural industries in said region, focusing on structured cultural industries; regulatory frameworks and improved market access)
- Human Rights Council (HRC) (multiple references to culture, particularly cultural rights, a culture of tolerance)
- Pacific Heritage Hub (vision for "Pacific island cultural and natural heritage is restored, enriched, cherished, and protected for the present and future generations")
- Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (PFII) (multiple minor references to culture)
- SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee (multiple minor references to culture)
- World Heritage Committee (UNESCO) (policy recommendation: 2015 Policy for the integration of a sustainable development perspective into the processes of the Convention)
- World Water Council (includes UNESCO; assessment headings include "Water cultures, equity and justice")

Beside the first HLPF, another event that made 2016 an important year for sustainable development was the UN Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development, or **Habitat III,** held in Quito, Ecuador on 17-20 October 2016. In Resolution 66/207 and in line with the bi-decennial cycle (1976, 1996, and 2016), Habitat III was convened to reinvigorate the global commitment to sustainable urbanization, and produced the milestone document, New Urban Agenda, building on the Habitat Agenda of Istanbul in 1996.

Culture in the New Urban Agenda is significantly stronger than in the 2030 Agenda, as the preamble includes among its 10 paragraphs, one devoted to culture: "culture and cultural diversity are sources of enrichment for humankind and provide an important contribution to the sustainable development of cities, human settlements and citizens, empowering them to play an active and unique role in development initiatives. (…) Culture should be taken into account in the promotion and implementation of new sustainable consumption and production patterns that contribute to the responsible use of resources and address the adverse impact of climate change" (para 10).

Culture is a central theme in six further sections, i.e. 38 (leveraging of natural and cultural heritage), 45 (developing sustainable urban economies, building on (…) cultural heritage), 60 (urban economies to transition to higher productivity through (…) cultural and creative industries, sustainable tourism, performing arts and heritage conservation), 97 (planned urban extensions and infill, prioritizing renewal, regeneration and retrofitting (…) while preserving cultural heritage), 124 (include culture as a priority component of urban plans and strategies) and 125 (support the leveraging of cultural heritage for sustainable urban development and recognize its role in stimulating participation and responsibility).

Habitat III was also the occasion for UNESCO to launch their Global Report, Culture: Urban Future in a high-level side event. Members of the Culture 2015 Goal Campaign (i.e. from UCLG and ICOMOS) were present at the conference, organizing and speaking at several events, including Viva Alameda, a community participation exercise for heritage as part the Habitat III Village.

Karima Bennoune was appointed **UN Special Rapporteur in the field of Cultural Rights** in October 2015, thus succeeding Farida Shaheed, the expert who had become the first-ever to take this important position (in 2009). She published her initial report in 2016, reconfirming the conceptual and legal framework of her mandate and highlighted priority areas in the field. Also in 2016, she published the report on Intentional destruction of cultural heritage, indicating her intention to study this issue more in depth for her upcoming report to the General Assembly. This decision was welcomed by a cross-regional statement made to the Council in March 2016 by an unprecedented coalition of 145 States. The statement condemned intentional destruction of cultural heritage and called for identification of best practices for its prevention, and for raising awareness on the mutually reinforcing relation between the protection of cultural heritage and human rights and on the risks faced by defenders of cultural heritage.

2.3.2_ 2017: Eradicating Poverty and Promoting Prosperity

a_ Overview of HLPF 2017

The HLPF 2017, convened under the auspices of ECOSOC, was held on 10-19 July 2017, with the overarching theme: "Eradicating poverty and promoting prosperity in a changing world". The set of goals to be reviewed in depth was the following, including Goal 17, to be considered each year:

Goal 1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere

Goal 2. End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture

Goal 3. Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages

Goal 5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

Goal 9. Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation

Goal 14. Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development

Goal 17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development, to be considered each year:

In accordance with paragraph 84 of the 2030 Agenda, the regular voluntary reviews of the 2030 Agenda began to be carried out, by developed and developing countries as well as relevant UN entities and other stakeholders. The reviews were Member State-led, involving ministerial and other relevant high-level participants, and provided a platform for partnerships, including through the participation of major groups and other relevant stakeholders.

The 43 countries that volunteered to present VNRs in 2017 were Afghanistan, Argentina, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Botswana, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Maldives, Monaco, Nepal, the Netherlands, Nigeria, Panama, Peru, Portugal, Qatar, Slovenia, Sweden, Tajikistan, Thailand, Togo, Uruguay, and Zimbabwe.

b_ Keyword Analysis of 2017 VNRs

The 2017 analysis that the 5 countries out of 45 with the most frequent references to 'culture' and 'cultural', in terms of number of keyword occurrence proportional to total number of pages, were Italy, Cyprus, Portugal, United Arab Emirates and Argentina (see Table 1: Use of keywords 'culture' and 'cultural' in VNRs by country, 2016-19.)

Figure 10: The use of keywords reflecting the 'three dimensions' of sustainable development and the 'fourth' ('culture'), in VNRs of 2017. [15]

VNR Reports 2017

443 5%

1860 23%

3841 47%

2055 25%

■ Society/Social   ■ Economy/Economic   ■ Environment/Environmental   ■ Culture/Cultural

---
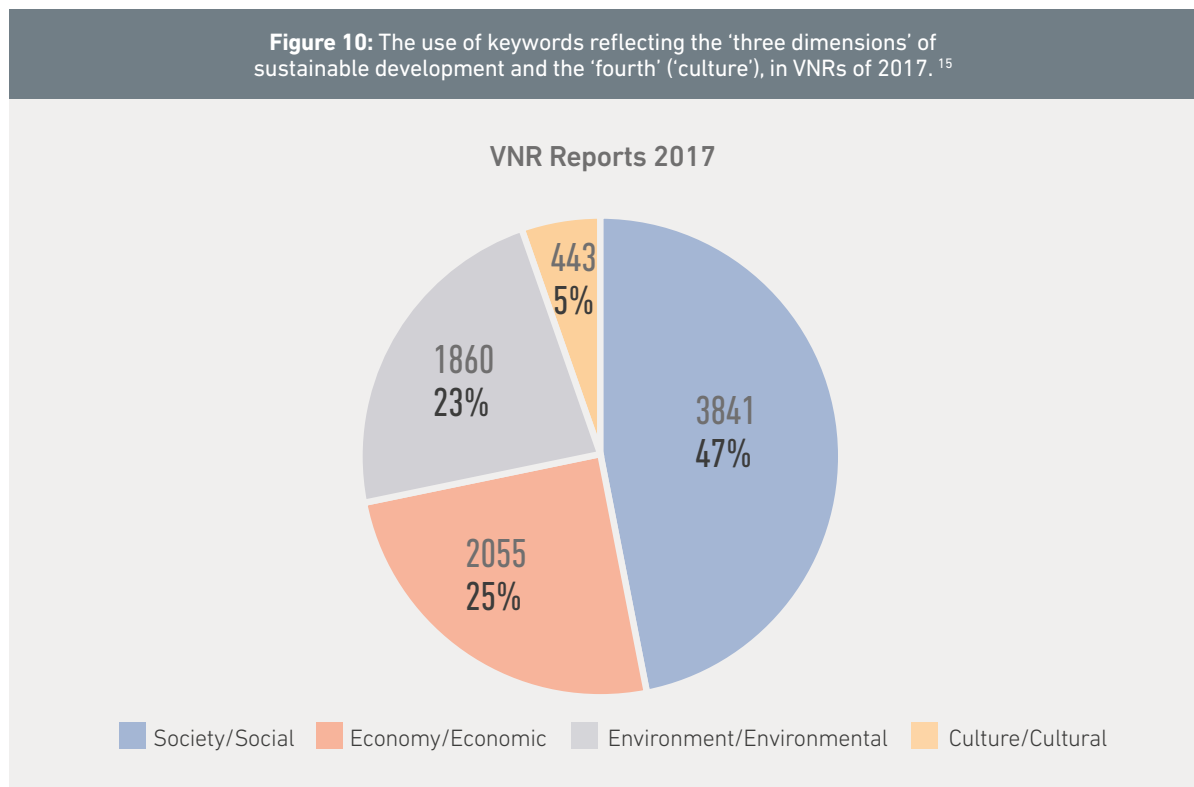
15. Note: The frequency of the term 'socio-economic' has been equally divided and added to those of 'social' and 'economic'

c_ Selections of Exemplary Content on Culture in 2017 VNRs

Below are excerpts from the VNRs with exemplary approaches to engaging with culture for the SDGs focusing on the five highest scorers in the Keyword Analysis.

Italy:

- Sustainability Vectors: I. Common Knowledge (objectives aimed at improving the state of knowledge, with special attention to the areas where more effort is required to complete the current information framework): "This refers to environment and **culture** (natural ecosystems and related services, preservation and exploitation of **natural and cultural resources**) and to society (human equality and dignity, migrations, social inclusion, legality)." (...) Cross-cutting goals: I.2 Improving knowledge on quantitative and qualitative status and exploitation of natural, **cultural** and landscapes resources.

- Sustainability Vectors: IV. Education, awareness and communication: "The "**culture of sustainability**" must be spread at all levels (...), in a life-long learning perspective. This is the most important vector to trigger the transformation of the current development model and the dissemination of **knowledge**, skills, lifestyles and best practices for sustainable production and consumption."

Cyprus:

- Executive Summary: Enabling environment: "Following an extensive promotion (...) to the Cypriot public, an effort undertaken in the framework of the European Year for Development by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in cooperation with the **Ministry of Education and Culture** and the Cypriot NGOs, the Cypriot civil society carried out numerous projects, promoting all or specific SDGs."

- Integration of Sustainable Development Issues: The Republic of Cyprus' Sustainable Development Policy: "A focus on youth has been set as a general priority (...). The National Youth Strategy (NYS) of Cyprus for the period 2017-2022 defines, for the first time, the vision of the state for its young people (...) under eight main fields of action: Education and Training, Employment and Entrepreneurship, Health and Wellbeing, Participation, Volunteerism, Social Inclusion, Youth and the World, **Creativity and Culture**.

- Goals and Targets: SDG4: "The main mission is the continuous upgrade of education in order to ensure the provision of learning opportunities to all learners, through the implementation of an educational policy which embodies the **values** of equality, inclusivity, creativeness and innovation, aiming at a life-long, balanced and wholesome development, while, in parallel, strengthening **culture** and supporting **cultural creativity**. Cyprus aims towards the formulation of literate citizens with skills, responsibility, democratic ethos, **historical identity** as well as respect for diversity. Citizens with a holistic personality, capable to **creatively** contribute to the development of society and to cope with the challenges of the future, as well as to the improvement of citizens' quality of life through education and **culture**."

- Goals and Targets: SDG11: Protection of **cultural heritage**: "Cyprus strongly supported the development of the new **Convention of the Council of Europe on Offences relating to Cultural Property**."

- Goals and Targets: SDG16: **Illicit trafficking** and destruction of **cultural goods**: "Cyprus has extensive activity in the field of protection of cultural property at domestic and also at international level, as described in SDG 11, and also promotes cooperation between law enforcement agencies and (...). Upon initiative of the Cyprus Police, an informal network of Law Enforcement Authorities and Expertise in the Field of Cultural Goods was set up in 2012."

- CARDET: Civil Society's action towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals in Cyprus: Educational Projects: "the project '**Education for a Culture of Peace as a Vehicle for Reconciliation in Cyprus**' aims to bring a societal change and transform the current status-quo through a bottom-up approach by engaging educators, young people, parents, community members, and civil society into an educative and transformational process. The project is considered vital since the conflict between the two communities in Cyprus is still ongoing, while the **Culture of War** is maintained, with the major agents of change (i.e.: educational system, faith representatives/bodies, media, and other) currently perpetuating it."

Portugal:

- SDG4: "since **Culture** is understood as a tool for personal development and capacity building, training activities are promoted for global citizenship, by promoting the **diversity of cultural and artistic expressions**." (...) "It is relevant to point out the role of **Culture** as a factor of cohesion and reduction of asymmetries. Thus, from the joint action between the fields of **Culture** and education, the **National Reading Plan** was launched in 2006" (...) "Another joint initiative between the Culture and the Education is the **National Film Plan**, created in 2013, as a program of literacy for cinema" (...) "there are projects of micro-pedagogies develop with schools by some services of the **Culture sector**, as the *Museum goes to School* project or workshops in school context or in **museums, theatres and other culture infrastructures**." (...) "the adoption of the Referral of Education for Risk, complemented with the General Civil Protection Course for Educators and Teachers, allowing the investment in strategies of knowledge, prevention and mitigation of risks with a view to gradually build a **culture of security and resilience**."

- SDG8: "The public acknowledgement of the **economic dimension of culture** has demonstrated the sector's potential for employment and economic development, as well as their importance as a factor to fight social asymmetries, including support for research and scientific dissemination, and the creation of support structures for entrepreneurship to promoters of **cultural projects, cultural and creative industries**, the revitalization and work qualification of local craftsmen, as well as the creation of start-ups in the **cinematographic** and **audiovisual** sector."

- SDG10: "**Culture** is perceived as a tool to combat exclusion and discrimination, and has been developing the *Mostra de Autores Desconhecidos* (Exhibit of Unknown Authors), (...), with social integration and empowerment of **artists** from disadvantaged social backgrounds." (...) "As a means of reducing disparities in the **access to cultural assets** and fostering cohesion, the **Portuguese Film in Motion** takes movies to the villages and towns where the population do not have regular access to cinema (...)."

- SDG11: "Over the last 30 years, at the local level, the development of an **environmental and citizenship culture** took place in Portugal" (...). In the framework of the preservation of **archaeological and architectural heritage** as a distinguishing factor and creator of **identity** and sense of belonging, we highlight the potential of **cultural events** to foster social cohesion and the economy, particularly in sparsely populated areas in order to combat desertification. The national legislation governing implementation and management of **World Heritage Sites** in Portugal established the existence of fifteen Assets classified as world heritage, and there is provision for increasing this number. In this area, we point out two major challenges: i) the management and conservation of Assets needs to have sufficient resources (...); and ii) the management of visitors increased to levels not foreseen and there is a growing difficulty to give response to minimize impacts. (...) In the framework of the safeguard of the intangible heritage, the UNESCO **Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity**, was established in 2008 as a repository of cultural diversity and creative expressions, and practices that help to demonstrate the diversity and cultural heritage and to raise awareness of its importance. The active engagement of Portugal resulted in the inclusion of Fado, urban popular song of Portugal (2011), the Mediterranean diet

(2013), the Cante Alentejano, polyphonic singing from Alentejo, southern Portugal (2014) and Falconry, a living human heritage (2016) in that list. Moreover, in the **List of Intangible Cultural Human Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding**, composed of cultural elements, which require urgent measures to be kept alive, we point out the inclusion by Portugal of the Manufacture of cowbells (2015) and the Bisalhães black pottery manufacturing process (2016)." (...) "Tools were created to identify the intangible cultural heritage and, consequently, reinforcing feelings of belonging, strengthening territorial cohesion, such as the **Collection Kit of Intangible Cultural Heritage** involving communities since 2011, in particular young people."

- SDG14: "The strategy of Portuguese cooperation, with its vector on the Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries, is based on the Atlantic and Indian oceans as its main pillars. Portugal provides a link between East and West and an interface between the northern and southern hemispheres, valued by **maritime culture, language** and trade." (...) "**Portugal's History and Culture** in respect to Oceans and the extension of the immersed territory in the North Atlantic led to the drafting of national policies defining priorities such as achieving a leading role in international **knowledge** and protection, in particular regarding the in-situ monitoring of the Deep Sea and active participation in international *fora* that deal with research, observation/modelling and exploration of the sea, contributing for Portugal's active role in the international context of maritime affairs."

United Arab Emirates:

- Mechanisms to Implement UAE's National Development Priorities and Agenda 2030: UAE Vision 2021: UAE's National Priorities: 1. Cohesive society and preserved **identity**: "The UAE Vision 2021 National Agenda strives to preserve a cohesive society proud of its identity and sense of belonging. It promotes an inclusive environment that integrates all segments of society while preserving the UAE's unique **culture, heritage and traditions** and reinforces social and family cohesion."

- Mechanisms to Implement UAE's National Development Priorities and Agenda 2030: Architecture to Manage State Sector Performance: The Government Accelerators: "The objective of the accelerators is to give momentum to whole-of-government efforts towards the National Agenda by providing a platform for cross-sectoral teams to address specific challenges. Further, they seek to align the machinery of government vertically and horizontally, to instil a **culture of innovation and creativity** and foster close partnership between the public and private sectors."

- UAE's National Development Priorities & SDGs: Local Development Priorities & Agenda 2030: "Pillars of Fujairah 2040 Plan: Preserve Natural Resources and Celebrate Culture and Heritage (SDG15)". (...) "Pillars of RAK Strategic Framework 2015 – 2017: **Creative Talents** (SDG8, SDG4)".

- Enabling Mechanisms: Programs & Technologies: "The National **Innovation** Strategy (NIS) sets the overall direction of science, technology and innovation (STI) policy. (...) The strategy defines innovation as "the aspiration to achieve development by generating **creative ideas** and introducing new products, services and operations that improve the overall quality of life" and aims to: (...) Create a **culture of innovation** among individuals, firms, and the public sector".

- Enabling Mechanisms: Programs & Technologies: Happiness and Well Being as National Policy Priorities: Happiness Policy Manual: The Manual also includes a Happiness Impact Assessment Tool - a mandatory screening tool for any policy submitted to Cabinet - to ensure that happiness is viewed holistically in policy-making. The Tool assesses the expected impact of any policy on society's happiness based on six evaluation domains - namely, economy, health, education, society and **culture**, government services and governance, and environment and infrastructure.

- Sustainable Development in the UAE: The Story So Far: SDG4: National Qualifications Framework: Sectors of Industry: **Arts, culture and entertainment.**

- Sustainable Development in the UAE: The Story So Far: SDG10: Tolerance: "In February 2016 a Cabinet-level position of Minister of State for Tolerance was established to promote tolerance, inclusion and peaceful coexistence and instill its core principles as a fundamental **value** of the UAE society. Since then, UAE government entities have invested close to US$ 108 million in **cultural understanding** initiatives. (…) "UAE Ranked # 2: **National Culture** is Open to Foreign Ideas - World Competitiveness Yearbook by IMD 2017". ()… Social Integration and Empowerment: "In 2017, H.H. Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum launched a national policy in which he gave people with special needs the title 'people of determination' in praise of the spirit of courage and resilience they bring to society. (…) The policy covers health, education, vocational training, employment, social protection, **culture**, sports and accessibility." (…) National Indicators of Cohesion: Community Cohesion Indicator: It includes measures of family cohesion, education and **culture**, equality, justice, security, participation, and national belonging.

- Sustainable Development in the UAE: The Story So Far: SDG16: "Promote **traffic culture** standards in the community through traffic awareness programs". (…) Case Study, Dubai Police: 4. Climate Action: The Zero Carbon Police Force: The Zero Carbon initiative intends to maximize long-term benefits at both organizational and community levels by facilitating **knowledge** sharing augmented by a **culture of participation** as a tool for fulfilling the strategic goals and objectives."

Argentina:

- Thematic Analysis: Investment in research and development activities in relation to the Gross Domestic Product: "Research and experimental development (R&D) comprise **creative** and systematic work undertaken in order to increase the stock of knowledge – including knowledge of humankind, **culture** and society – and to devise new applications of available knowledge (OECD, 2015)."

- Annex: Provisional official list of SDGs with their adapted goals and indicators: 11.4 National Indicators, with the **Ministry of Culture** in charge of data: (I) Number of public and private organizations that register their **movable cultural property** in computer systems; (II) Amount of **immovable cultural property** that enter annually to be part of the patrimony of Ministry of Culture organizations; (III) Number of organizations trained in **conservation** and rescue of **cultural property**; (IV) Number of people trained in conservation and rescue of cultural property; (V) Number of manifestations of **intangible cultural heritage** surveyed in Argentina and incorporated into the database of intangible cultural heritage records; (VI) Amount of **assets declared** as per Law 12665; (VII) Year-on-year increase in budget allocated for the **Preservation** of declared assets by the National Commission of **Historic Monuments, Places and Assets**;

Some noteworthy covers and pictures from the 2017 VNRs are given below.

Figures 11-16: Belgium 2017 VNR, back cover, smurfs cartoon; Cyprus 2017 VNR, cover, 4 photos out of 9 with archaeological sites; Czech Republic 2017 VNR, cover: stylized image of a monument, within mosaic of images; Jordan 2017 VNR, cover, ancient site of Petra; Malaysia 2017 VNR, cover, Petronas towers (a unique identifying landmark) and people in traditional costumes; Uruguay 2017 VNR, cover, traditional theatre performers, wedding ritual, carnival dancers
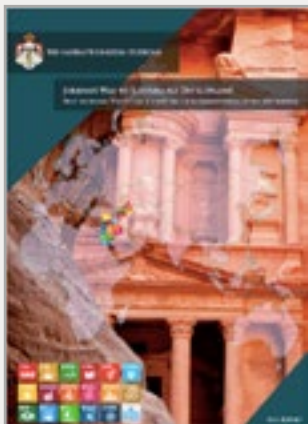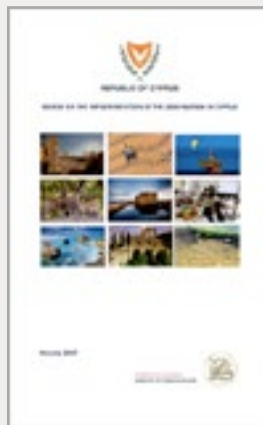
Figures 17-24: Monaco 2017 VNR, internal page, coastal townscape with historic fort at the centre; Monaco 2017 VNR, internal page, workshop with children using puppet theatre elements, with traditional decorative elements in Mongolia, recipient of international aid; India 2017 VNR, internal page, traditional and alternative medicine systems; Nigeria 2017 VNR, internal page, traditional dancers; Togo 2017 VNR, internal page, women with traditional dress and textiles and traditional market; Togo 2017 VNR, internal page, traditional boats; UAE VNR, internal page, woman in traditional dress; UAE 2017 VNR, internal page, dates, indigenous food of the region

d_ Other Documents and Activities of 2017

The HLPF 2017 Ministerial Declaration was adopted on July 31, 2017, consisting of 30 paragraphs that frame the commitments and assessments related to the 2030 Agenda around the theme of 'Eradicating poverty and promoting prosperity'.

As for the presence of culture, this is similar to the previous year, with paragraph 8 including mentions of cultural issues, although not specifically dedicated to the theme: "[We] commit ourselves to embracing diversity in cities and human settlements, to strengthening social cohesion, **intercultural dialogue** and understanding, tolerance, mutual respect, gender equality, innovation, entrepreneurship, inclusion, **identity** and safety, and the dignity of all people, as well as to fostering liveability and a vibrant urban economy. We also commit ourselves to taking steps to ensure that our local institutions promote pluralism and peaceful coexistence within increasingly heterogeneous and **multicultural societies**".

Among the 143 inputs made to HLPF 2017, beside the 43 national inputs (VNRs), there are 40 from Intergovernmental Forums and Bodies, 30 from Major Groups and Other Stakeholders (MGoS), and 30 from Partnerships and Voluntary Commitments. Some inputs with noteworthy culture references among the 74 results yielded by a 'culture' keyword search (based on the summary page, unless only the full report is available) include:

- Major Group: Indigenous Peoples (mention in context of land, as key theme; multiple minor references to culture)

- Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (PFII) (multiple minor references to culture)

- World Water Council (includes UNESCO)

- KEPA (Finnish Service Centre for Development Cooperation) (reference to culture in defining Finland success factor)

- Major Group: NGOs (a few minor references to culture)

- Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme of UNESCO (identification of its natural and cultural resources for ecotourism)

- UN Forum on Forests (a few minor references to culture)

- UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) (multiple minor references to culture)

- Volunteers Groups (a few minor references to culture)

Beside the HLPF, two noteworthy events were the UN Conference "Our oceans, our future: partnering for the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14" (Ocean Conference 2017), held on 5-9 June 2017 in New York and the UCLG 2nd Culture Summit, held in May 2017 in Jeju Island, R. Korea.

In 2017, the **UN Special Rapporteur in the field of Cultural Rights** published two reports that addressed the rise of fundamentalism and extremism, in diverse forms, and their grave impact on the enjoyment of cultural rights. She stressed that these represent major threats to universal human rights worldwide and a growing challenge that must be faced with urgency, using a human rights approach. The first report was devoted to the impact of fundamentalism and extremism on the enjoyment of cultural rights in general while the second report focused on the impact of fundamentalism and extremism on the cultural rights of women. The Special Rapporteur stresses the **centrality of cultural rights in combating fundamentalism and extremism**, stating that arts, education, science and culture are critical to creating alternatives, making space for peaceful contestation, promoting inclusion and protecting youth from radicalization. She makes a number of recommendations, including a call to the international community to give much more consideration to the local opponents of fundamentalism and extremism, human rights defenders, including women human rights defenders, in international gatherings to discuss strategy on how to battle these ideologies.

2.3.3_ 2018: Transforming toward Sustainable and Resilient Societies

a_ Overview of HLPF 2018

The HLPF 2018, convened under the auspices of ECOSOC, was held on 9-18 July 2018, with the overarching theme: "Transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies". More than 125 Heads and Deputy Heads of State and Government, Ministers, Vice-Ministers and other Ministerial level officials, and over two thousand representatives from governments, UN system and other organizations, civil society, NGOs and the private sector participated in the forum to discuss progress, successes, challenges and lessons learned on the road to a fairer, more peaceful and prosperous world and a healthy planet by 2030.

The set of goals to be reviewed in depth was the following, including Goal 17, to be considered each year:

6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION

Goal 6. Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all

7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY

Goal 7. Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all

11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES

Goal 11. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable

12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION

Goal 12. Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns

15 LIFE ON LAND

Goal 15. Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss

17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS

Goal 17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development

The 46 countries that presented VNRs in 2018 were Albania, Andorra, Armenia, Australia, Bahamas, Bahrain, Benin, Bhutan, Cabo Verde, Canada, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, Greece, Guinea, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Jamaica, Kiribati, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Lithuania, Mali, Malta, Mexico, Namibia, Niger, Paraguay, Poland, Qatar, Romania, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Singapore, Slovakia, Spain, Sri Lanka, State of Palestine, Sudan, Switzerland, Togo, United Arab Emirates, Uruguay, Vietnam.[16]

b_ Keyword Analysis of 2018 VNRs

The 2018 analysis reveals that the 5 countries out of 46 with the most frequent references to 'culture' and 'cultural', in terms of number of keyword occurrence proportional to total number of pages, were Qatar, Greece, Latvia, Andorra and Bahrain (see Table 1: Use of keywords 'culture' and 'cultural' in VNRs by country, 2016–19.)

Figure 25: The use of keywords reflecting the 'three dimensions' of sustainable development and the 'fourth' ('culture'), in VNRs of 2018.[17]

VNR Reports 2018

- Society/Social
- Economy/Economic
- Environment/Environmental
- Culture/Cultural

---
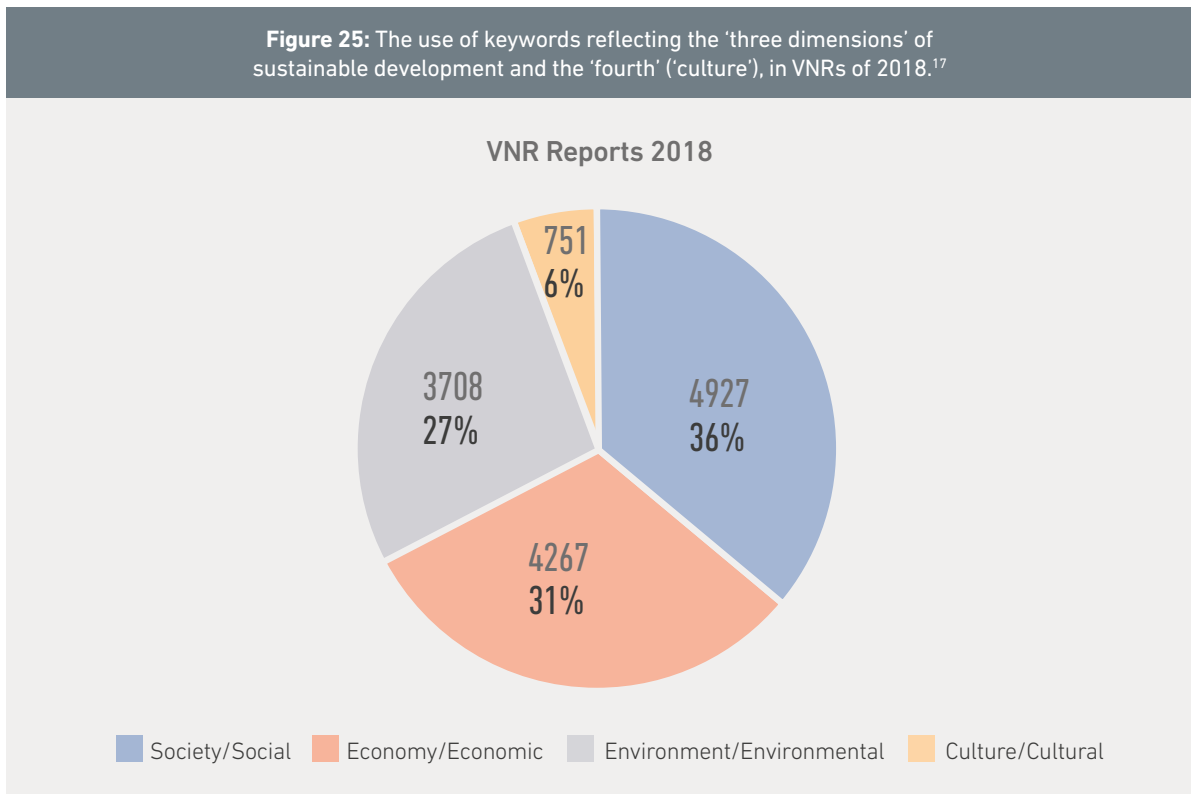
16. Countries not included in the analysis due to full reports not being available: Kiribati.
17. Note: The frequency of the term 'socio-economic' has been equally divided and added to those of 'social' and 'economic'.

c_ Selections of Exemplary Content on Culture in 2018 VNRs

Below are excerpts from the VNRs with exemplary approaches to engaging with culture for the SDGs focusing on the five highest scorers in the Keyword Analysis.

Qatar:

- SDG11: Second: Strengthening the efforts to protect and preserve the world's **cultural and natural heritage**: "The preservation of the cultural and natural heritage, the promotion of **cultural exchange**, and the promotion and fostering of the **dialogue of civilizations** and coexistence are all important components of Qatar National Vision 2030 goals and targets. Therefore, the **Culture Sector Strategy 2011-2016** included targets to promote **intercultural understanding**, protect and develop Qatar's cultural **heritage**, preserve national **identity**, promote cultural **knowledge** among young people, attract and nurture high-quality **talents** to enrich and stimulate the **culture sector**, raise **cultural interest** and promote Qatar as a vibrant **cultural destination**. (…) The strategy of the **Culture and Sports Sector 2018-2022** seeks to make culture a framework for the preservation of **identity** and the promotion of citizenship and **cultural communication**." (…) "In terms of **cultural infrastructure**, a number of cultural buildings and facilities have been established, such as Qatar National Library, the Museum of Islamic Art and the Arab Museum of Modern Art. Qatar Museums Authority has developed an ambitious plan for ten years to build several **museums** until the end of 2023. Qatari competent authorities started to digitize hundreds of valuable and rare **books**, maps and manuscripts. (…) "The most important challenges facing Qatar's efforts in the **cultural field** are the obsolescence of the legislative structure (…). There is also an urgent need to develop **policies for the culture sector** based on evidence-based relevant studies."

- Conclusion: "Through the efforts of its national institutions, Qatar has achieved many important objectives in areas that include infrastructure and transportation development, enhancing security and safety procedures, urban development and its implications on health, education, work, and **culture** (…)."

Greece:

- Introduction: "Particular emphasis was placed on specific themes, including employment, and in particular youth employment, education, health, water and marine resources, migration, **culture** and sustainable tourism. (…) The second National Strategy for Sustainable Development (NSSD) was prepared in 2007 by an inter-ministerial committee, aligned with the Renewed 2006 EU Strategy for Sustainable Development, also including four additional national priorities (**culture**, tourism, agriculture and spatial planning).

- The Incorporation of the SDGs in the National Framework: The National Priorities for the SDGs: Fostering a competitive, innovative and sustainable economic growth (SDGs 8, 9): (…) research and innovation (SDGs 8.2, 8.3, 9.5): "Special actions are planned by the National Research and Innovation Strategy (RIS3) (…) thematic sectors include: (…) viii) **Culture - Creative Industries & Tourism**.

- The Incorporation of the SDGs in the National Framework: The National Priorities for the SDGs: Enhancing open, participatory, democratic processes and promoting partnerships (SDGs 16, 17): International ministerial meetings and conferences on human rights, democracy and **peaceful coexistence** (SDGs 16.3, 17.16, 17.17): "The participants (…) deepened their discussions at the 2nd Ministerial Meeting, on major issues of the Eastern Mediterranean, like education, **culture** and environment, security and stability and migration."

- Stakeholders' Engagement and Commitment: Local and regional authorities: Regionalising the SDGs: "the Regions have implemented thus far 30,000 projects promoting regional development and local economies, creating new jobs, supporting social solidarity structures, improving the environment and upgrading education, health, tourism and **culture**." (…) " RIS3 focuses on the productive reconstruction of a region, (…) with a view to decreasing regional inequalities and working towards sustainable employment with respect to people, society and **culture**."

- Means of Implementation: Fostering policy coherence and interlinkages: the case of the agricultural, tourism and **cultural sector**: Cultural sector: cultural **heritage and creativity** as sustainable development motivator: "The National Growth Strategy regards the country's rich cultural heritage as one of its comparative advantages. For Greece, cultural heritage, linked to tourism and new technologies, constitutes a key driver for economic growth and sustainable development. The Partnership Agreement for the Development Framework (PA) 2014-2020, the main strategic plan for growth in Greece, mainstreams **culture** in practically all sectoral and regional operational programmes. Cultural heritage -along with tourism and the **cultural and creative industries**- has been identified as one of the eight priority sectors with a substantial contribution to economic growth. (...) Greece attaches great importance to the development and implementation of policies, which protect and promote **cultural heritage**, a field that maintains by far the highest priority within the competent Ministry of Culture and Sports in terms of funding, project implementation and organisational support. In particular, in the broader field of culture and the arts, the Greek government has established policy priorities aimed at building closer ties between **culture and society** (including **cultural participation**), supporting **creativity**, especially young **artists and culture professionals**, and promoting internationalisation of Greek **cultural production**. (...) SDGs interlinkages: Protecting and promoting cultural heritage through extended **excavation and restoration works** and appropriate infrastructure (linked to SDGs 8.3, 8.9, 11.a, 11.4, 11.7, 12.b) ("**Archeological sites, museums and monuments** are closely connected to tourism and local communities through synergies that boost local and peripheral economy and strengthen the country's comparative advantage, creating a product of high value added (...)); Protection and promotion of cultural heritage as well as **dissemination of cultural products** through synergies for the creation of sustainable cities and communities (linked to SDGs 2.4, 8.3, 8.9, 11.4, 12.8, 12.b) ((...) **linking cultural heritage with the local community** through the development of synergies of touristic and awareness-raising (...) enhance the cultural product and strengthen the country's position in the international touristic map, thus contributing to its economic and social growth (...)); Fostering policies that support **cultural creativity and increase employment in cultural sector**, including **cultural tourism** and cultural and creative industries (linked to SDGs 1.4, 4.7, 8.3, 12.b, 16.7, 17.16, 17.17) (The implementation of the PA 2014-2020 in the sector of culture is expected to further promote and enhance **cultural heritage** for the benefit of a wider audience. It will also contribute to supporting **contemporary culture**, institutions and creators, and in particular to strengthening support for the cultural and creative sectors which constitute an important driver of growth. The **cultural and creative industries (CCIs)** -including the visual and performing arts, ICT apps, gaming, publishing, fashion, the music and film industries and various youth subcultures- are increasingly recognised as a dynamic cluster of sectors which underpin local, regional and national economies and societies. (...)). (...)

- Means of Implementation: Fostering policy coherence and interlinkages: the case of the agricultural, tourism and cultural sector: Tourism Sector: fostering sustainable and inclusive tourism growth and competitive tourism product & services: "The country possesses unique characteristics (i.e. climate, nature, **history, culture**, gastronomy) that offer a globally competitive tourism product".

- Means of Implementation: Promoting the SDGs implementation at global and regional level: "The **safeguarding and promotion of culture** contributes directly to achieving many of the SDGs, including safe and sustainable cities, decent work and economic growth, reduced inequalities, environment, promotion of gender equality and peaceful and inclusive societies. The indirect benefits of culture are accrued through the culturally-informed and effective implementations of the development goals. An important initiative of Greece (...) is the International Forum of Ancient Civilisations (...) between Bolivia, China, Egypt, Greece, India, Iran, Iraq, Italy, Mexico and Peru, a platform for dialogue and cultural cooperation."

Latvia:

- Opening Remarks by the Prime Minister: "Latvia's recent success is, in part, due to the government's goal oriented **planning culture**."

- Summary – Latvia's Sustainability: Latvia's Sustainable Development Strategy: Latvia 2030 sets the following priorities: **Development of cultural space** (SDG 4); Long-term investments in **human capital** (SDG 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 10, 12, 16, 17); A paradigm change in education (SDG 3, 4, 8); An innovative and eco-efficient economy (SDG 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 16, 17); Nature as future capital (SDG 6, 12, 13, 14, 15, 17); The spatial development perspective (SDG 9, 11); Innovative government and public participation (SDG 16, 17).

- Summary – Latvia's Sustainability: Towards the achievement of the three dimensions of sustainability, Latvia's Strengths are its moderate and steady increase in wellbeing, the **quality of natural and cultural capital and the importance of nature and culture in the eyes of society**, a high degree of digitalisation, and the strategic investments in Latvia's development since 2014.

- Summary – Latvia's Sustainability: Natural and cultural capital: "Latvia's advantages in **culture** and natural resources will contribute to economic innovation and eco-efficiency and will be passed on to future generations. In Latvian policy, nature and **culture** are regarded as capital. Of the 12 areas in which Latvia directs its mid- term goals, progress in Management of **Natural and Cultural Capital** was assessed to be most successful (…). Latvia's inhabitants and guests, however, perceive **nature and culture** not as capital, but as the enabling environment that makes Latvia attractive for life, work and leisure. Culture in Latvia is understood not only in terms of **historical heritage** and **fine arts** that promote **creativity**, but also as **relations** among the people - such as mutual cooperation, trust, public participation and integrity."

- Summary – Latvia's Sustainability: Innovative economy: "For an **innovative economy** to succeed, society as a whole must be creative. Latest research shows that **culture fosters the type of creativity and abstract thinking that brings excellence to STEM**. Latvian children have access to high quality, publicly funded art and music schools in addition to their traditional schooling."

- Linking National Development Planning with SDGs, and the Enabling Environment: Territorial development – "development is balanced throughout the country, the **uniqueness of each area** is preserved and promoted"

- Linking National Development Planning with SDGs, and the Enabling Environment: Civil society: "Restoration of Latvia's independence in 1991 is inextricably linked to the **sustainability of the environment and culture**, citizens' self initiative and taking responsibility for change."

- SDG4: The Latvian Schoolbag: "As of September 2018, all primary and secondary school pupils in the country will have the chance to explore the **interrelationships between history, culture, nature and innovations** outside the traditional classroom setting through a programme called the Latvian Schoolbag."

- SDG11: "Latvia preserves its **cultural heritage** (Target 11.4) by restoring and reconstructing sites and opening new cultural infrastructure. People increasingly go to concerts, museums and theatres, and participate in amateur folk art groups. Between 2015 and 2017, the number of museums visits went up by 13%, reaching 3.7 million. As incomes increase, households spend more on culture and recreation." (…) "The Historic Centre of Riga is listed on the **UNESCO World Heritage List**. To maintain this status, the Riga Sustainable Development Strategy 2030 calls for the protection of the distinctive silhouette, and building regulations prevent new development projects from affecting the skyline." (…) "Deeper societal understanding of culture and cultural heritage is promoted through the recognition and support of different **regional cultures and dialects**. This support fits into the broader objective of promoting regional and linguistic differences as a dimension of the **national identity**. Important **religious buildings**, i.e. churches, monasteries, chapels, etc, throughout the country will be conferred **cultural monument** status and be protected by a new Law on Financing Sacral Heritage (2018)."

Andorra (translated from French):

- Means of Implementation: SDG11: Protection and preservation of the **cultural and natural heritage**: "Cultural heritage is one of the main **witnesses of history, of the identity and creativity of a country**. It is an essential duty of society and public authorities to preserve this collective wealth and pass it on in the best conditions future generations. (...) the 2003 Act stipulates that the Government must provide for annual investment program at least equivalent to 0.5% of the budget planned for public construction to grant **conservation aid** for integrated, restoration and improvement **cultural heritage (immovable, movable and documentary**)." (...) "On July 1, 2004, the **UNESCO World Heritage** Committee approved the inscription of the Madriu–Perafita–Claror Valley on the Heritage List, in the category of cultural landscape. It is (...) also recognized as a Ramsar site and Category VI by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature."

- Means of Implementation: SDG17: Volunteering: "In order to facilitate the exchange of knowledge, especially for young people from the Global South, Andorra finances, at each session, the travel and stay of a youth from a developing country at the **UNESCO Youth Forum**. (...) **Art Camp** - Andorra and Intercultural Dialogue: Since 2008, on the initiative of the Andorran **National Commission for UNESCO**, about thirty painters from around the world meet in Andorra every two years for artistic workshops."

Bahrain:

- Creating an enabling policy environment: Integration between dimensions and national adaptation: "Bahrain pays particular attention to **knowledge, innovation, and culture**, as there is no sustainable development without advances in science and knowledge, and in developing a **system of values, behaviours, and innovations** that achieve sustainable development."

- Issues central to a national perspective: Education, innovation and culture: **Culture**: (...) the **Bahrain Authority for Culture and Antiquities** is promoting its cultural and historical heritage and advertising its natural landscape to stimulate tourism to support job creation and stimulate the national economy. Bahrain takes seriously its social responsibility to preserve the natural landscape and protect the environment and is committed to the principles of sustainability in the preservation of the environment and in understanding its economic and social impact. Initiatives and programs such as the "**Spring of Culture" "Pearl Road**" and "**Our Heritage is Our Wealth**" have been developed to promote tourism in Bahrain and to encourage tourists to visit the historical and archaeological sites of Bahrain, to promote cultural understanding and raise awareness of the need to preserve and maintain cultural heritage and natural landscapes."

- Thematic debate: Transforming into sustainable and resilient societies: Cities and urban development in Bahrain: "Muharraq was chosen as the **capital of Islamic Culture** for the year 2018 due to its historical importance, preservation of heritage, and the rich and distinctive culture of its ancient civilizations."

Australia:

- Forewords: "Australians have long recognised the need to manage the environment and the economy in a sustainable way. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander concept of "Caring for Country" is a foundation of **Indigenous culture and spirituality** (...)".

Some noteworthy covers and pictures from the 2018 VNRs are given below.

"The safeguarding and promotion of culture contributes directly to achieving many of the SDGs, including safe and sustainable cities, decent work and economic growth, reduced inequalities, environment, promotion of gender equality and peaceful and inclusive societies. The indirect benefits of culture are accrued through the culturally-informed and effective implementations of the development goals."
(Greece)

"For an innovative economy to succeed, society as a whole must be creative. Latest research shows that culture fosters the type of creativity and abstract thinking that brings excellence to STEM."
(Latvia)

Figures 26-28: Australia 2018 VNR, cover, aboriginal-inspired art for each SDG; Australia 2018 VNR, aboriginal-inspired art for each SDG, following the cover theme; Malta 2018 VNR, cover, historic Valetta skyline

Figures 29-36: Cabo Verde 2018 VNR, traditional terraced landscape mitigating climate change; Armenia 2018 VNR, photographic art to raise awareness on climate change; Bahamas 2018 VNR, student artwork; Malta 2018 VNR, cathedral interior; Malta 2018 VNR, historic armoury; Malta 2018 VNR, old anchor underwater; Bahamas 2018 VNR, handicrafts; Cabo Verde 2018 VNR, handweaving and handmade food; Mexico 2018 VNR, public artwork
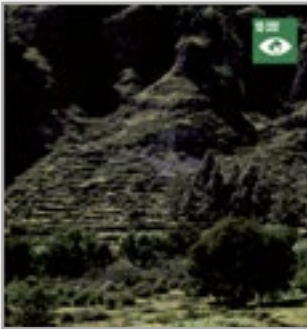
Figures 37-47: Lao PDR 2018 VNR, traditional temple roof; Lao PDR 2018 VNR, traditional temple; Latvia 2018 VNR, historic centre of Riga; Latvia 2018 VNR, historic cathedrals spires; Mexico 2018 VNR, traditional beadwork motif; Mexico 2018 VNR, historic building façade; Mexico 2018 VNR, handweaving; Mexico 2018 VNR, historic bridge/aqueduct; Mexico 2018 VNR historic townscape; Mexico 2018 VNR, conference in a historic building; Palestine 2018 VNR, traditional crafts
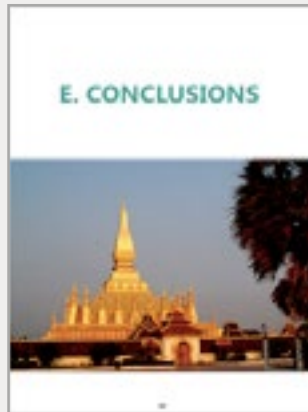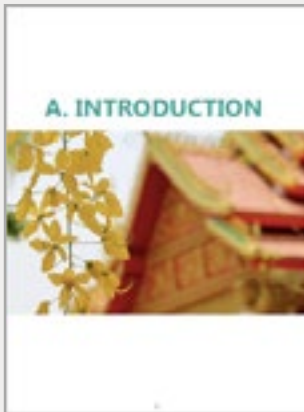
Figures 48-56: Palestine 2018 VNR, date palm harvest; Palestine 2018 VNR, historic building; Qatar 2018 VNR boys in traditional dress; Qatar 2018 VNR, building craft; Qatar 2018 VNR, traditional souq (bazaar); Qatar 2018 VNR, iconic façade of convention centre; Qatar 2018 VNR, architectural detail with Islamic motif; Qatar 2018 VNR, public artwork; Singapore 2018 VNR, musicians

Figures 57-64: Singapore 2018 VNR, images of children's book covers with artist illustrations; ; Ecuador 2018 VNR, traditional work with straw; Ecuador 2018 VNR, boy playing guitar and woman in traditional dress; Ecuador 2018 VNR, young classical music orchestra and name of Quito city as public art prepared for Habitat IIIColombia 2018 VNR, traditional boat; Colombia 2018 VNR, traditional textile; Colombia 2018 VNR, ancient sculpture; Colombia 2018 VNR, historic church building

Figures 65-69: Andorra 2018 VNR, UNESCO World Heritage Site of Madriu-Perafita-Claror Valley; Andorra 2018 VNR, sculptures along a cultural route; Andorra 2018 VNR, murals of a historic church; Andorra 2018 VNR, Art Camp Andorra; Slovakia 2018 VNR, library

d_ Other Documents and Activities of 2018

The Ministerial Declaration at HLPF 2018, consisting of 31 paragraphs in its adopted version, was a harsh reality-check for the cultural networks attending the forum, for the low level of recognition of culture in its text. This was limited to a reference on "cultural diversity" in context of human rights and the need for "a culture of innovation, sustainability and inclusiveness" (Paragraph 13).

Focusing on cultural heritage, **ICOMOS** drafted a statement titled "Is Heritage Left Behind in the HLPF Ministerial Declaration?", with UCLG (World Secretariat and Culture Committee), IFLA, Global Planners Network (GPN) and Europa Nostra joining as co-signatories. ICOMOS also organized the side event on 'SDG11.4: Heritage for Sustainability' with co-sponsors UNESCO, UN-Habitat, IUCN, GEN, UCLG and APA, a diverse range of speakers at international, national (US) and local (New York) level. Furthermore, as a member of the NGOs Major Group, ICOMOS contributed with culture-related content to the position statement of this Major Group.

Among the 113 inputs made to HLPF 2018, beside the 46 national inputs (VNRs), there are also 46 from Intergovernmental Forums and Bodies, 21 from Major Groups and Other Stakeholders (MGoS), (there were none from Partnerships and Voluntary Commitments). Some inputs with noteworthy culture references among the 22 results yielded by a 'culture' keyword search (based on the summary page, unless only the full report is available) include:

- International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)

- Position paper submitted to the High-Level Political Forum 2018 - GOAL 11: BUILDING INCLUSIVE, SAFE, RESILIENT AND SUSTAINABLE CITIES FOR ALL AGES, INCLUDING OLDER PERSONS (Stakeholder Group on Ageing - Position Paper) United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF)

- World Heritage Committee (policy recommendation: 2015 Policy for the integration of a sustainable development perspective into the processes of the Convention) (it is interesting that this document was not included in the 'culture' keyword query)

- Non-Governmental Organizations Major Group - Position Paper (it is interesting that this document was not included in the 'culture' keyword query)

The **9th World Urban Forum** (WUF9) was held on February 7-13 2018 in Kuala Lumpur, as the first session to focus on the implementation of the New Urban Agenda adopted in Habitat III. WUF9 was instrumental to substantively feed into the inputs for the first report of the implementation of the New Urban Agenda. The Theme of WUF9, "Cities 2030, Cities for All: Implementing the New Urban Agenda", places the Forum's focus on the New Urban Agenda as a tool and accelerator for achieving Agenda 2030 and the SDGs. The Kuala Lumpur Declaration, the main outcome document, was a concise document of 40 paragraphs, in which the initial statement cited 5 key enablers for implementation of the New Urban Agenda, one of these being "adopting integrated territorial development, including (...) appropriate compactness and density, diversity of uses, and revitalization of cultural heritage." There are further mentions of 'cultural inequalities' and a 'culture of creativity and innovation' in the declaration text.

In 2018, the **UN Special Rapporteur in the field of Cultural Rights** devoted a report on how actions in the field of arts and culture can make significant contributions towards creating, developing and maintaining societies in which all human rights are increasingly realized. The report explains that actions in the field of culture "can open a space in which individuals and groups can reflect upon their society, confront and modify their perception of one another, express their fears and grievances in a non-violent manner, develop resilience after violent or traumatic experiences, including human rights violations, and imagine the future they want for themselves and how to better realize human rights in the society they live in".

2.3.4_ 2019: Empowering People, Ensuring Inclusiveness and Equality

a_ Overview of HLPF 2019

The HLPF 2019, convened under the auspices of ECOSOC, was held on 9-18 July 2019, with the overarching theme: "Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality".

The set of goals to be reviewed in depth was the following, including Goal 17, to be considered each year:

4 QUALITY EDUCATION

Goal 4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH
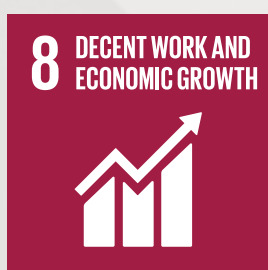
Goal 8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all

10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES

Goal 10. Reduce inequality within and among countries

13 CLIMATE ACTION

Goal 13. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts

16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS

Goal 16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels

17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS

Goal 17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development

The 47 countries that presented VNRs in 2019 were Algeria, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, Congo (Republic of the), Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Eswatini, Fiji, Ghana, Guatemala, Guyana, Iceland, Indonesia, Iraq, Israel, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Lesotho, Liechtenstein, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mongolia, Nauru, New Zealand, Oman, Pakistan, Palau, Philippines, Rwanda, Saint Lucia, Serbia, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Timor-Leste, Tonga, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania and Vanuatu.[18]

18. Countries not included in the analysis due to full reports or reports in English/French/Spanish not being available: Fiji, Guatemala, Nauru, Oman.

The UN General Assembly resolution A/RES/70/299 decided to review the format and organizational aspects of the HLPF at its 74th session, to benefit from lessons learned in the first cycle of the forum as well as from other processes related to the follow-up and review of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. An Expert Group Meeting was held in May 2019 with the aim to bring Member States, the UN system, experts, academia and other stakeholders together to prepare the discussions of the 74th session. The Summary of the meeting can be found here.

b_ Keyword Analysis of 2019 VNRs

The 2019 analysis reveals that the 5 countries out of 47 with the most frequent references to 'culture' and 'cultural', in terms of number of keyword occurrence proportional to total number of pages, were Palau, New Zealand, Serbia, Turkey and Vanuatu (see Table 1: Use of keywords 'culture' and 'cultural' in VNRs by country, 2016-19.)

Figure 70: The use of keywords reflecting the 'three dimensions' of sustainable development and the 'fourth' ('culture'), in VNRs of 2019.[19]

VNR Reports 2019

604 4%
3425 25%
4798 36%
4702 35%

■ Society/Social ■ Economy/Economic ■ Environment/Environmental ■ Culture/Cultural

---
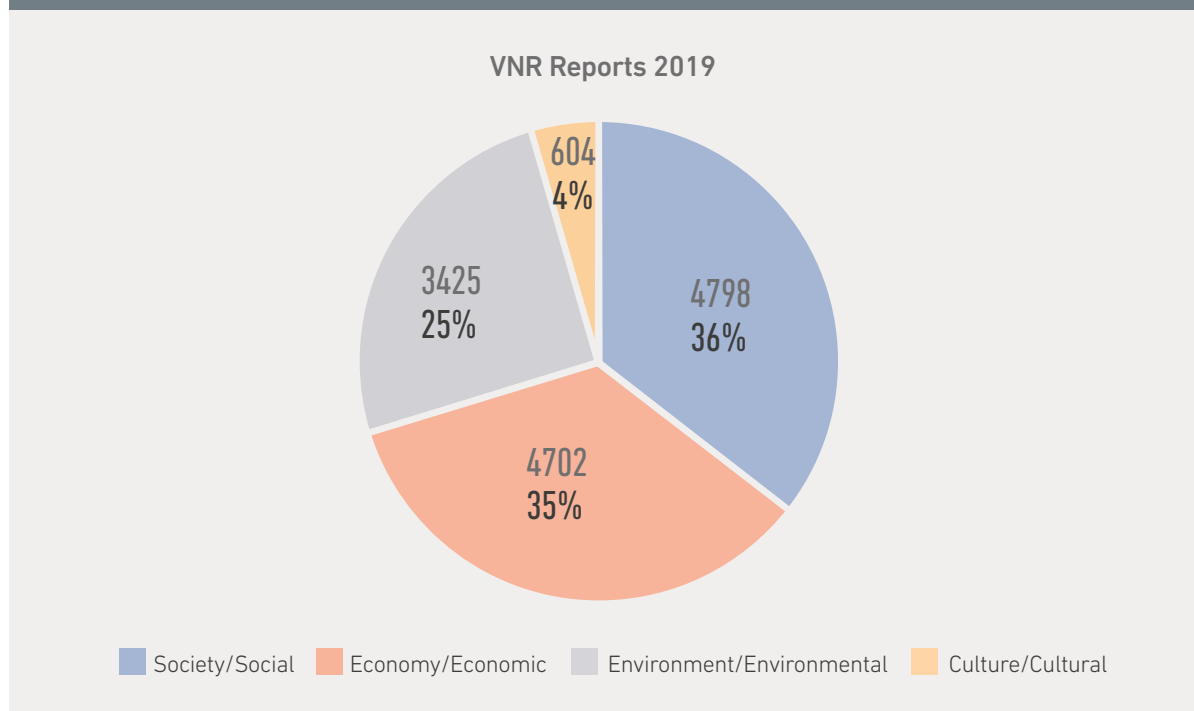
19. Note: The frequency of the term 'socio-economic' has been equally divided and added to those of 'social' and 'economic'.

c_ Selections of Exemplary Content on Culture in 2019 VNRs

Below are excerpts from the VNRs with exemplary approaches to engaging with culture for the SDGs focusing on the five highest scorers in the Keyword Analysis.

Palau:

- Title: "**Pathway to 2030: Progressing with Our Past**: Toward a Resilient, Sustainable and Equitable Future"

- Executive Summary: Building resilience: "Climate change, and associated disaster risks, impact all aspects of life and without climate-informed development threaten Palau's health, **culture**, economy, infrastructure, and environment."

- Policy and Enabling Environment: Ownership of the SDGs: Working Groups: "The third and final pre-VNR meeting of working group chairs took place on 6 June 2019. Considering a pre-final draft, chairs identified (...) examples of Palau **culture and traditions** that illustrate the subtheme of this report, "Progressing with our Past".

- National SDG Framework: Progress, Challenges, Future Priorities: Pillar One: People: "Palau begins this VNR with a focus on four enablers of human well-being—• SDG 2, food and nutrition; SDG 3, health and well-being; SDG 4, education; SDG 11, human settlements (focus on **culture**). (...) SDG2, Food and Nutrition: "Palau's **traditional agriculture** is a multi-story agroforestry system, where tree crops provided a protective canopy for the intensive production of over 40 plant varieties. (...) Traditional agriculture is good for people and the environment. Research shows that taro patches absorb up to 90 percent of sediment thus protecting Palau's coral reefs." (...)

- National SDG Framework: Progress, Challenges, Future Priorities: Pillar One: People: SDG11, human settlements (focus on culture). Palau has integrated 3 of the 10 SDG 11 targets into the National SDG Framework. The focus for discussion in this section, however, will be **SDG 11.4 (culture) since this very important element of sustainability from a Palau perspective is not fully explored elsewhere in the SDGs**. (...) Cultural and Natural Heritage: Target 11.4. "This is a high priority target for Palau with many actions having been taken or in progress to protect Palau's tangible and intangible cultural heritage. Several government and semi-government organizations (Bureau of Cultural and Historic Preservation within the Ministry of Community and Cultural Affairs, Palau Society of Historians; an NGO, Risel Belau; States; other ministries, for example, the Ministry of Education) have responsibility for arts, culture, and historic preservation. (...) Several government and nongovernment conservation agencies also touch on cultural heritage because of the **close link between Palau's natural resources and its cultural resources**. Because of the multi-sector and multi-agency involvement in this area, it has not been possible to track expenditures by all the parties per the **11.4 indicator**." Pathways to 2030: Closing Gaps, Improving Quality and Reach, Building Resilience.

- National SDG Framework: Progress, Challenges, Future Priorities: Pillar Three: Planet: "We do not inherit the earth from our parents; we borrow it from our children." - **Traditional wisdom.**

- Progressing with the Past: SDG1: **Culture of "sharing and caring";** SDG14: **Traditional "Bul"** (the Council of Chiefs placing reef areas off limits to fishing during known fish spawning and feeding periods) as the Foundation for MPAs (Marine Protected Areas).

New Zealand:

- Living Standards Framework and Indicators Aotearoa New Zealand: "The LSF is a practical application of national and international research around measuring wellbeing, tailored to **reflect New Zealand's unique culture** and what matters to New Zealanders." (...) "The indicator suite has been developed to allow for measurement of New Zealand's current and future wellbeing and New Zealand's impact on the rest of the world. The indicators build on international best practice, and have been tailored to a New Zealand context by incorporating topics such as **culture, identity**, land and waste. New Zealand's official statistics agency is partnering with **Māori** to further develop the set of indicators based on concepts of wellbeing from a Te Ao Māori perspective."

- SDG12: "Doing more and better with less is in our DNA. It is **part of our culture of ingenuity** and resourcefulness."

- SDG15: "Conservation and sustainable use of New Zealand's unique habitats, ecosystems and biodiversity is at the heart of our culture. For many New Zealanders, the natural environment is part of our **identity**."

Serbia:

- Policy and enabling environment: Incorporation of the SDGs in national frameworks: "One of the model examples of incorporating the SDGs into national framework through sectoral policies and also through **cross-cutting policies, such as culture**, is of special significance for growing into sustainability by creating new patterns of **cultural life styles**, and life values of sustainability and sustainable development. The practice of the Ministry of Culture and Information of the Republic of Serbia shows how to incorporate the SDGs into the **culture policy** by means of focused programmes and measures for achievement of targets: 4.7 **Education for Cultural Diversity** and Peace –encourages participation of artists and professionals in the field of culture in workshops, seminars and conferences; 8.3 Policies for Decent Jobs and Entrepreneurship – **Creative industries** in Serbia are developing faster than the rest of the economy. Government incentives for the development of creative industries as a sector of economy are resulting in increased share of the creative sector in the gross domestic product; 8.9 Sustainable Tourism and Employment – supports and funds projects of reconstruction and rehabilitation of **cultural heritage** in the territory of Serbia as a function of developing sustainable cultural tourism; 10.a Preferential Treatment for Developing Countries –public competitions for mobility of **artists** and professionals in the field of culture from Serbia; 11.4 Safeguarding Cultural and Natural Heritage - implementing the **UNESCO conventions** in the field of cultural heritage (the Hague, 1954; Paris, 1972; Paris, 2003); as well as the Law on **Cultural Assets** in Serbia; 13.1 Resilience to Climate-related Disasters – need to build capacities in the area of managing **disaster risks in the field of cultural heritage**, being implemented through the participation with UNESCO since 2016 in the programme Disaster Risk Management in the field of Cultural heritage; 16.a Prevention of Violence, Terrorism and Crime and 16.4 Recovery and Return of **Stolen Assets** - implementation of the UNESCO Conventions (Paris, 1970); 16.10 Protecting Fundamental **Freedoms** - implementation of the UNESCO Convention (Paris, 2005) along with the Institute for the Study of Cultural Development, UNESCO Recommendation on the Status of Artists of 1980; 17.9 Capacity-building for SDGS in National Planning - enhancement of knowledge and skills of professionals in the field of culture through participation in national and international gatherings and seminars and projects; 17.14 Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development - harmonization of regulations with the **EU Acquis in the field of culture**; 17.16 Multi-stakeholder partnerships; 17.17 Public, Public-private and Civil Society Partnerships cooperation between the public and private sector through public competitions and projects of national significance such as the project ''Novi Sad 2021 - the **European Capital of Culture**'' and ''Novi Sad - the Youth Capital of Culture 2019''. (...)

- Among the best results comes from the cooperation with the UNESCO Regional Office for Science and Culture in Europe, through the project **"Culture for Development Indicators"- CDIS**. The objective is scientific proof that **culture contributes** to social and economic development. The project is aimed in its final stage to contribute to global reporting on the effects of culture on development within the Agenda 2030. Although the sector of culture has been recognized earlier as significant for sustainable development, it was difficult to come up with accurate data and indicators of the specific scope of such impact or contribution to overall development. The seven dimensions and 22 indicators of CDIS can be links with 9 SDGs and 36 targets, which can be better achieved with the use of CDIS at national level. Evidence demonstrates that, even with the high level of national production, with a significant share of cultural activities in the gross domestic product (3.90% of the total GDP) and a relatively high share of employment in institutions of culture (5.3% of the total employed population), the share of culture (80.1%) should be additionally supported in order to **increase the consumption of cultural goods** in households (2.59% of the total household consumption), in order to facilitate higher **market potential of cultural industries**. Good results in the protection and valuation of cultural heritage, through the established multidimensional framework for protection, preservation and improvement of heritage sustainability (0.89/1), can be further enhanced through greater investments in youth education (4.0%), which would raise awareness among the youth and the whole local community of the significance of **preserving their heritage**, and would in the long term contribute to developing this sector, increasing employment and enjoyment of cultural contents, as well as through the reforms of the legislative framework in order to modernize the overall system of heritage protection in Serbia."

Turkey:

- Integration of SDGs into National Agenda: Role of Local administrations on SDGs: "SDG Practices in Municipalities: Yenimahalle Municipality: Tutoring sessions to assist economically and **socio-culturally disadvantaged** children in their school courses and examinations as well as to support their social and **cultural development**; Adana Metropolitan Municipality: Refugee Assembly to form policies ensuring the social, **cultural**, political and economic integration of refugees into the city."

- Integration of SDGs into National Agenda: Integration of Three Dimensions of Sustainable Development: "The following is a summary of the reflections of sustainable development on the multi-sectoral NDPs that determine main goals and priorities for Turkey's development in **economic, social and cultural spheres** and constitutes a framework for institutional and structural arrangements. (...) The 8th NDP (2001-2005) adopted a sustainable development approach that was essentially based on protecting human health, ecological balance, **historical and aesthetic values** while achieving economic and social progress."

- Progress towards SDGs and Next Steps: SDG2: "The Environmentally-based Agricultural Land Protection Program (ÇATAK) is designed as a scheme where farmers who prefer to use environmentally friendly techniques and **cultural practices** are provided with land-based support payments." SDG5: "empowering women in its all dimensions including economic, social and **cultural aspects** and ensuring their active contribution to development is considered an essential component of our human-centred development approach." SDG8: Policies: "Increasing the tourism capacity of the country considering the social, **cultural and environmental impacts of tourism**. "SDG11: The main objective is to create **human settlements that preserve historical and cultural values**; are resilient to disasters and secure; have effective waste management systems which minimizes the impacts of waste on environment; and are safe and accessible with integrated transportation networks and also to ensure that all segments of the

society, particularly elderly, persons with disabilities, women and children are safely included in city life." Policies: "Undertaking **urban regeneration** projects (...) compatible with the **city's historical and cultural background** and supports social integration" (...) "Protecting and restoring **cultural heritage** in line with **holistic protection** principle and increase public awareness." (...) SDG 11 is assessed on four focus areas: (...) and iv. **Protection of natural and cultural heritage**. In terms of protection of natural and cultural heritage: Turkey, (...) is strengthening efforts to safeguard its vast heritage resources' wealth **and bio-cultural diversity**. As of 2019, Turkey has 18 cultural properties in the World Heritage List and 77 properties in the tentative list. The latest to be inscribed in the UNESCO World Heritage List as was Göbeklitepe Archaeological Site. (...) 2019 was declared **Göbeklitepe Year** in Turkey. (...) 10% of the property tax (approximately 100 million USD/ year in total) collected by local administrations, being the most important actors in protecting the cultural heritage, is allocated for protecting and benefiting from cultural heritage. In 2016, the ratio of total **cultural expenses** over Gross Domestic Product was 1.4%. Inventory and restoration works for registering and protecting our cultural heritage inside and outside our country continues. (...) With the Turkish National **Immovable Cultural Heritage Inventory System** Project implemented between 2011-2020, an archival index is being created to identify all registered immovable cultural assets (...) There is a comprehensive legislation that defines movable, immovable cultural and natural assets, protection measures of cultural and natural heritage, regulates actions and activities to be undertaken, identifies necessary principles and practical decisions. Cultural and natural heritage is protected through creation and supervision of land development plans as well as plans, research, control and supervision on special environmental protection areas where special natural and cultural assets are located.

- SDG12: Under Sustainable Tourism, Green Star certificate has been awarded to environmentally friendly accommodation facilities since 2008 to protect the environment, to reduce the negative impacts of the touristic facilities to the environment (...) contributing to the environmental, **socio-cultural and economic sustainability** of the tourism sector.

Vanuatu:

- As reflected in the cover of the report, Vanuatu has proposed a new formulation of sustainability goals, whereby 12 goals are divided into social, environmental and economic themes, and the **first goal, a social one, is titled 'Vibrant Cultural Identity'**.

- Introduction: "The design of the National Sustainable Development Plan (NSDP) reflects the **unique identity** of the Ni-Vanuatu people. (...) "It is the **values and spirit of Ni-Vanuatu people that infuses and guides the implementation of the NSDP and the aligned SDGs**. Vanuatu was founded on Melanesian values of respect, harmony, unity and forgiveness. These values shape our **cultural heritage**, which is our strength. They are expressed through our oral traditions, languages, performing arts, social practices, rituals, festive events, traditional knowledge, and our deep connections with our ancestors, land and place, as well as the skills to be productive with our natural resources. Our development must be firmly **anchored to these values** that hold our society together." (...) The indivisible connections between culture and the social, environmental and economic pillars of the NSDP are reflected in our aspirations, and how we will deliver our national vision. (...) Our societal values, economic development and environmental situation were all considered in designing an NSDP with a focus on culture to coordinate the social, economic and environmental pillars of development. (...)"

- Policy and Enabling Environment: Creating Ownership of the NSDP and SDGs: "the scope of the new national plan needed to be broadened and reprioritised to better reflect **culture as the foundation of life** in Vanuatu, and to better balance the social, environmental and economic pillars of development."

- SDG Progress: SDG11: SOC 1.1: Promote and protect **indigenous languages**: "The NSDP includes an indicator regarding the proportion of population first language learned being indigenous (...)." (...) SOC 1.2: Preserve and enhance cultural and **traditional knowledge**, including appropriate medicines, natural remedies and healing practices: "The NSDP includes an indicator regarding the proportion of population with knowledge of traditional stories, dances, songs, and games (...)." SOC 1.3: Conserve **sites of cultural and historical significance**: "The NSDP includes an indicator regarding the total number of sites with cultural and/or historical significance newly identified, registered and preserved (...)." SOC 1.6: **Integrate culture and heritage into the national curriculum**: "436 primary and 93 secondary schools have culture and heritage modules in the curriculum. Schools also have extra curricula activities on culture & heritage (e.g. cultural nights; arts/crafts; etc.) annually (...)." SOC 1.7: **Safeguard the traditional economy** as a valued means of contributing to the wellbeing of the population and complementing the formal economy: "The percentage of population with free access to traditional lands, forest and marine resources is currently listed as 79% from the Alternative Indicators and Well Being Module (AIWBM) (...)". SDG16: SOC 1.4: Strengthen **links between traditional and formal governance systems**: "The NSDP includes a target regarding the number/proportion of relevant bills (land, culture, and environment) that are reviewed by the Malvatumauri Council of Chiefs (MCC) prior to parliamentary debate (...)."

- Next Steps: "The Plan has as its foundation, the **people and culture of Vanuatu**. Government will seek to ensure this continues to be a focus of policymaking efforts through the implementation of the NSDP and the realisation of the SDG goals and targets."

"It is the values and spirit of Ni-Vanuatu people that infuses and guides the implementation of the National Sustainable Development Plan and the aligned SDGs. Vanuatu was founded on Melanesian values of respect, harmony, unity and forgiveness. These values shape our cultural heritage, which is our strength. Our development must be firmly anchored to these values that hold our society together."
(Vanuatu)

Some noteworthy covers and pictures from the 2019 VNRs are given below.

Figures 71-79: Mongolia 2019 VNR, cover, traditional decorative motif bracing the SDGs; New Zealand 2019 VNR, cover, Maori-inspired artwork; Vanuatu 2019 VNR, cover, a new formulation of sustainability goals prioritizing culture. Algeria 2019 VNR, cover, photo of public landmark, artwork; Cameroon 2019 VNR, cover, traditional pottery-making; Croatia 2019 VNR, cover, children artwork with images of monuments and historic coat-of-arms; Kazakhstan 2019 VNR, cover, detail from abstract artwork, and a traditional decorative motif; Palau 2019 VNR, cover, stylized graphics with traditional, vernacular house and historic monument; Rwanda 2019 VNR, cover, traditional decorative motif
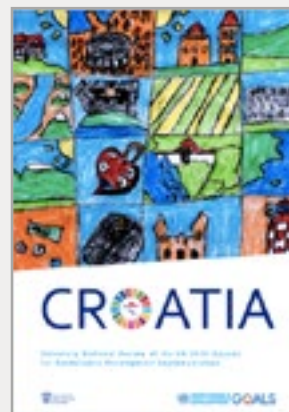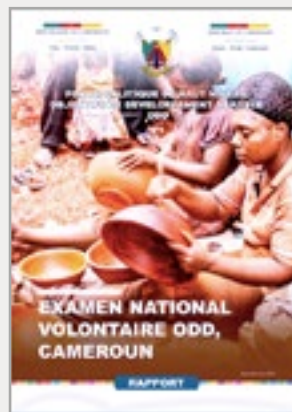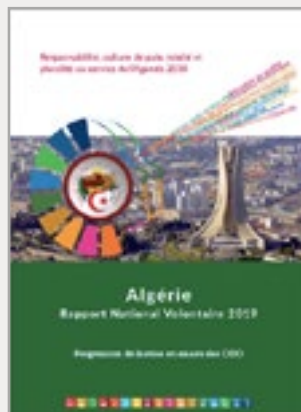
Figures 80-90: Croatia 2019 VNR, cartoon for children; Lesotho 2019 VNR, traditional straw hats; Kazakhstan 2019 VNR, landmark monument; Mauritius 2019 VNR, traditional market, women in traditional headwear in market; Kazakhstan 2019 VNR, public landmark tower; New Zealand 2019 VNR, weaving pattern, child's face painted; Timor Leste 2019 VNR, traditional boat, indigenous animal (crocodile) motif, traditional village and men in traditional costumes, women in traditional headwear
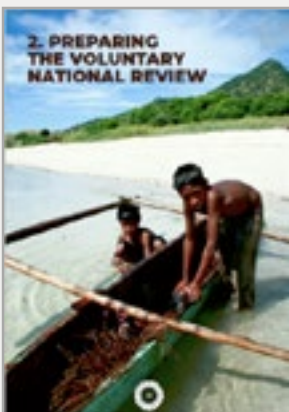
Figures 91-102: Turkey 2019 VNR, whirling dervish, traditional cuisine; Iceland 2019 VNR, wooden bridge over river; Indonesia 2019 VNR, Borobudur ancient site, historic church buildings, ancient sites,; Israel 2019 VNR, Bahai Gardens, parliament building, World Heritage site; Kuwait 2019 VNR, water towers; Pakistan 2019 VNR, traditional animal husbandry, girls in traditional headwear
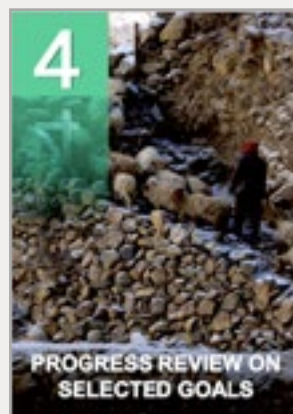
Figures 103-106: Cameroon 2019 VNR, minister headshot with traditional headwear; Cameroon 2019 VNR, public artwork and monument; Cameroon 2019 VNR, women in traditional headwear; Tunisia 2019 VNR, women in traditional headwear

d_ Other Documents and Activities of 2019

Among the 148 inputs made to HLPF 2019, beside the 47 national inputs (VNRs), there are 67 from Intergovernmental Forums and Bodies, 33 from Major Groups and Other Stakeholders (MGoS), 1 from Partnerships and Voluntary Commitments. Some inputs with noteworthy culture references among the 37 results yielded by a 'culture' keyword search (based on the summary page, unless only the full report is available) include:

- International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

- International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)

- Non-Governmental Organizations Major Group - Position Paper

- Stakeholder Group on Ageing - Position Paper

- United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF)

- United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names (UNGEGN)

- World Federation of Engineering Organizations (WFEO) - Para 89

- World Heritage Committee (policy recommendation: 2015 Policy for the integration of a sustainable development perspective into the processes of the Convention)

At HLPF 2019, ICOMOS was present as a speaker at a side event "SDG 8, Leave No One Behind: The 2030 GDP Target - Vulnerable People and the Regions Where They Live"., and with its substantive contributions to the position statement of the NGO Major Group.

While the HLPF has been held July since 2016 under the auspices of ECOSOC, it is also scheduled to convene under the auspices of the General Assembly (in its 74th Session) as 2019 is also the time when the first cycle of review for all SDGs is completed. The so-called SDG Summit will be held on 24–25 September 2019, with the theme 'Accelerating the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development', whereby Heads of State and Government, as opposed to ministerial level delegates, will gather at the United Nations Headquarters in New York to follow up and comprehensively review progress in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The event is the first UN summit on the SDGs since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda in September 2015.

This year in the July HLPF, there has been no Ministerial Declaration issued, as it has been deferred to the September HLPF (SDG Summit) to issue this outcome document, i.e. the **Political Declaration**. The final draft agreed by States Parties of the HLPF 2019 Political Declaration, issued in July 2, 2019, has no mention at all of culture or cultural themes. This disappointing result takes the status of HLPF declarations further behind than the previous year.

The UCLG 3ʳᵈ Culture Summit was held on 3-5 April 2019 in Buenos Aires, tackling the key themes of 'Culture in the SDGs: towards 2030','A gender perspective in cultural policies', 'Implementing Culture 21 Actions',' Social Transformation and Culture' and 'Independent culture'. Held biennially, the UCLG Culture Summit is a unique global event, which sends strong messages on the role of culture in development and enables the sharing of experiences and innovations from cities across the world.

To mark the 70th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the **Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural rights** examined the cultural rights approach to the universality of human rights and the close interrelationship between universality and cultural diversity. In her report, Karima Bennoune documents "different types of threats to the human rights system and cultural diversity, and in particular selective approaches to universality – excluding certain rights, certain persons or groups and recognizing only civil and political or economic, social and cultural rights as real human rights – and various cultural relativist arguments. While pointing towards abuse of cultural arguments to justify violations of human rights, she also demonstrates how cultural diversity and cultural rights contribute to strengthening the universal framework of human rights. She calls for a foundational renewal and vigorous defence of **universality that is grounded in cultural diversity**."

2.3.5_ Key Findings on VNRs and Inter-governmental Inputs

a_ Keyword Analysis Results for All Years

The keyword analysis done for all of the 135[20] VNRs submitted of 2016-19 reveals that the countries with the **ten most frequent references** to 'culture' and 'cultural', in terms of number of keyword occurrences (average of their VNRs over multiple years), proportional to total number of pages, were Italy (0.80), **Cyprus** (0.78), **Palau** (0.73), **Greece** (0.68), **New Zealand** (0.65), **Portugal** (0.60), **Serbia** (0.57), **Latvia** (0.57), **Turkey** (0.54) and **Qatar** (0.53). The remaining 125 countries (90% of total VNR-submitting countries) are behind the 0.50-words/page mark and 88 countries (65%) are below the **average** of 0.17 words/page (see Table 1: Use of keywords 'culture' and 'cultural' in VNRs by country, 2016-19). Perhaps **a target for the coming years** could be to raise the number of countries surpassing the 0.50 mark to 50%, i.e. half of the VNRs using at least one 'culture'/ 'cultural' term per 2 pages.

Table 1: Use of keywords 'culture' and 'cultural', and their ratios within the reports, in VNRs by country, 2016-19											
Countries	2016 No. Words	2016 Words / Pgs	2017 No. Words	2017 Words / Pgs	2018 No. Words	2018 Words / Pgs	2019 No. Words	2019 Words / Pgs	**Average No. Words**	Total No. Pages	Total Words /Pages	Rank
Afghanistan			1	0.01					**1**	81	0.01	135
Albania					8	0.07			**8**	108	0.07	99
Algeria							24	0.14	**24**	176	0.14	69
Andorra					51	0.44			**51**	116	0.44	12
Argentina			54	0.42					**54**	130	0.42	14
Armenia					5	0.06			**5**	82	0.06	104
Australia					31	0.23			**31**	132	0.23	31
Azerbaijan			12	0.17			17	0.12	**15**	103	0.14	67
Bahamas					11	0.07			**11**	159	0.07	102
Bahrain					45	0.42			**45**	106	0.42	13
Bangladesh			2	0.02					**2**	82	0.02	132
Belgium			12	0.13					**12**	95	0.13	73
Belize			10	0.20					**10**	51	0.20	36
Benin			5	0.06	6	0.07			**6**	86	0.06	103
Bhutan					14	0.16			**14**	86	0.16	49
Bosnia Herzegovina							5	0.05	**5**	96	0.05	115
Botswana			2	0.03					**2**	60	0.03	127
Brazil			8	0.20					**8**	41	0.20	37
Burkina Faso							12	0.10	**12**	117	0.10	88
Cabo Verde					13	0.15			**13**	86	0.15	58
Cambodia							7	0.06	**7**	116	0.06	109
Cameroon							21	0.11	**21**	200	0.11	86
Canada					47	0.32			**47**	148	0.32	22

20. 70% of all 193 State Parties have submitted VNRs, while nine countries (Azerbaijan, Chile, Colombia, Egypt, Indonesia, Mexico, Qatar, Turkey and Uruguay) have submitted twice and one country (Togo) three times

Countries	2016 No. Words	2016 Words / Pgs	2017 No. Words	2017 Words / Pgs	2018 No. Words	2018 Words / Pgs	2019 No. Words	2019 Words / Pgs	Average No. Words	Total No. Pages	Total Words /Pages	Rank
Central African Republic							10	0.08	**10**	120	0.08	95
Chad							7	0.06	**7**	116	0.06	107
Chile			7	0.05			35	0.14	**21**	195	0.11	69
Colombia	4	0.05			12	0.11			**8**	105	0.08	96
Costa Rica			20	0.17					**20**	119	0.17	46
Cote d'Ivoire							36	0.24	**36**	153	0.24	30
Croatia							19	0.17	**19**	109	0.17	43
Cyprus			63	0.78					**63**	81	0.78	2
Czech Republic			5	0.13					**5**	40	0.13	74
Denmark			5	0.04					**5**	140	0.04	125
Dominican Republic					4	0.01			**4**	274	0.01	134
Ecuador					75	0.37			**75**	202	0.37	17
Egypt	8	0.14			3	0.04			**6**	131	0.04	122
El Salvador			10	0.20					**10**	50	0.20	35
Estonia	20	0.33							**20**	60	0.33	21
Eswatini							3	0.04	**3**	79	0.04	124
Ethiopia			3	0.06					**3**	52	0.06	109
Finland	10	0.16							**10**	64	0.16	57
France	7	0.13							**7**	53	0.13	70
Georgia	0	0.00							**0**	16	0.00	136
Germany	3	0.05							**3**	59	0.05	117
Ghana							4	0.03	**4**	118	0.03	126
Greece					108	0.68			**108**	160	0.68	4
Guatemala			15	0.05					**15**	277	0.05	111
Guinea					13	0.11			**13**	122	0.11	84
Guyana							26	0.14	**26**	180	0.14	63
Honduras			0	0.00					**0**	52	0.00	137
Hungary					14	0.16			**14**	85	0.16	48
Iceland							24	0.16	**24**	151	0.16	53
India			2	0.05					**2**	41	0.05	120
Indonesia			10	0.07			39	0.13	**25**	218	0.11	82
Iraq							11	0.12	**11**	95	0.12	78
Ireland					28	0.09			**28**	300	0.09	90
Israel							75	0.17	**75**	430	0.17	42
Italy			40	0.80					**40**	50	0.80	1
Jamaica					27	0.17			**27**	163	0.17	47
Japan			3	0.06					**3**	52	0.06	110
Jordan			15	0.21					**15**	70	0.21	34
Kazakhstan							25	0.16	**25**	159	0.16	54
Kenya			11	0.14					**11**	76	0.14	62

Countries	2016 No. Words	2016 Words / Pgs	2017 No. Words	2017 Words / Pgs	2018 No. Words	2018 Words / Pgs	2019 No. Words	2019 Words / Pgs	Average No. Words	Total No. Pages	Total Words /Pages	Rank
Kuwait							14	0.12	**14**	115	0.12	75
Lao					12	0.09			**12**	130	0.09	91
Latvia					36	0.57			**36**	63	0.57	8
Lebanon					26	0.28			**26**	94	0.28	26
Lesotho							4	0.03	**4**	145	0.03	131
Liechtenstein							13	0.17	**13**	77	0.17	45
Lithuania					20	0.29			**20**	70	0.29	25
Luxembourg			12	0.26					**12**	46	0.26	28
Madagascar	0	0.00							**0**	42	0.00	138
Malaysia			6	0.07					**6**	82	0.07	100
Maldives			2	0.07					**2**	28	0.07	101
Mali					6	0.09			**6**	70	0.09	94
Malta					42	0.34			**42**	122	0.34	19
Mauritania							8	0.08	**8**	96	0.08	33
Mauritius							22	0.16	**22**	140	0.16	55
Mexico	24	0.21			7	0.04			**16**	137	0.11	81
Monaco			2	0.03					**2**	70	0.03	130
Mongolia							5	0.05	**5**	97	0.05	116
Montenegro	67	0.41							**67**	163	0.41	15
Morocco	2	0.18							**2**	11	0.18	39
Namibia					7	0.16			**7**	44	0.16	52
Nepal			6	0.12					**6**	52	0.12	79
Netherlands			12	0.27					**12**	44	0.27	27
New Zealand							41	0.65	**41**	63	0.65	5
Niger					11	0.15			**11**	75	0.15	61
Nigeria			2	0.02					**2**	100	0.02	133
Norway	3	0.10							**3**	29	0.10	87
Pakistan							4	0.05	**4**	81	0.05	119
Palau							78	0.73	**78**	107	0.73	3
Palestine					20	0.16			**20**	128	0.16	56
Panama			15	0.14					**15**	106	0.14	66
Paraguay					5	0.05			**5**	100	0.05	118
Peru			5	0.07					**5**	67	0.07	98
Philippines	5	0.19					5	0.10	**5**	38	0.13	71
Poland					12	0.11			**12**	106	0.11	80
Portugal			53	0.60					**53**	89	0.60	6
Qatar			17	0.35	34	0.71			**26**	48	0.53	10
R. Congo							14	0.12	**14**	119	0.12	77
R.Korea	4	0.12							**4**	34	0.12	76
Romania					35	0.37			**35**	94	0.37	16
Rwanda							11	0.09	**11**	124	0.09	93

Countries	2016 No. Words	2016 Words / Pgs	2017 No. Words	2017 Words / Pgs	2018 No. Words	2018 Words / Pgs	2019 No. Words	2019 Words / Pgs	Average No. Words	Total No. Pages	Total Words /Pages	Rank
Saint Lucia							2	0.04	2	51	0.04	123
Saudi Arabia					30	0.31			30	96	0.31	23
Senegal					22	0.14			22	153	0.14	64
Serbia							59	0.57	59	103	0.57	7
Sierra Leone	3	0.05							3	56	0.05	112
Singapore					20	0.24			20	84	0.24	29
Slovakia					2	0.06			2	33	0.06	106
Slovenia			18	0.23					18	78	0.23	32
South Africa							4	0.03	4	130	0.03	129
Spain					61	0.34			61	181	0.34	20
Sri Lanka					6	0.05			6	115	0.05	114
Sudan					18	0.29			18	62	0.29	24
Sweden			13	0.15					13	88	0.15	59
Switzerland	2	0.07			6	0.21			4	28	0.14	65
Tajikistan			2	0.04					2	46	0.04	121
Tanzania							6	0.03	6	186	0.03	128
Thailand			10	0.11					10	94	0.11	85
Timor Leste							18	0.09	18	198	0.09	92
Togo	3	0.09	4	0.09	0	0.00			2	37	0.06	104
Tonga							11	0.13	11	84	0.13	72
Tunisia							27	0.18	27	148	0.18	37
Turkey	7	0.14					64	0.43	36	66	0.54	9
Turkmenistan							8	0.10	8	79	0.10	89
Uganda	13	0.11							13	118	0.11	83
United Arab Emirates			34	0.47					34	73	0.47	11
United Kingdom							38	0.16	38	235	0.16	50
Uruguay			59	0.19	54	0.17			57	316	0.18	40
Vanuatu							34	0.35	34	97	0.35	18
Venezuela	42	0.15							42	285	0.15	60
Viet Nam					15	0.16			15	94	0.16	51
Zimbabwe			10	0.17					10	58	0.17	44
TOTAL	227		597		1022		890		2736	14392		
AVERAGE	11	0.13	14	0.17	23	0.21	21	0.16	19	107	0.17	

In comparing the top 20 scorers for the culture term in the VNR against UNWTO[21] and World Economic Forum[22] international tourism rankings, it is interesting to observe a small correlation, where three countries that scored high in the VNR also score high in tourism globally. However, the correlation of prioritising culture in VNRs and the role of tourism in the national economy may also be assumed for countries will smaller populations but still popular tourism destinations/tourism-dependent economies, such as Greece and Cyprus.

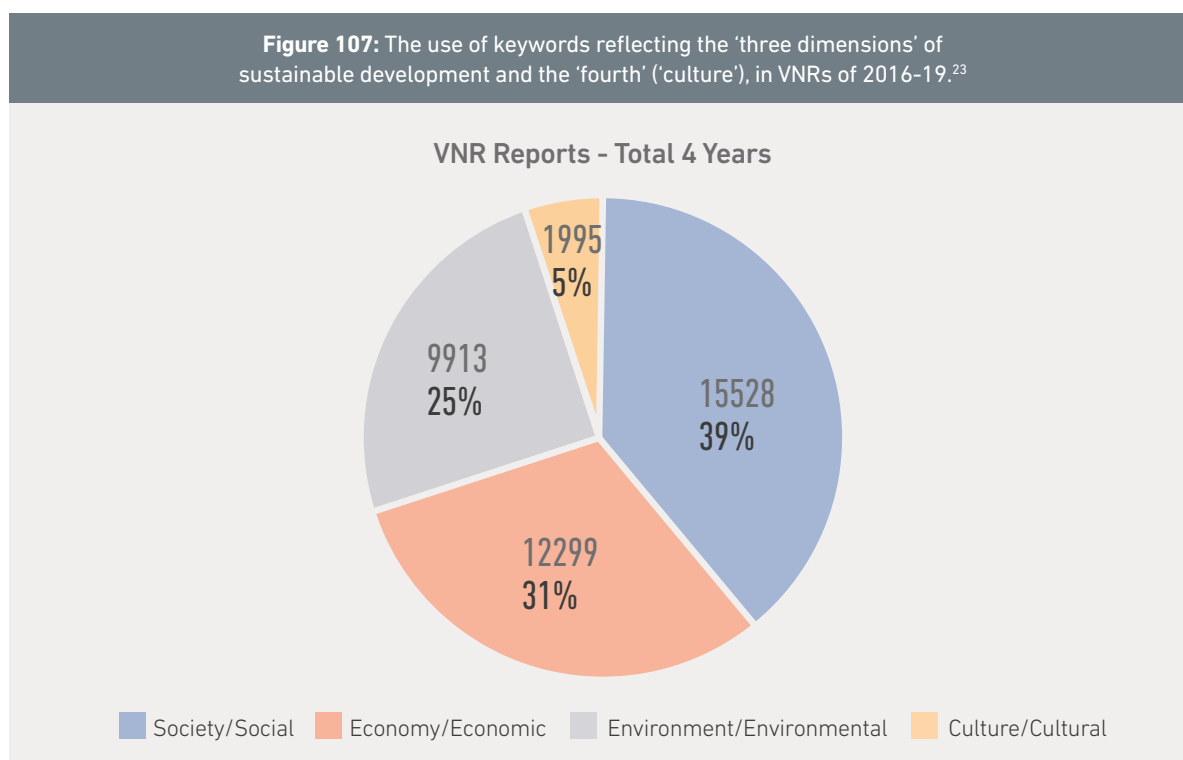21. UNWTO, 2019, International Tourism Highlights, https://www.e-unwto.org/doi/pdf/10.18111/9789284421152
22. World Economic Forum, 2019, The Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Report, http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_TTCR_2019.pdf

Culture(al) in VNR Rank		2019 Tourist Arrivals Rank	2019 Tourist Receipts Rank
1: Italy	11: United Arab Emirates	1: France (70 in VNR)	1: United States of America*
2: Cyprus	12: Andorra	2: Spain (20 in VNR)	2: Spain (20 in VNR)
3: Palau	13: Bahrain	3: United States of America*	3: France (70 in VNR)
4: Greece	14: Argentina	4: China*	4: Thailand (85 in VNR)
5: New Zealand	15: Montenegro	5: Italy (1 in VNR)	5: United Kingdom (50 in VNR)
6: Portugal	16: Romania	6: Turkey (9 in VNR)	6: Italy (1 in VNR)
7: Serbia	17: Ecuador	7: Mexico (81 in VNR)	7: Australia (31 in VNR)
8: Latvia	18: Vanuatu	8: Germany (117 in VNR)	8: Germany (117 in VNR)
9: Turkey	19: Malta	9: Thailand (85 in VNR)	9: Japan (110 in VNR)
10: Qatar	20: Spain	10: United Kingdom (50 in VNR)	10: China*

* Countries with no VNR submitted or evaluated in this report.

The fact that the cultural dimension of sustainable development lags significantly behind the other three recognized dimensions is evidenced in the keyword analysis of the VNRs, i.e. the number of mentions in texts of the full VNR reports. If one were to imagine a baseline of equal consideration of all four dimensions and examine how the VNRs deviate from this in their frequency, the total number of mentions, for all four years, stands at 5% for cultural, 39% for social, 31% for economic and 25% for environmental (See Figure 107). In other words, there are eight times as many references to social, six to economic, and five to environmental compared to cultural. We would like to see an increase in the share of the cultural dimension in the coming years, to a level closer to 25% of all dimensions, and at least as much as the environmental. As countries would internalize their consideration of culture in all its dimensions, we believe the VNR reports would reflect it in these figures.

Figure 107: The use of keywords reflecting the 'three dimensions' of sustainable development and the 'fourth' ('culture'), in VNRs of 2016-19.[23]

VNR Reports – Total 4 Years

1995 5%
9913 25%
15528 39%
12299 31%

■ Society/Social ■ Economy/Economic ■ Environment/Environmental ■ Culture/Cultural

23. Note: The term 'socio-economic' has been equally divided and added to those of 'social' and 'economic'.

Among culture-related terms encountered, keywords standing out, in order of highest to lowest frequency, are '**knowledge**' (2337), '**tradition**(al)', (1883) '**culture**(s)' (1178), '**buildings**' (958), '**character**' (792), '**heritage**' (753), '**design**(ers)' (714). In contrast, some other keywords that are central to cultural concerns, such as 'conservation' in the cultural sense, 'intangible', 'libraries', 'literature', 'museums', and 'music', are noticeably absent from most reports.

Mention of **UNESCO and World Heritage** would also have been expected to be featured more often, as World Heritage Sites, as well as other UNESCO labels, offer readily available ways for countries to promote their achievements as attractive and livable places.[24]

To delve slightly deeper into the usage of terms, '**culture**' is used most often by itself (including of national, ethnic, social groups) (718), '**culture(s) of**' (green entrepreneurship, cycling, sustainability, peace, recreation, understanding of rights, preservation of life) (228), and with **descriptive adjectives** (organizational, business, etc) (153).

As for '**cultural**', this is used most often in the contexts of 'cultural **heritage**' (279), 'cultural **institutions**' (Ministry of Culture or equivalent, and others) (85), cultural **diversity**(es) (70) and cultural **rights** (36). 'Culture' by itself lends itself to a diverse range of uses, both as a sector, a concept and a more ambivalent signifier of society's ways of life and practice. Not surprisingly, heritage is the most widely associated field with which to associate culture, also reflected in its having a dedicated Target (11.4). (See Figure 108.)

When examining important terms outside of the culture field, but which have particular affinities with culture, one observes that '**gender**' (13092), '**education**' (12060), '**resources**' (9407), '**cities**'/ 'urban' (7120) and '**quality**' (6812) stand out as frequent mentions in the VNRs. Education is indeed a primary theme with which culture is connected in the reports, which must be supported by Target 4.7.

While 'cities' are technically the most important context for culture discussions, owing to Target 11.4 and the cultural heritage connection, this is only a moderately widespread topic, showing that **there is potential beyond the 'Urban Goal' for culture discussions**. It seems worthwhile to explore the potentials of 'gender' and 'resource conservation' as themes in which cultural actors can engage further

An analysis of the use of certain culture-related terms in direct cultural contexts or with indirect, generic meanings shows that while words such as conservation, protection and preservation are important terms for cultural heritage, they are more often used in contexts of **social** (e.g. children, women, labour rights, etc.) and **environmental** (nature) **protection**, rather than cultural. The exception is the term 'tradition(al)', used in mostly in context of 'traditional way of life'/ 'livelihood' (fisheries) (632), as 'traditional buildings'/ 'settlements'/ 'neighbo(ur)hoods' (429), by itself ('tradition(s)') and as 'traditional knowledge'.

---

24. This may be an area where UNESCO National Commissions have a role to enable improvement.

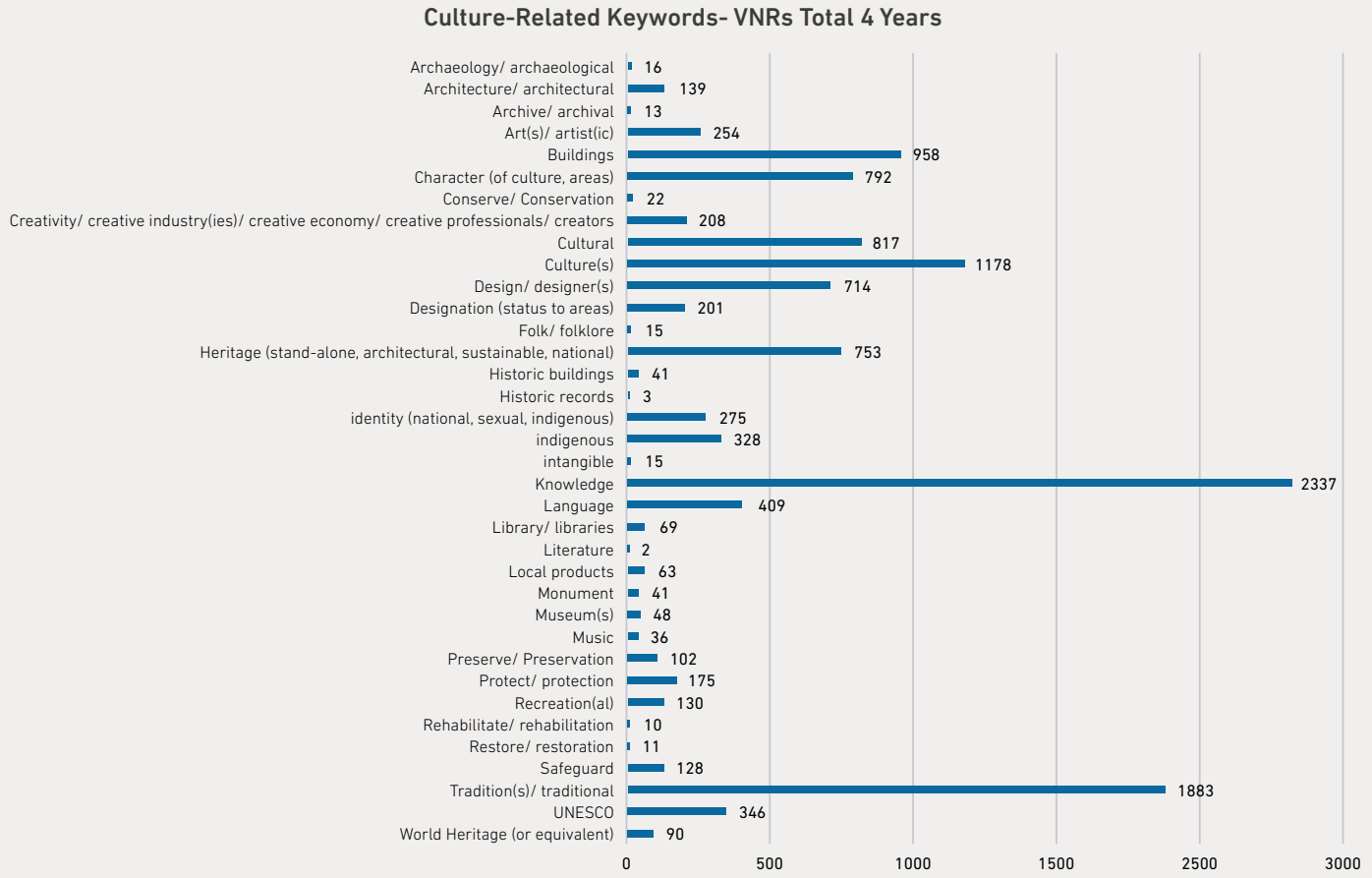**Figure 108:** Breakdown of culture-related keywords, 2016–19.

Culture-Related Keywords- VNRs Total 4 Years

Keyword	Value
Archaeology/ archaeological	16
Architecture/ architectural	139
Archive/ archival	13
Art(s)/ artist(ic)	254
Buildings	958
Character (of culture, areas)	792
Conserve/ Conservation	22
Creativity/ creative industry(ies)/ creative economy/ creative professionals/ creators	208
Cultural	817
Culture(s)	1178
Design/ designer(s)	714
Designation (status to areas)	201
Folk/ folklore	15
Heritage (stand-alone, architectural, sustainable, national)	753
Historic buildings	41
Historic records	3
identity (national, sexual, indigenous)	275
indigenous	328
intangible	15
Knowledge	2337
Language	409
Library/ libraries	69
Literature	2
Local products	63
Monument	41
Museum(s)	48
Music	36
Preserve/ Preservation	102
Protect/ protection	175
Recreation(al)	130
Rehabilitate/ rehabilitation	10
Restore/ restoration	11
Safeguard	128
Tradition(s)/ traditional	1883
UNESCO	346
World Heritage (or equivalent)	90

Figure 109: Breakdown of keywords related to other fields but having affinity with culture, 2016–19.

Other Keywords - Total of 4 years

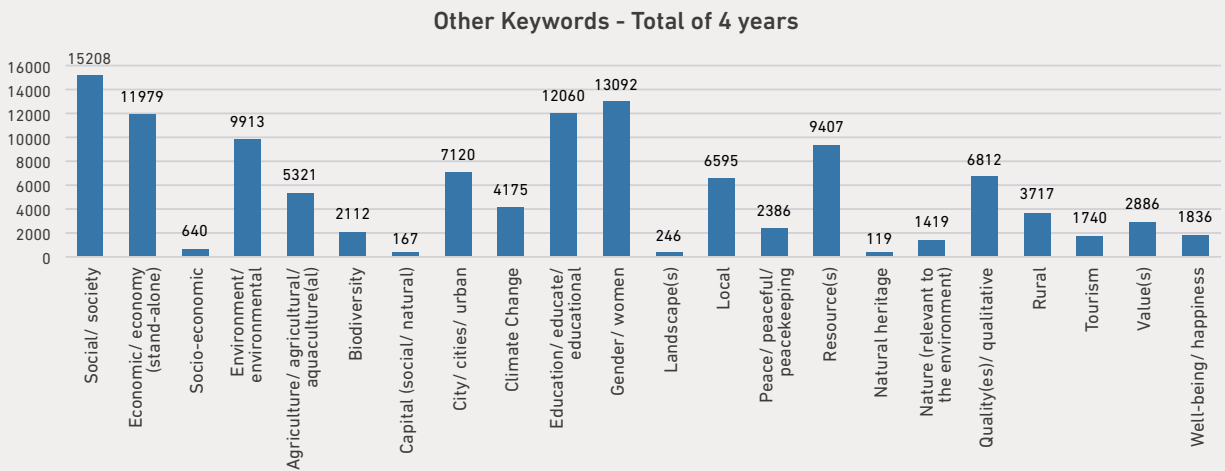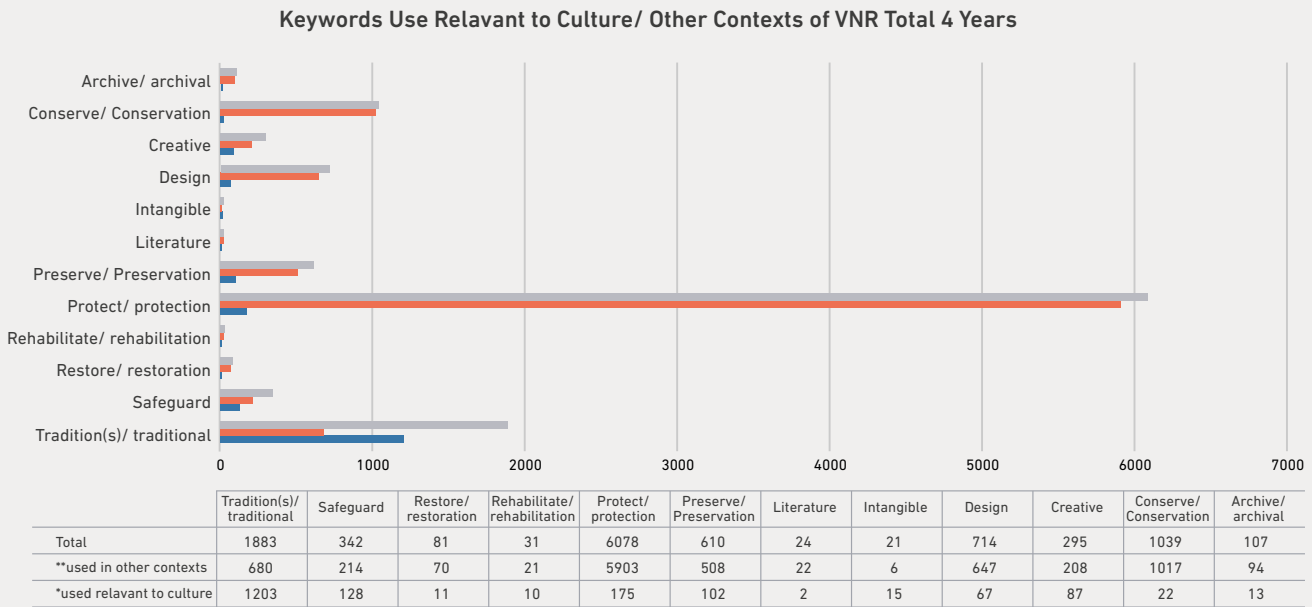| Keyword	Value
Social/ society	15208
Economic/ economy (stand-alone)	11979
Socio-economic	640
Environment/ environmental	9913
Agriculture/ agricultural/ aquaculture(al)	5321
Biodiversity	2112
Capital (social/ natural)	167
City/ cities/ urban	7120
Climate Change	4175
Education/ educate/ educational	12060
Gender/ women	13092
Landscape(s)	246
Local	6595
Peace/ peaceful/ peacekeeping	2386
Resource(s)	9407
Natural heritage	119
Nature (relevant to the environment)	1419
Quality(es)/ qualitative	6812
Rural	3717
Tourism	1740
Value(s)	2886
Well-being/ happiness	1836

Figure 110: Comparison of culture-related keywords used in direct, cultural contexts and used with indirect, more generic meanings, 2016-19.

Keywords Use Relevant to Culture/ Other Contexts of VNR Total 4 Years

	Tradition(s)/ traditional	Safeguard	Restore/ restoration	Rehabilitate/ rehabilitation	Protect/ protection	Preserve/ Preservation	Literature	Intangible	Design	Creative	Conserve/ Conservation	Archive/ archival
Total	1883	342	81	31	6078	610	24	21	714	295	1039	107
**used in other contexts	680	214	70	21	5903	508	22	6	647	208	1017	94
*used relevant to culture	1203	128	11	10	175	102	2	15	67	87	22	13

Looking at the use of the terms 'culture'/ 'cultural' over the four years of VNRs, one observes a steady rate of about 0.16 for most years, except for a slight increase in 2018 to 0.20, which should be a reflection of SDG11 and thus Target 11.4 being reviewed that year.

Figure 111: Ratio of the keywords 'culture' and 'cultural' within VNR reports over the years 2016-19.

Ratio of Keywords 'Culture-Cultural' / Total Pages of VNRs

Year	Ratio
2016	0,165
2017	0,162
2018	0,20
2019	0,157
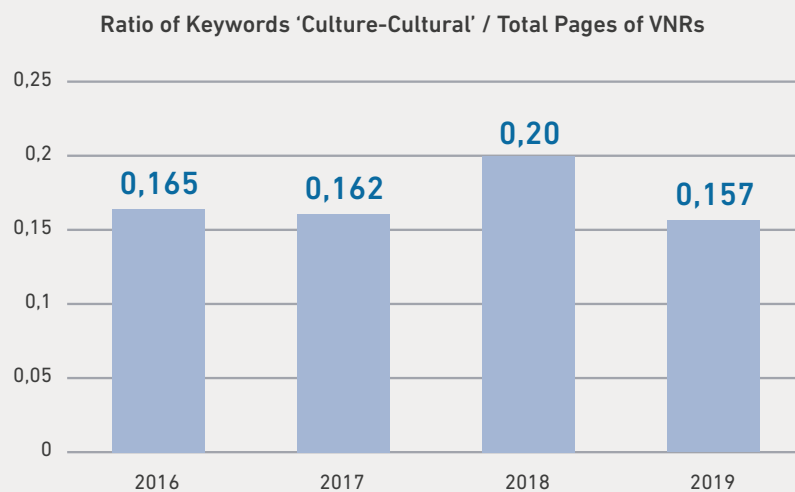
We have also noticed that 32 'suggested keywords' are listed on the <u>VNR webpage</u>, but culture is not included among these.

Figure 112: Un Webpage of VNR reports, with 'suggested keywords' on the left section.

b_ Approaches to Engaging with Culture in the VNRs

There is a great range and diversity of references to culture identified throughout the VNR texts. These are found in all sections of the reports, from executive summaries, leadership forewords, introductions, sections on 'Preparation of the Report' (consultations with cultural agencies and NGOs), 'Enabling policy environment', 'Means of Implementation', dedicated sections to each Goal, and others including 'Thematic analysis', 'National Priorities' and 'Next Steps'.

Some exemplary approaches are cited below from seven countries; mostly from the highest scorers for the terms 'culture'/ 'cultural', as well as some countries outside the top ten (Argentina and Vanuatu), for their highly interesting and inspiring content.[25]

Montenegro (2016), in its Introduction, identifies as one of ten key elements of their vision for sustainable development, their openness and diversity of culture, in terms of heritage and cultural expression, highlighting their prominent natural, landscape and cultural values preserved and used in support of sustainable development.

Argentina (2017) has developed a detailed set of 11.4 national indicators, including registering movable cultural property in computer systems; immovable cultural property entering into official stock of patrimony; organizations and people trained in conservation and rescue of cultural property; manifestations of intangible cultural heritage surveyed and registered; assets declared as per the cultural heritage law; year increase in budget allocated for the preservation of declared assets.

Greece (2018) has mentioned that culture is one of their national priorities, and that their National Research and Innovation Strategy in a thematic sector on 'Culture - Creative Industries & Tourism'. In terms of the Means of Implementation (policy coherence and interlinkages), there is a robust section for the Cultural sector, whereby it is explained that their main strategic plan for growth mainstreams culture in practically all programmes, that cultural heritage -along with tourism and the cultural and creative industries- is one of the eight priority sectors with a substantial contribution to economic growth. Greece explicitly states that the safeguarding and promotion of culture contributes directly and indirectly to achieving many of the SDGs.

Latvia (2018) sets the development of cultural space as a priority in their 2030 plan, identifies among the country's strengths the quality of natural and cultural capital and the importance of nature and culture in the eyes of society, positions nature and culture as the enabling environment that makes Latvia attractive for life, work and leisure and promotes good relations among its people. Latvia also asserts that for an innovative economy to succeed, society as a whole must be creative, and that culture fosters this type of creativity and abstract thinking.

Palau (2019), has entitled their VNR "Pathway to 2030: Progressing with Our Past", and makes repeated reference to this theme, using examples of traditional and indigenous practices. Palau places culture at the top of the VNR vision. This VNR has also clearly pointed out the problem this report has been underlining: while culture (explored under Target 11.4) is a very important element of sustainability and a high priority target from a Palau perspective, it is not fully explored elsewhere in the SDGs.

---

25. There may be other VNR reports with exemplary content, which we did not include, as we focused on the 'high scorers' for ease of the scanning exercise given our very limited time resources.

Serbia (2019) takes culture as a cross-cutting policy, and a model example of incorporating the SDGs into national framework, for growing into sustainability by creating new patterns of cultural life styles, and life values of sustainability and sustainable development. This VNR has developed a detailed cultural policy incorporating the SDGs, including managing disaster risks in the field of cultural heritage; the report explains how the country has also applied UNESCO's Culture for Development Indicators (CDIS) at the national level, coming up with some statistical data-based conclusions regarding the need to increase the consumption of cultural goods in households and facilitate higher market potential of cultural industries.

New Zealand (2019) has tailored their Living Standards Framework and Indicators, to reflect their unique culture, incorporating topics such as culture, identity and land, and partnering with their indigenous Māori community to develop indicators based on concepts of wellbeing.

Vanuatu (2019), perhaps most interesting of all, has effectively created its own 'Culture Goal', in a new formulation of the sustainability framework, whereby 12 goals are divided into social, environmental and economic themes, and the first goal, a social one, is titled 'Vibrant Cultural Identity'. This Goal, SOC.1 is elaborated in detail into seven sub-themes, including indigenous languages, traditional knowledge, cultural heritage sites, integration into education curriculum, traditional economy and traditional governance systems.

Beside specific model practices such as the above-cited, the general trend observed in VNRs show that the types of reference to culture fall into a few categories, including generic, non-action references; culture as an end in itself; culture as an enabler of other ends (cultural industries and jobs, promoting wellbeing, promoting tolerance); engagement of culture ministries/ agencies in consultation, coordination and executive mechanisms; and innovative practices (e.g. having a clear section on culture policy and programmes, or focusing on cultural indicators).

The **main themes or entry points for culture** are observed to include the following:

- Culture is sometimes placed at the top of the VNR **vision**, such as in the title (e.g. Progressing with Our Past) or as the first **Goal**. There are several cases where it is also cited as a **strategic** goal or element of the national strategic vision/ priorities, as a fundamental **value**, or as an element of a **country's strength and identity**. It can also be cited alongside social, economic dimensions of sustainability.

- Culture has been cited as a sustainability vector, notably for **human and social capital** (SDG8), and **social cohesion** (SDG16), an enabler that makes the country attractive and **livable**, as a vehicle for fostering peace and combatting hatred (SDG 16), in conjunction with **education** (SDG4) for a culture of peace as well as for broader citizenship and the development of arts and crafts, as a driver of the **creativity, innovativeness and productivity** of a country (SDG8, SDG9), as part of national **youth** strategies and youth empowerment, as well as of the empowerment of all **women** and girls (e.g. Pachamama) (SDG5) and as a basis for citizens' **quality of life** and personality development and healthy lifestyles (SDG3).

- Culture is identified as a key a **policy enabling / accelerating tool** (harmonization of sectoral strategies and the roles and responsibilities within society, within the context of social resources; related to 'common knowledge' or traditional wisdom (for example as an enabler of the pillars of **People and Planet**), creating national ownership and delivering messages; adapting to national contexts based on unique local culture; developing a culture of sustainability) (SDG17)

- Culture is seen as a worthwhile objective in itself, notably cultural **diversity**, cultural expressions and multiculturalism (SDG10, 16), access to culture as an essential service (SDG1), the preservation of cultural **heritage**, together with natural heritage and **landscape** values (target 11.4, SDG14, SDG15), the fight against cultural property **crimes** and illicit trafficking (SDG16)

- References are made to related issues, such as the close link between **natural and cultural resources** (e.g. in context of traditional agriculture) (SDG2, target 11.4, SDG 12, SDG 14, SDG 15), **indigenous** rights, in context of **land** (SDG10, SDG15), to **cities** and urban policy (SDG11), resilience (SDG11, SDG13) and volunteering (SDG17):

- Some references are also made to **UNESCO**, in context of **World Heritage**, the Culture Conventions, and the Youth Forum (target 11.4, SDG14, SDG16)

- Efforts and challenges are demonstrated in **quantifying** progress in culture, i.e. developing new **indicator** sets.

In terms of **Goals and Targets**, it is interesting to observe **that a few SDGs are the focus** of attention in relating culture with sustainable development, which also reflect the text of the 2030 Agenda: **SDG4** (Education), **SDG11** (Cities and Human Settlements) and **SDG16** (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions) are the most closely cited, while SDG8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) and **SDG12** (Sustainable Consumption and Production) are also relatively common.

Among other Goals, the narratives of VNR reports **implicitly suggest connections** with SDG1 (No Poverty), 2 (End Hunger), 5 (Gender Equality), 9 (Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure), 10 (Reduce Inequalities), 13 (Climate Action), 14 (Life under Water), 15 (Life on Land) and 17 (Partnerships), while they seem to be missing this connection for SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation) and 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy).

An interesting trend is the implicit presence and usage of cultural themes throughout the VNRs, while they may not be acknowledged as such.

There is plenty of **visual material presenting the best of nations' cultural heritage** (around 15 countries using prominent photographs and images in their cover pages, and more than 70 countries using them within their reports). These range from historic towns, architecture, ancient sites and landscapes representing the nations' tangible cultural heritage, to intangible heritage elements such as traditional dress and textiles, markets, products and handicrafts. Many **visual unique identifiers** of nations' distinctiveness, from national symbols and decorative motifs to style of dress, are used in a more diffused manner, to enhance the tone and power of countries' individual messages. This somehow testifies to the almost universal understanding of tangible and intangible cultural aspects as being elements of national pride and distinction, and potentially key resources in personal and collective well-being and development.

However, as in the case of text of the 2030 Agenda, this often remains taken for granted in the minds of decision-makers but not written explicitly in the texts of the formal documents.

2.4
PRESENCE OF CULTURE IN SDG REVIEWS AT LOCAL LEVEL (VLRS)

2.4.1_ Overview

Since 2016, the HLPF has involved member states in the submission of national reports – the VNRs – to assess the state of implementation of the SDGs. Member states have committed to present at least two VNRs each by 2030. To assist them, the office of the UN Secretary General (UNSG) issued a set of guidelines for the production of the VNRs. The VNRs submitted in 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019 have been analysed in previous chapters of this document, looking for evidences of involvement of cultural narratives, actors, policies and programmes in the reporting process.

A significant part of the SDGs are implemented at the **sub-national and local level**; thus, **cities and regions**, and their governments, play a vital role in the achievement of all 17 SDGs. This has prompted a number of cities to develop their own strategies to implement the SDGs, as well as many awareness-raising and capacity-building activities to ensure that local services align their work with the SDGs. Furthermore, some cities have increasingly engaged in monitoring and accountability initiatives, as the examples hereafter demonstrate.[26]

In **2017**, the city of **Deqing** elaborated a "Progress Report on Implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development".

In **2018**, during the HLPF, some local governments took the initiative to present their own reports – a **Voluntary Local Review (VLR)** – to showcase their contribution to the realization of the SDGs.

- The city of **New York**, host of the UN, presented the 'New York City's Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development' report to the HLPF.

- Three municipalities in Japan – **Kitakyushu, Shimokawa** and **Toyama** – also produced their own SDG reports.

- **Mexico City** elaborated a local review on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in the city.

- The City of **San Antonio** developed and implemented a methodology to map the Targets and Goals the city is already meeting and has begun an internal detailed review of specific programs implementing the SDGs. The goal is to create an SDG toolkit for other U.S. cities

In **2019**, other cities have joined this mechanism and published reports to showcase their contribution to the realization of the SDGs:

- **Helsinki** and **Bristol** elaborated and published documents presented as VLRs.

- The cities of **Buenos Aires** and **Santana de Parnaíba**, as well as the **State of Oaxaca** elaborated and published documents presented as VLRs.

- The city of **Los Angeles** also elaborated a document presented as VLR.

- **Barcelona** elaborated a local review on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in the city.

---

26. Because of this, UCLG advocates for the 'localization of the SDGs', namely, for distinct local challenges and opportunities to be taken into account in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

Some of these local governments have used the **UNSG guidelines** for the elaboration of the VNRs. It is interesting to highlight that, according to UCLG, "the idea of picking up the **same structure of the national reports** is in itself a testament to the ambition of local governments to take part as peers in the reporting process. It also allows for comparisons across the reporting activities of a very diverse – albeit small – sample of aware, active cities: New York's metro area has a population of over 20 million. Shimokawa is a 3,000-people village in a municipal territory larger than Tōkyō's in the middle of Hokkaido's countryside".[27]

UNDESA affirms "local and regional governments have a wealth of valuable experience in the "**localization**" of the 2030 Agenda, where they provide **leadership in the mobilization** of a wide range of stakeholders".[28] The VLR and similar reports can be seen, as the Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES) states, as a mechanism that "enables local governments to engage citizens in the review process, strengthening accountability and inclusive governance".[29] Both UNDESA and IGES have interesting websites with collections of VLRs. The analysis of this chapter has included only the some of these cities and local and regional governments. We express our apologies for not having been able to analyse more documents, and keep open to engage with all cities that have produced VLR or similar documents.

2.4.2_ Analysis of VLRs

a_ Covers and Pictures

An image, said to be worth 1000 words[30], is always a statement; this is why several cities have chosen images reflecting their cultural identities and assets in the covers of their VLRs.

- Some reports have covers that reproduce local cultural heritage or expressions. This is the case of the covers of Buenos Aires (the sculpture "Floralis Generica"), Oaxaca (its cultural heritage) and Helsinki (the central library "Oodi"). These reports include a great collection of images of their cultural heritage and expressions in the internal pages.

- The report of Shimokawa reproduces the natural heritage of the town.

- The reports of Mexico City and Santana de Parnaíba include pictures of the natural and cultural heritage of the city, including museums, monuments and sites.

- The reports of Bristol and Los Angeles include images of natural and cultural heritage, as well as cultural expressions (urban art, parades) that occur in the city.

---

27. UCLG internal report on VLRs
28. https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdg11/local
29. The IGES was established in March 1998 under an initiative of the Japanese government and with the support of Kanagawa Prefecture. The IGES promotes a VLR LAB (https://iges.or.jp/en/projects/vlr) and provides access to some of the reports
30. They are two different, both valuable, ways of human expression

Figures 113-115: A sample of VLR covers: the Floralis Generica of Buenos Aires, the cultural heritage of Oaxaca and the central library Oodi in Helsinki

b_ Introductions

Cities often write a presentation to present **their case for reporting** on the localization of sustainable development in their territory. In many cases, these include references to cultural aspects.

- The Opening Statement of **New York** provides a solid narrative for the explicit and operational role of culture in sustainable development efforts: "Cities are on the forefront of some of the world's most urgent challenges, and as hubs of the global economy, innovation, and culture, our urban centers have also proved to be where solutions to some of humanity's toughest problems are found". A similar sentence is found in the Letter to the Citizens of **Santana de Parnaíba** and the Statement of **Kitakyushu**.

- The presentation of **Shimokawa** depicts a "challenging history and true character" and becomes a commitment to put "wisdom, ingenuity and hard work into action to face crises and difficulties" and "creativity to generate fresh, untapped value". **Toyama** is introduced as "a city rich in culture and history".

- **Bristol** is presented as being "creative and diverse" whose "international history is reflected in its contemporary diversity". Bristol is seen as "a hub of cultural and technological innovation" and famous for its music (the birthplace of drum and bass and trip hop) and street art ("thanks to artists such as Banksy", "it hosts the largest street art festival in Europe"). Also Bristol explains that it "is also known for its maritime history" (....). [It] has been an important port in England for much of its history. It was first listed as a trading port in the Anglo-Saxon chronicle of 1051. It was from Bristol that some of the first European ships sailed west to explore uncharted waters."

- **Buenos Aires** states that the purpose of the Local Implementation of the 2030 Agenda is "to create a city to enjoy that ensures social integration and where all residents can develop their full potential with creativity and innovation". Buenos Aires is presented as "a remarkably eclectic urban profile, highlighted by its cultural offer and pluralism and its nightlife. The gastronomic, cultural and architectural identity of the City is nourished by foreign influences".

- **Deqing** introduces the city as "a land of harmonious livelihood integrated with its deep-rooted culture, with a history of more than five thousand years of civilization (...) it is one of the birthplaces of original Chinese porcelain and silk crafts as well as ancient court dance". The report also mentions (with two short stories) the beauty of Mogan Mountain and the importance of Luoshe as the "Hometown of Piano in China".

- **Helsinki** is "a place and a community" with (among other features) "a unique urban culture".

- In **Oaxaca**, the VLR is seen as an "unprecedented exercise worldwide": the multi-ethnicity and multiculturalism of Oaxaca, which is one of its most attractive characteristics, represents a window of opportunity to observe how the SDGs can be adapted to the context of life and worldview of each ethnic group of the state. The report also explains that the governance in the majority of municipalities of the State is based on Indigenous Normative Systems.

c_ Preparation of the Report

Cities often explain the institution or department that has elaborated the report. Some cities mention to what extent civil society and local actors have been involved in the exercise. In both these cases, there are instances in which references to **cultural stakeholders** is made.

- The involvement of the departments, agencies or institutes for Culture of the local government is made explicit in the reports published by Helsinki, Los Angeles Mexico City, New York, Oaxaca and Barcelona. This is implicit in the case of Bristol and Santana de Parnaíba.

- The direct involvement of cultural actors and institutions is likely to have happened in some cities, but it is not explicit in any case.

d_ Enabling Policy Environment

Cities explain the main ideas/ **values that lead local policies**, which are very often aligned with local stakeholders, communities and their associations. Again, references to cultural aspects are frequent.

- The local policies of **Mexico City** are informed by "interculturality" as well as "gender perspective and human rights". Also, the report of Mexico City states the local policies are aligned to the "Right to the City" because "this frame guarantees the participation and the inclusion of all expressions that are present in the city".

- **Barcelona** refers to its participation in global frameworks on local cultural development (the Agenda 21 for culture of UCLG).

- **Bristol** refers to antiracism with the report "The 1965 Bristol Bus Boycott", "which challenged the colour bar that prevented Black or Asian people operating as bus crews" and thus was important in the passage of the national Race Relations Act.

It is also noteworthy that some cities make efforts to relate the 17 SDGs to the local long-term plans and policies. Interesting **exercises of alignment** have been produced.

- "Creativity", together with Enjoyment, Human Scale and Social Integration are the 4 key axes of the current Government Plan in **Buenos Aires**. In its VLR, each one of the axis is related to a number of SDGs. Creativity is associated to SDGs 7, 8, 9, 11, 13 16 and 17.

- **New York**'s VLR interrelates the 17 SDGs with the local long-term plan "for a strong and just city" named OneNYC, based on four interdependent visions (growth, equity, sustainability, and resiliency) and 24 components (including "Culture"). In the interrelation, Culture is identified to contribute to the achievement of SDGs 1, 4, 10 and 11.

- **Los Angeles** has related each of the 169 targets to the local policies and programmes, in an in-depth analysis that involves language, content and legal frames. Five possibilities exist: (a) the target does not apply at the local level, (b) the target as written applies to the City, (c) the target as written does not apply, but can be revised to apply to the City, (d) the target as written does not apply, but can be replaced with a target for the City with similar intent, and (e) a new target should be added for the City.

- In 2018, **Oaxaca** decided to undertake an exercise to align its sectorial plans (among the 12, one is Culture). The local department for culture is involved in the achievement of Goal 11.

- **Kitakyushu** mentions the existence of a City plan for cultural promotion that needs to be revised to incorporate the SDGs.

- **San Antonio** aligns initiatives and programs with each of the Goals and Targets and an in-depth analysis of the intersectionality with heritage, including its UNESCO City of Gastronomy Designation, its Vacant Building Program and its Living Heritage initiative to determine cultural contributions to achieving SDGs 1, 3, 4, 5, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 16, and 17.

- Similarly, **Shimokawa** writes "A town that treasures its cultural heritage and resources, and uses them to create new value" as one of the seven components of its "Vision 2030", with "Culture and the arts" contributing to achieve SDGs 3, 4 and 11.

e_ Goals and Targets

Some cities focus the analysis in specifically assessing the goals that are included in its thematic cycle, whereas other reports, less bound by the UNSG guidelines' template, used this part to showcase examples of policies, programmes or projects strongly related to the localization of SDGs. References to cultural aspects can be found with respect to a large majority of the SDGs, suggesting that cities see the relevance of culture even in areas where the SDGs do not explicitly refer to it. Only in the case of SDG7 (Affordable and Clean Energy) and SDG14 (Life Below Water) have no references been found in VLRs.

SDG1: No Poverty

- **Deqing** includes "coverage of basic cultural life services" in the range on key local targets to "End poverty in all forms and everywhere" (SDG 1) and uses the indicator of "100% of residents can reach cultural facilities in 40 min" to evaluate this objective.

SDG2. Zero hunger

- **Los Angeles** explains the use of public property for urban agriculture (the target is to increase the number of edible gardens in City parks and public libraries by 50%).

- **San Antonio**'s "Food Bank" established an urban farm on the historical agricultural fields of one of the city's World Heritage missions, Mission San Juan, to expand its program to feed the hungry while restoring an important cultural and agricultural resource.

SDG3: Good Health and Well-being

- **Bristol** mentions local agencies (charities) that "provide culturally appropriate counselling services for people with mental health issues" (Target 3.4).

SDG4: Quality Education

- **Mexico City** includes the programme "Saludarte" that coordinates a group of 120 primary schools in which art is a tool to better health and education. Similarly, in Los Angeles "arts, culture, and services that enhance well-being" are mentioned as components of the local "Plan for a Healthy L.A."

- **Bristol** explains the "Knowle West Media Centre" provides training and education opportunities for people interested in getting involved in the creative and technology industries" (Targets 4.4 and 4.6)

- Bristol explains some education institutions have been a part of the "Film for Learning program", which involves film making to improve literacy attainment". This programme "is a key part of Bristol's international knowledge exchange as a UNESCO City of Film" (Target 4.7).

- Mexico City counts 697 public libraries that have been renewed as a contribution to "build and upgrade education facilities that are child, disability and gender sensitive and provide safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all" (Target 4.a).

- **Barcelona** explains the alliance with CERN (the European Council on Particle Physics) to raise awareness on the interrelation between the arts and sciences, as well as the launch of the first-ever local Biennale on "Science and the City".

- Also, Barcelona monitors the implementation of SDG 4 with (among others) five cultural indicators: number of libraries and cultural users (libraries, museums, museums and performing arts).

- In its vision of the Secondary School of the Future, **Buenos Aires** affirms "It is a school that forms responsible people capable of making decisions, by promoting autonomous learning and teaching to study. In addition, it encourages creativity and research development, critical thinking, and teamwork". Los Angeles mentions its "pLAn Milestone" that includes "increase education and training through City science, arts, and cultural programming in its analysis of Target 4.1.

- In **Los Angeles**, the Mayor's Young Ambassador (MaYA) Initiative (a free international travel program for community college students) is connecting young residents with the international community. During the trips (so far, to Mexico, Egypt, Japan, France, and Vietnam), students engage with their international peers, visit historic landmarks, participate in cultural exchanges, meet government officials, and take part in community service projects. This initiative is also strongly related to SDG17.

- **San Antonio** is working on a cultural heritage curriculum for its largest school district, serving students from pre-kindergarten to high school. The curriculum includes classroom study, as well as field trips to engage students in project-based learning

SDG5: Gender Equality

- In **Barcelona**, the Plan on Gender and Justice mentions the importance of cultural narratives and cultural diversity, as well as to the participation of women in cultural life as key elements (SDG 5).

- In **Los Angeles**, the Department of City Planning aims to increase the number of landmarks, statues and public spaces named in honour of women "whose accomplishments and contributions to the city may have been previously overlooked". In 2018, a new framework to identify places associated with the long struggle for women's rights was approved (SDG 5).

SDG6. Clean Water and Sanitation

- **Bristol** explains the role played by "We The Curious", Bristol's interactive science museum, in raising-awareness on water consumption (Target 6.4) and in Climate Change (SDG 13).

SDG8. Decent Work and Economic Growth

- **Buenos Aires** explains the economic development of the city is supported (among other measures) with the so-called "districts", six territorial clusters devoted to Arts, Design, Audiovisual, Fashion, Sports and Technology (Target 8.3).

- Also Buenos Aires: "Addressing tourism from the sustainable development perspective is essential to protect the cultural, material and natural heritage of Buenos Aires" (Target 8.9); the report mentions the revamp of "Caminito" as an open-air museum.

- The report of **Los Angeles** refers to the importance of culture in sustainable tourism, the specific support for the Film Industry (including tax credits to qualified productions), and the specific "creative workforce development" program to expand "the existing cultural vitality of Pacoima".

- The report of **Kitakyushu** mentions the consideration of its World Heritage sites in the city as tourism resources.

- **Bristol** explains the existence of the Bristol Cultural Development Partnership, which "aims to build a better Bristol by creating and celebrating arts, culture and heritage". It also mentions that in 2017 the city was designated as a City of Film in the UNESCO Creative City Network. This is connected to the importance that tourism has in the city (Target 8.9).

- **Helsinki** illustrates its sustainable tourism program, with the upcoming "Helsinki Biennale for Public Art" that will happen Vallisaari in 2020. The Biennale "is an essential part of the implementation of the marine strategy" and will reinforce "the appeal of Helsinki as a city of visual arts". Sustainability will be considered in the planning, implementation, and reporting of the event.

- Furthermore, Helsinki explains the cultural dimension of creativity and innovation (Target 8.3), with the schools, the Helsinki City Museum and the Oodi central library used as development platforms for "the development of new solutions with business potential".

- **San Antonio** created a Legacy Business Program intended to sustain small family-owned businesses that perpetuate the city's cultural authenticity. The program connects businesses to educational and promotional tools and strategies to keep businesses thriving

SDG9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure

- **Mexico City includes** the restoration of "historic buildings and façades" as a key activity in the development of "quality, reliable, sustainable and resilient infrastructure" (Target 9.1).

SDG10: Reduced Inequalities

- **Mexico City** states that 34 "museums and zoological parks" take part in the Local Network of Handicapped People.

- Also, Mexico City explains the realization of courses of translators and interpreters in indigenous languages, "in order to empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all" (Target 10.2). Similarly, Los Angeles "supports systems and services that are linguistically inclusive and culturally competent" (this is included in Target 11.4).

- **Bristol** shows commitment to "Improving the Voice of the Voiceless" with community radio stations that celebrate African and Caribbean cultures through music and informative talk" (Targets 10.1, 10.2, 10.3 and 10.4).

- **Barcelona** presents its programme of "Culture and Neighbourhoods" (with an accent on public cultural centres, artistic education and cultural events driven by communities) as a contribution to Reduce the Inequalities in the city. The "Intercultural Programme", the "Local Strategy with the Gipsy People" and the "Local Plan against Islamophobia" are also mentioned as a contribution to achieve the SDGs.

- Also in SDG 10, the City of **Buenos Aires** mentions the Policy "Capital of Encounter, Coexistence and Inter-religious Dialogue" and its standing programme "The Night of the Temples" (40 temples in the City open their doors to reflect the spirituality of their communities and become a witness of the cultural, artistic and architectonic heritage of the City). Buenos Aires mentions the Pride Week in support of SDG 10, because it "reflects the permanent commitment of Buenos Aires with the promotion of the LGBTIQ+ rights". Finally, Buenos Aires also relates under SDG 10 "the cultural heritage of more than 50 communities who live in the city" and the programmes to share history, culture and identity with all the neighbours.

- **Helsinki** devotes several paragraphs in its VLR to explain the importance of libraries in the city's policies to reduce inequalities. The 38 libraries are seen as "learning environments" that promote residents' skills regarding the information society: differences between population groups are identified, and services are targeted at high-risk target groups and people in need of special support. The programmes of the new central library Oodi, opened in 2018, are explained in detail in the VLR.

- Also under SDG 10, Helsinki explains the growing importance of arts education and targeted cultural activities in schools and day care centres.

- **Los Angeles** explains the existence of Citizenship Corners at each of the city's 73 public libraries, with library employees offering guidance on navigating the naturalization process.

- The City of **San Antonio** introduced an equity-focused platform to inform the city's budget planning to ensure a fair and impartial use of city funds throughout communities. Additionally, ensuring translation services at all public meetings empowers all city residents to have their voices heard while improving their understanding of policy

SDG11: Sustainable Cities and Communities

- Under the Target 11.4, the only target that explicitly addresses "cultural heritage", **Deqing** mentions the "stylistic facilities" that have been built, the "five large public halls, including Cultural hall, library, museum, sports center and Grand Theatre". The report also mentions "other characteristic venues such as Civic Ethics Museum" and refers to the indicator of target 11.4 (budget devoted to natural and cultural heritage).

- **New York** devotes a full chapter to explain its cultural policies under the Target 11.4. Firstly, the report mentions the adoption of "CreateNYC", the City's first-ever comprehensive cultural plan, which had been built "on a deep public engagement process that included 400 live events and the feedback of nearly 200,000 New Yorkers". Several programmes are explained in detail: (a) the Building Community Capacity (BCC) program that operates in neighbourhoods and supports communities in creating their own cultural visions, because previous research has provided full evidence that "presence of cultural assets in low-income communities correlates with improved outcomes in education, health, and safety"; (b) the "PAIR" inter-agency initiative that embeds artists with New York City public agencies (example, Sanitation or Housing) in order to use creative, collaborative art practices to discover solutions to pressing civic challenges; (c) the "CycleNews", a collaborative art performance initiated by artist Tania Bruguera that opens opportunities for two-way dialogue between the local government (with the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs) and the newest immigration communities, and (d) the activities of the Landmarks Preservation Commission, responsible for identifying and protecting New York City's architecturally, historically, and culturally significant buildings and sites (there are more than 36,000 designated buildings and sites in New York City, including 142 historic districts, 1,412 individual landmarks, 120 interior landmarks, and 11 scenic landmarks).

- **Los Angeles** explains several cultural programmes under Target 11.4, namely (a) the 35 Historic Preservation Overlay Zones that preserve and revitalize neighbourhoods of unique architectural, historic, and cultural significance (it currently protects over 21,000 structures), (b) the Triennial of public art, that addresses important civic issues (example, the edition of 2019 is devoted to food), and (c) the Urban Design Studio, created to bring a unified design vision to projects that are shaping Los Angeles' urban landscape. Also, now under Target 11.7, Los Angeles includes arts programming in the Summer Night Lights program.

- **San Antonio** identified numerous programs supporting SDG 11 including historic designations which protect over 11,000 structures, The Rehabber Club promoting 'do it yourself' educational opportunities and encouraging new skills for historic preservation contractors, the planned development of a Historic Preservation Trade School, an in-depth study into affordable housing, a residential roof repair program and other programs and incentives to rehabilitate substandard and non-code compliant residential properties.

- **Santana de Parnaíba** explains recent opening of cultural facilities (in the Complexo Cultural) and the importance of cultural events in its VLR.

- **Shimokawa** devotes a full chapter to explain its "Culture and the arts" policy, that commits to (a) support voluntary cultural activities and promote cultural experiences to help people find their purpose, (b) provide opportunities to appreciate a variety of quality artistic and cultural performances, and (c) protect and effectively use precious tangible and intangible cultural properties.

SDG12: Responsible Consumption and Production

- **Los Angeles** refers to the various programmes of "El Pueblo" historical monument a "tourist icon that brings people to Los Angeles and creates jobs while promoting local culture and the long history of Los Angeles" (Target 12.b).

- **San Antonio**'s "Vacant Building Program" encourages the re-use of old buildings for new purposes while its "Deconstruction Program" utilizes salvaged materials for re-use in rehabilitation and in new construction.

SDG13: Climate Action

- The Global Goals Centre of **Bristol** has used street art images (including a mural painting of Greta Thunberg) in order to raise awareness on Climate Action (SDG 13).

- The City of **San Antonio** hosted a Peer Exchange Program with other U.S. cities to address climate change issues and develop methodologies to improve interdepartmental cooperation between city agencies.

SDG15. Life on Land

- **Bristol** hosts the BBC's Natural History Unit and Rural Affairs Radio, which engage audiences about the importance of biodiversity and ecosystems (SDG 15).

- **New York** promotes parks and open spaces as "essential resources" and "democratic spaces" that "promote civic and cultural engagement and strengthen social bonds that make for a more vibrant, cohesive city" (SDG 15).

SDG16. Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions

- Under SDG 16, **Buenos Aires** recalls its commitment to Public Information Access and mentions article 134 of the Inter-American Convention on Human Rights: "Every individual has the right to freedom of thought and speech. This right includes the freedom to seek, receive and disseminate information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally or in writing, in print or in artistic form or by any other means of choice".

- Also under SDG 16, the city of **Helsinki** explains its "Participatory and parity plan of cultural and recreational services", with the participatory budgeting as a mechanism to empower citizens ("reinforce the participatory opportunities of young people"), the "adoption" of historical monuments and the design of the City Museum's new collection policy "for the first time interactively with Helsinki residents".

- **San Antonio**'s focus on living heritage ensures equity in cultural sustainability by focusing on participatory community engagement to identify tangible and intangible cultural resources important to underrepresented communities.

SDG17. Partnerships for the Goals

- **Mexico City** includes culture as one of the components of its international action. Sharing knowledge and expertise on cultural policies and programmes is seen as a contribution to promote a global partnership for sustainable development (Target 17.16).

f_ Means of implementation

Some cities explain the activities planned (or put into practice already) for the actual localization and implementation of the SDGs, including the technical, economic and social means available or needed. In some cases, references to cultural aspects are included in this section.

- **Mexico City** explains the participation in the campaign My World (in 2014), which used cultural actors and activities to raise awareness on the importance of sustainable development.

- In **Barcelona**, the Observatory of Cultural Data appears as a key provider of indicators. Also in Barcelona, the "Policy to Promote the Participation of People with Diverse Origins and Contexts in Participatory Local Processes" is mentioned as a process to raise awareness.

- **New York**'s VLR details the indicators used to monitor the achievement of the SDGs. Under Target 11.4, New York is currently using the number of "Individual landmarks and historic districts designated", the "Total number of buildings designated" and the "Archaeology applications received" as well as the "Rate of cultural participation in key neighborhoods".

- In **Los Angeles**, the "Resilient LA" Plan includes a policy to "promote diversity in community leadership by pursuing policies and programs that develop more leaders reflecting the communities they represent" in the strategies to achieves SDGs 5, 10 and 17.

- In **San Antonio**, the "Living Heritage Action Plan" includes numerous action items and steps to better manage cultural heritage (including intangible heritage) with sustainable development.

Some cities explain the existence of **events and festivals** to raise awareness on sustainability.

- The Convention for Sustainable Development in **Oaxaca** (in 2018) included talks, workshops, competitions, concerts, gastronomic exhibitions, solidarity economy fairs, theater plays, film projections and art exhibitions.

- "Restored by Light" in **San Antonio** is a free public event illuminating two of the city's 18th century World Heritage missions with laser lights. The event helps residents envision how the missions originally appeared without disturbing the fragile facades. The event features local music and food throughout the light show.

2.4.3_ Key Findings on VLRs

The analysis in this chapter shows that **culture is seen by cities as a crucial component** in the achievement of the SDGs. Explicit contributions can be found in almost all goals. Nevertheless, several factors are **preventing a more thorough** reporting by cities (through VLRs or similar exercises) of the role of culture in the achievement of the SDG, among others:

• the absence of a Goal dedicated to culture or more references to cultural aspects in other Goals,

• the nature of the VLR exercise (only some Goals are reported every year),

• issues of coordination among local government agencies (there is still a sub-representation of cultural voices), as well as

• a lack of dissemination of relevant guides (such as UCLG's document mentioned above).

There is obvious **room for improvement in awareness-raising** and the need to further mobilize local communities related to cultural policies (the local government, universities, activists and NGOs, as well as cultural institutions) in the 'formal' framework of the Goals.

This chapter also shows that the "**alignment**" exercises (Goals and Targets related to Local Plans and Policies) undertaken by cities in the elaboration of the VLRs can be **two-directional**: yes, all SDGs need to be related to local policies and programmes, and (also yes) key local priorities that are not explicitly present in the SDGs need to be highlighted in VLRs (as illustrated by Los Angeles with LGBTQIA+ persons, Shimokawa with cultural diversity, San Antonio with heritage or Oaxaca with human rights). In other words, cities and local and regional governments are invited to more explicitly highlight **local priorities on creativity, culture or heritage** in their future VLRs.

If taken as a whole, the collection of narratives, policies, programmes and projects of this chapter are totally **coherent with UCLG's document "Culture in the SDGs: A Guide for Local Action"**. Both the Guide and this chapter can be jointly used as a checklist to inspire future reporting by cities. Culture is an essential component of **subsidiarity**, and it needs to become more explicit to accelerate ownership and positive impact.

Last, but not least, global networks and research centres involved in the preparation of international templates for the VLRs may **consider explicitly including culture as a key dimension in the local implementation of the SDGs**. In fact, the UN Secretary General's Guidelines for Voluntary Reviews includes a chapter on the "Integration of the three dimensions" (the three currently accepted in the UN system dimensions of sustainable development are economic, social and environmental) and, at least locally, as some of the VLRs analysed illustrate, the local integration of the dimensions is impossible unless culture becomes **explicit and operational**. Therefore, international templates for the VLRs preparation may consider adopting the "**global acquis**", mainly developed by UCLG, on the place of cultural aspects in local sustainable development, which is based on the narrative that culture needs to be considered the fourth (or the first) pillar (dimension) of sustainable development. This narrative becomes obvious when policies and programmes are **implemented at a local level**: people inhabit places with history and understand cultural rights, including heritage, diversity, creativity and critical knowledge, as key components for the future.

3 CONCLUSIONS

3.1
SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS IN THE ANALYSIS OF VNRS AND VLRS

As the one crucial arena to track implementation of the 2030 Agenda identified as the focus of analysis in this report, the **reporting mechanism for the HLPF has important messages and potential for improvement to take better account of culture**. Our observations relate to both encouraging trends and challenges:

On the positive side, we observe a great range and diversity of references to culture identified throughout the VNR texts, in all sections, stages and levels of policy. Some of these provide an example for others to follow. Culture is both referenced at the highest, most conceptual level, as fundamental values and vectors of sustainability, as well as in detailed programmes with dedicated cultural policy sectors or part of other sectors.

The **types of reference to culture** fall into a few categories, including generic, non-action references; culture as an end in itself; culture as an enabler of other ends (cultural industries and jobs, promoting wellbeing, promoting tolerance); engagement of culture ministries/ agencies in consultation, coordination and executive mechanisms; and innovative practices (e.g. having a clear section on culture policy and programmes, or focusing on cultural indicators).

Some of the **most prominent themes or entry points for culture** are observed to include: culture at the top of the VNR **vision** (e.g. the title or as a Goal), culture as a **strategic** element of the national vision; culture as a fundamental **value** related to citizens' **quality of life** and **social cohesion**; culture as an elements of a **country's strength, identity** and enabler that makes the country attractive and livable; culture as a vehicle for fostering **peace**, in conjunction with **education** for a culture of peace; culture as an element of the **creativity, innovativeness and productivity** of a country; culture being leveraged as a **policy enabling/ accelerating tool**; the **cultural dimension** cited alongside social, economic dimensions of sustainability; culture as an enabler of the **Pillars of People and Planet**; focused themes such as cultural **diversity** and cultural **heritage**; close link between **natural and cultural** resources (e.g. in context of traditional agriculture); **indigenous** rights, in context of **land**; culture as a part of **education policies**; culture being often linked to **cities and urban policy**; culture as a dimension of empowering **vulnerable groups** such as women and youth; right to access to cultural **services**; cultural property **crimes**; culture in context of **resilience**; and efforts and challenges in **quantifying** progress in culture.

In terms of **Goals and Targets**, it is interesting to observe **that a few SDGs are the focus** of attention in relating culture with sustainable development, which also reflect the text of the 2030 Agenda: **SDG4** (Education), **SDG11** (Cities and Human Settlements) and **SDG16** (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions) are the most closely cited, while **SDG8** (Decent Work and Economic Growth) and **SDG12** (Sustainable Consumption and Production) are also relatively common. For other Goals, the narratives of VNR reports either implicitly suggest or effectively miss the connections with culture.

In all of these Goals, there is **evidence of the involvement of cultural actors** in the elaboration, implementation and evaluation of cultural actions in policies and programmes

We thus observe **sincere and proactive efforts** on the part of some States Parties to engage and mainstream culture in the SDGs, although this is limited to only a certain proportion of VNRs and only a certain degree in most VNRs. While there is **potential for a wide spectrum of engagement with culture and cultural policies**, this reveals itself to be **realized only to a small extent**, leaving more to be desired.

An interesting trend is the implicit presence and usage of cultural themes throughout the VNRs, while they may not be acknowledged as such. There is plenty of **visual material presenting the best of nations' cultural heritage** (around 15 countries using prominent photographs and images in their cover pages, and more than 70 countries using them within their reports), ranging from historic towns, architecture, ancient sites and landscapes representing the nations' tangible cultural heritage; to intangible heritage elements such as traditional dress and textiles, markets, products and handicrafts.

Many **visual unique identifiers** of nations' distinctiveness, from national symbols and decorative motifs to style of dress, are used in a more diffused manner, to enhance the tone and power of countries' individual messages. This somehow testifies to the almost universal understanding of tangible and intangible cultural aspects as being elements of national pride and distinction, and potentially key resources in personal and collective well-being and development. However, as in the case of text of the 2030 Agenda, this often remains taken for granted in the minds of decision-makers but not written explicitly in the texts of the formal documents.

The research presented in this report also shows that, although references to culture are made in almost all VNRs to some degree, **many of the specific manifestations of culture are missing**. While more than 100 potential keywords have been identified as related to culture (see Figure 108: Breakdown of culture-related keywords, 2016-19), only 34 of these have been mentioned more than 100 times, with 53 mentioned less than 50 times and 23 mentioned less than 10 times in the entirety of the documents analysed.

Taking into account existing knowledge on the connections between culture and sustainable development, **the potential existing in some areas appears to remain largely untapped in national strategies** to implement the SDGs. This is the case, among others, of SDG 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions) and SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals), which fail to take advantage of the potential of citizen participation in cultural life and of local, national and international cultural collaborations, for instance.

While, as this report also shows, recent years have witnessed a mobilization around culture and sustainable development (as proven by the relevant UNGA Resolutions, the work of UNESCO, and the initiatives of cultural networks and organizations) and this has been reflected in other global agendas (such as the New Urban Agenda), **there is a gap between existing expertise and on-the-ground practices engaging culture for sustainable development and the reflection of this in documents emerging from the implementation of the 2030 Agenda**.

Therefore, **we remain concerned about the limited presence of culture** in the VNRs and in the broader documents emerging from the HLPF review process, including the relevant Ministerial and Political Declarations. To a large extent, this results from the feeble presence of explicit references to culture in the text of the 2030 Agenda, but also because communities, leaders and networks of cultural initiatives, programmes and institutions have not been called to the table in which the reporting to the UN is designed and elaborated. These issues of coordination and involvement are crucial.

This report has also shown interesting results from the so-called **Voluntary Local Reviews**, that is, the documents elaborated by cities, local and regional governments to explain their own strategies to implement the SDGs. These strategies include the **alignment of local policies**, programmes and services, as well as **awareness-raising and capacity-building** activities. We have found that several influential cities (New York, Mexico City, Buenos Aires, Los Angeles, Barcelona, Helsinki) have explicitly included key cultural considerations in their VLRs. These reports show interesting important findings related to SDG 11 (cultural heritage, public spaces), but also important cultural initiatives in SGDs 4 (quality education), 5 (gender equality), 8 (decent work and economic growth), 9 (infrastructures), 10 (reduced inequalities), 12 (sustainable production and consumption), 15 (life on land) and 16 (peace, justice and strong institutions). The analysis of the VLRs also shows that **culture is often mentioned** in the local Narratives and Enabling Policies that explain "**why the local level is relevant** to achieve the SDGs". We have also noticed that some cities have taken the stance to include **local cultural priorities** in their VLRs (examples: Los Angeles with LGBTQIA+ persons, Shimokawa with cultural diversity, San Antonio with heritage or Oaxaca with human rights); we understand this is useful and needed.

The analysis also allows us to highlight some interesting issues to be considered in future VLRs:

(a) the need to improve **coordination among local government agencies**, because the municipal department/institute for culture has not always been involved in the reporting exercise,

(b) the importance to **involve local cultural communities** in the local alignment of the SDG, because without these communities the SDGs cannot be locally achieved, and

(c) the need for global networks and research centres that are elaborating **international templates for the VLRs** to explicitly include culture as a key dimension in the local implementation of the SDGs, because, as per subsidiarity rules, at a local level it is unavoidable to link people, rights, places, cultures and development.

We encourage governmental actors at all levels to consider the positive examples, trends and challenges identified in preparation of their forthcoming VNRs and VLRs over the next cycle of reporting.

3.2
KEY MESSAGES

The Implementation of the 2030 Agenda with the Sustainable Development Goals at its heart is the most important shared agenda that the humanity has ever adopted. But, as the UN Secretary General has affirmed in his 2019 Report to the HLPF, the global response to the 2030 Agenda has not been ambitious enough... Four years after its approval in 2015, the challenges are even greater: growing inequalities, mistrust in policy systems, violence against vulnerable groups, military conflicts and climate emergency. **In the face of such urgency, culture should be at the heart of the response, as a crucial, needed force.**

Taking the 2030 Agenda as our baseline, we offer in this report some key takeaways from the first four-year cycle of review on progress on its implementation, focusing on national reports (VNRs) and looking from the perspective of 'Culture and the SDGs'. As global networks in the field of culture, **our fundamental position has always been, and continues to be, to "place culture at the heart of sustainable development".** Looking back at the 'year zero' of the current era in development policies, the adoption of the 2030 Agenda in 2015 offered a certain level of reference to culture, therefore going beyond previous similar efforts (the MDGs). We believe the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs would be more complete and coherent if a **single Goal** devoted to Culture existed, with **a clear set of culture-related targets and indicators**; this was our fundamental position and expectation. The reality is that references to culture in the SDGs are scarce and do not sufficiently acknowledge the many ways in which cultural aspects influence and contribute to sustainable development. Therefore, we believe indeed that further awareness-raising must be done in order to convince that, in practice, **culture is essential for the achievement of all Goals**.

The Implementation decade (2020-2030) is about to begin. We are convinced that an explicit presence of culture in the "action and delivery" efforts to achieve the SDGs is more essential than ever, because:

(a) the adaptation of the SDGs at the national or local level requires recognition of specific cultural contexts – what may be termed the '**cultural localisation**' of the SDGs, which involves translating the universal language of the SDGs into the individual and collective lives of citizens inhabiting specific communities, cities and regions. This is valid for all SDGs, but particularly salient in areas like health and wellbeing (SDG 3), cities and settlements (SDG11), education (SDG 4) or governance, peace and justice (SDG 16);

(b) in many areas, including zero hunger (SDG 2), sustainability education (SDG 4), sustainable use of environmental resources (SDG 6, 7, 13, 14, 15), promotion of sustainable tourism (SDG 8), sustainable evolution of urban and rural settlements (SDG11), adoption of sustainable patterns of production and consumption (SDG 12) or mitigation of and adaptation to climate change (SDG13), **cultural knowledge and resources can act as enablers** of sustainable development. While they may not be always central to the ways in which SDGs have been formulated, cultural aspects can become resources to achieve the goals as specified in the 2030 Agenda – e.g. through the mobilisation of traditional knowledge around natural resources and the integration of cultural heritage and creative industries in economic development strategies; and

(c) cultural practices convey forms of **expression, creativity and identity building** that relate to the core of **human dignity**, and as such embody **people-centred**, sustainable development. Libraries, museums and community cultural centres can be seen as basic services (SDG 1), while the interrelation between gender equality and culture holds potential for positive social transformation (SDG 5) and the integration of the arts and cultural knowledge, diversity and creativity can be seen as integral to inclusive education (SDG 4). Cultural facilities may also be seen as part of resilient, quality infrastructures (SDG 9), cultural programmes contribute to reducing inequalities (SDG 10) and the protection of cultural heritage is key to sustainable cities and communities (SDG 11). Last, but not least, Partnerships for the Goals (SDG 17) should foster more international cultural collaborations.

We require all parties involved in the implementation of the SDGs to take into account the above three essential considerations for an explicit presence of culture in the efforts to achieve the SDGs. This report provides the evidence that some organisations, governments and institutions are already working in this direction.

Our ultimate goal is for the achievement of a **full synergy of culture with all other dimensions of sustainable** development, for the well-being of '**People**' and the '**Planet**', for all human beings and societies to live materially and spiritually '**Prosperous**', '**Peaceful**' and fulfilling lives. This can only be facilitated with the exercise of **cultural rights for all**, including the right to take part in cultural life, and for a thorough engagement with culture in its different aspects, forms and elements – traditional and novel, material and immaterial, commercial and non-commercial – which involves a diverse range of '**Partnerships**', among all kinds of actors, at all levels.

This report needs to be understood as a strong message and a full commitment to the 2030 Agenda from a huge range of committed networks, with all our members and on behalf of our communities: **we look forward to a time when sustainable development agendas deliver a full recognition of culture**, making explicit at the global level that which is often only implicit in the work of many decision-makers, practitioners and communities on the ground.

In the meantime, focusing on the current Agenda, we would like to propose some **key avenues of action** for both the culture sector and all other actors active in the field of sustainable development, in order to accelerate implementation of the 2030 Agenda, as well as to prepare for an enhanced reflection of culture in future global agendas on sustainable development:[31]

- As stated above regarding key findings, there are positive examples of engaging with culture in the VNRs that could be built on, expanded and replicated. All concerned parties should **consider culture from the outset in their national development planning frameworks for implementing the SDGs, as well as in their reporting through the VNR process**. In particular, they should use culture-related targets and their indicators more actively, and ensure that the role of culture is recognised in the plans for each relevant individual policy area. The monitoring and reporting of how culture is reflected in the VNRs should be continued in the coming years, to identify any trends of improvement, e.g. against benchmarks such as the 0.50-words/page mark for 'culture' terms.

---

31. In so doing, we recall the comprehensive set of guidelines and recommendations that already exist, and remain valid, in the documents of the #culture2015goal campaign, as well as earlier documents such as the Agenda 21 for culture, Culture: Fourth Pillar of Sustainable Development, and more recent activities such as UCLG's Guide on Culture in the SDGs, documents and activities by IFLA and by ICOMOS.

- We encourage **UN member states to foster wider consultation and participatory exercises** in the elaboration of their VNRs and other planning, monitoring and evaluation mechanisms in the context of the 2030 Agenda. We believe these exercises would be enriched by the engagement of cultural actors, who can help visualise how culture is, at the national and local level, relevant for the achievement of the SDGs, and to discuss what further opportunities may exist in this respect. There are hundreds of extremely relevant initiatives, in each one on UN member states, that are already connecting culture to the SDGs, but their communities, leaders and networks are not called to the table in which the reporting to the UN is designed and elaborated. These issues of coordination and involvement are crucial.

- The evidence presented in this report shows that **there is significant support from a number of governments and parts of the UN** for more work to take place on culture in the context of the SDGs (e.g. the work of the UN Special Rapporteur on Cultural Rights or the World Bank-UNESCO partnership on Culture and Reconstruction). This is reinforced by the fact that in recent years several **high-profile, cross-cutting agendas** (in particular, the New Urban Agenda[32]) have been agreed by governments and with significant UN involvement that make it clear that culture has a role (e.g. New Urban Agenda, COP, *Addis Ababa Action Agenda* on Financing for Development, Convention on Biological Diversity, Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, 10 year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production) – it is worth noting that the adoption of these documents has involved engagement from many organisations and groups outside the cultural sector. Our presence at past HLPF meetings and other international forums has also provided evidence of the interest in culture existing in many parts of the UN and among other relevant actors. This potential is however hampered in practice by a number of factors, including the limited references to cultural aspects in the 2030 Agenda, as well as the absence of a Major Group or further stakeholder group presence. This means that the opportunity to make the voices of culture-focused organisations heard is too often lost, or the message is diluted, and culture risks losing ground as a result. This reinforces **our commitment to developing a coherent community around this issue**, and ready to respond to this demand. Such a community would build on and expand beyond each of our networks' scope of work, to mobilize the resources of international bodies, including UNESCO, governmental, non-governmental and business organisations that express their support. This would also enable heightened media attention, more floor time to speak at HLPF sessions, larger culture summits and meetings attended by a wider range of actors. Such a community – i.e. a renewed, more ambitious and numerous, **#culture2030goal platform** – would make an enormous contribution to the achievement of SDG 17. Thus, we will invite new networks to join in the #culture2030goal platform and to jointly explore the creation of a formal '**Major Group for Culture**'.

- Taking the idea of convening high-impact meetings and taking the numerous UN resolutions on culture one step further, we recommend that the **UN devotes a High-Level Meeting to Culture** within the next HLPF cycle of reporting (2020-2023), based on the latest UN General Assembly Resolution N. 72/229 (2017) on "Culture and sustainable development", to create a global momentum for actors at all levels to coalesce.[33]

- In the short, mid and long-term, the recognition of the place of cultural aspects in the SDGs requires **better dissemination of already existing evidence and improved collection of new data**. We call on governments and other organisations to support evidence-based research and the design and implementation of quantitative and qualitative indicators reflecting the place of culture in sustainable development, including in areas such as cultural investment, participation and impact. Wherever possible, data should be disaggregated to address relevant imbalances in terms of gender, ethnicity or socio-economic levels.

---

32. While the New Urban Agenda has achieved a robust engagement with culture, other global agendas have partial engagement, where the potentials of culture engagement still need to be further tapped: Conference of Parties on UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development, Convention on Biological Diversity, Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, 10 year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production)
33. This can perhaps be modelled on the High-Level Meeting of the General Assembly held on 5-6 September 2017 to discuss the effective implementation of the New Urban Agenda, in accordance with UNGA Resolution 71/256.

- Because many SDGs are **implemented at the local level, the role of local governments, grassroots organisations and communities** needs to be further recognised in the monitoring and evaluation of the 2030 Agenda. In line with several cities' efforts to produce VLRs, we encourage global networks and research agencies to develop guidelines for the elaboration of VLRs that explicitly include cultural aspects in them. These guidelines should promote culture as the fourth pillar or dimension of sustainable development, recognising the importance of cultural contexts in the local implementation of the SDGs and the crucial role played by cultural actors, institutions and organisations.

- We believe the **cultural actors need to strengthen their own efforts towards the implementation of the SDGs**. Cultural policies, institutions and organizations need to contribute to our common challenges as one humanity, and be bolder and more explicit in our annual and long-term programmes on issues such as human rights, gender equality, the fight against all inequalities and the struggle against climate change. We are aware of the need to **broaden the conversation** outside the culture sector proper and are keen to engage in discussions with public, private and civil society organisations approaching cultural aspects from other perspectives. Among key topics with important and natural synergies with culture are sustainable cities and communities, quality education, gender equality, human rights, the knowledge economy, peace, resilience, resource conservation, biodiversity and tourism. As this report has shown, there is evidence to suggest that the effective implementation and delivery of the SDGs on the ground involves culture. We will thus continue to make efforts to make this visible to the broader public, through publications and other dissemination and awareness-raising initiatives, including public events and online campaigns. We commit to supporting awareness-raising and capacity-building in this respect, and encourage other cultural organisations and networks to explore how best they can contribute to the achievement of the SDGs in their respective areas.

- We also commit to continue to **develop partnerships** at local, national, regional and global level to work with public authorities, civil society organisations and communities in order to strengthen the understanding of the cultural dimension of the SDGs and to ensure that this is better integrated in the relevant policy, planning and evaluation documents.

We need parties involved in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs to consider culture as an invaluable driver and enabler to help communities thrive and be sustainable. We need the cultural communities, sectors, actors and agents, to come closer together for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs.

INFO ON 'CULTURE GOAL CAMPAIGN' MEMBERS

Arterial Network: Arterial Network is a dynamic network of non-government organisations, institutions, companies of the creative economy, festivals as well as individual artists and protagonists from the African cultural sector. It was founded in 2007 during the conference "Revitalising Africa's Cultural Assets" on Goree Island in Senegal. Today, 28 countries are represented within Arterial Network. The network has its headquarters in Cape Town, South Africa, additional regional chapters are currently in Mali and Kenya. Arterial Network's vision is to develop a vibrant, dynamic and sustainable African creative sector engaged in improving the living and working conditions of artists and cultural practitioners on the African continent and enhancing the quality in the arts. And within the cultural dimension of development, Arterial Network wants to initiate processes contributing to the implementation of human rights and democracy, and to the eradication of poverty on the African continent. With this aim, Arterial Network organises events, conferences and educational programs throughout Africa. The network is supported by the DOEN Foundation, the European Union and HIVOS among others.

Contact: www.contemporaryand.com/place/arterial-network/

President Mr Daves Guzha <dguzharooftop@gmail.com>

Culture Action Europe: Culture Action Europe (CAE) was established in 1994 under the name of European Forum for Arts and Heritage (EFAH) – Forum Européen pour les Arts et le Patrimoine (FEAP) under the Belgian law. Predominantly as 'network of networks', EFAH-FEAP aimed to maintain continuous dialogue and knowledge exchange between the cultural sector in Europe and EU policymakers. The association changed its name to Culture Action Europe in 2008 and diversified its membership, opening it up to public and private organisations, both large and small. This change was mirrored in the mission and advocacy policies of CAE. It adopted a new strategy, advocating for access to the arts and participation in culture as a fundamental right of every citizen. It has continued lobbying for public investment in culture and the arts as the main force for the development of a sustainable and more cohesive Europe. Today, CAE is the major European network of cultural networks, organisations, artists, activists, academics and policymakers. CAE is the first port of call for informed opinion and debate about arts and cultural policy in the EU. As the only intersectoral network, it brings together all practices in culture, from the performing arts to literature, the visual arts, design and cross-arts initiatives, to community centres and activist groups. CAE believes in the value and values of culture and its contribution to the development of sustainable and inclusive societies.

Contact: www.cultureactioneurope.org/

Secretary General Ms Tere Badia <secretarygeneral@cultureactioneurope.org>; Policy and Advocacy Director Ms Rosa Perez Monclús <policy@cultureactioneurope.org>

ICOMOS - International Council on Monuments and Sites: ICOMOS works for the conservation and protection of cultural heritage places. It is the only global non-government organisation of this kind, dedicated to promoting the application of theory, methodology, and scientific techniques to the conservation, protection, use and enhancement of the tangible and intangible cultural heritage. ICOMOS is an Advisory Body for the implementation of the UNESCO World Heritage Convention, reviewing nominations and ensuring the conservation status of properties. Through decades of studies, conferences and discussions, ICOMOS has built the philosophical and doctrinal framework of cultural heritage on an international level, and helps the evolution and distribution of these ideas through its advocacy. Our strength lies in the high standard of integrity which our members set themselves in their work to meet local and global needs, and in the professional and geographic diversity of our membership.

Contact: www.icomos.org

Secretary General Mr Peter Phillips; Director General Ms Marie-Laure Lavenir; Director of International Secretariat Ms Gaia Jungeblodt <gaia.jungeblodt@icomos.org>; SDG Focal Point Ms Ege Yildirim <ege.yildirim@icomos.org>

IFACCA - International Federation of Arts Councils and Culture Agencies: The International Federation of Arts Councils and Culture Agencies (IFACCA) is the global network of arts councils and ministries of culture, with member institutions in over 70 countries. Our vision is a world in which arts and culture thrive and are recognised by governments and peoples for their contribution to society. The IFACCA Secretariat provides services, information and resources to member institutions and their staff - from senior executives and policy makers, to researchers, grant makers and administrators - as well as the wider community.

Contact: www.ifacca.org

Executive Director Ms Magdalena Moreno <m.moreno@ifacca.org>; Director of Communications and Engagement Ms Meredith Okell <M.Okell@ifacca.org>

IFCCD - International Federation of Coalitions for Cultural Diversity: The International Federation of Coalitions for Cultural Diversity (IFCCD) is the voice of cultural professionals around the world. It brings together some thirty organizations representing creators, artists, independent producers, distributors, broadcasters and publishers in the book, film, television, music, live performance and visual arts sectors. The Federation was created as a result of a major mobilization of civil society in favour of the adoption and subsequent ratification of the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions. It is incorporated in Canada and its General Secretariat is located in Montreal. The French Coalition for Cultural Diversity represents the IFCCD at UNESCO in Paris.

Contact: www.ficdc.org

General Secretary Ms Nathalie Guay <nguay@cdc-ccd.org>; French Coalition Ms Laure Gicquel <contact@coalitionfrancaise.org>

IFLA - International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions: IFLA is the primary global organisation for libraries and library and information workers. It is a membership organisation, made up of about 1500 members from 150 countries, many of whom are in turn associations with their own members.

Contact: www.ifla.org

President Ms Christine Mackenzie; Secretary General Mr Gerald Leitner; Policy and Advocacy and SDG Liaison Mr Stephen Wyber <stephen.wyber@ifla.org>

IMC – International Music Council: Founded in 1949 by UNESCO, IMC is the world's largest network of organizations and institutions working in the field of music. The International Music Council promotes access to music for all and the value of music in the lives of all peoples. Through its members and their networks, IMC has direct access to over 1000 organisations in some 150 countries and to 200 million persons eager to develop and share knowledge and experience on diverse aspects of musical life.

Contact: www.imc-cim.org

Secretary General Ms Silja Fischer <s.fischer@imc-cim.org>

Latinoamerican Network of Arts for Social Transformation: This is a network that convenes 24 organizations working on art for social development in Argentina, Brazil, Peru, Chile and Bolivia. It is a set of initiatives that do quality practices on the building of effective citizenship, social integration, human rights, inter-cultures and global and social sustainability promotion. Part of the Art for Social Transformation action plan is to imagine projects that link with Europe and draw the attention of fundraisers, funding agencies and governments to invest in Art and Social Development. Therefore, understanding that this field is a relevant episode for the quality-life of the citizens and that it provides the necessary tools to build a socially sustainable world.

Contact: www.artfactories.net/Art-for-social-Transformation.html

Coordinator Ms María Emilia de la Iglesia <emisansi@yahoo.com.ar>

UCLG (United Cities and Local Governments) Culture Committee – Agenda 21 for culture: The global network of cities and local and regional governments has a Committee on culture whose mission is "to promote culture as the fourth pillar of sustainable development through the international dissemination and the local implementation of Agenda 21 for culture". The Committee is chaired by Buenos Aires, Lisbon and Mexico City, and vice-chaired by Barcelona, Bilbao, Bogotá, Jeju, Porto Alegre and Rome. UCLG has several key documents on culture: the Agenda 21 for Culture, approved in 2004 by cities and local governments from all over the world to enshrine their commitment to human rights, cultural diversity, sustainability, participatory democracy and creating conditions for peace; the political declaration 'Culture: Fourth Pillar of Sustainable Development', adopted in Mexico City in 2010; and Culture 21 Actions, approved in Bilbao in March 2015 on the occasion of the first UCLG Culture Summit. UCLG organises the International Award "UCLG – Mexico City – Culture 21" on Cultural Policies every two years, hosts a database of good practices on "culture in sustainable cities", convenes a global Summit on Culture also every two years, runs programmes to support the elaboration and implementation of cultural policies (Leading Cities, Pilot Cities, the "Seven Keys on Culture and the SDGs" and Culture 21 Lab) and fully supports the advocacy campaign #culture2030goal to advocate for culture in the UN Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals.

Contact: www.agenda21culture.net/

Coordinator Mr Jordi Pascual <coordination@agenda21culture.net>; Advisor on Culture in Sustainable Cities Mr Jordi Baltà <jordi.balta@agenda21culture.net>

CREDITS

The report can be reproduced for free as long as the authorship is mentioned. We recommend the following quote: Culture2030Goal campaign (2019), "Culture in the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda". Published in Barcelona, Paris, Harare, Sydney, Montreal, The Hague and Brussels, in the frame of the first UN SDG Summit taking place on 24-25 September 2019.

This report has been written by Dr. Ege Yildirim (ICOMOS), with contributions from Jordi Baltà Portolés, Jordi Pascual, Massimo Perrino and Marta Llobet (UCLG), Stephen Wyber (IFLA), Peter Phillips (ICOMOS), Laure Gicquel (IFCCD), Raquel Martínez (UCCI) and Shanon Miller and Claudia Guerra (San Antonio). Support in the analysis of keywords was provided by Ilgem Coban (Urban Planner).

The report expresses the consensus of the members of the campaign. The report does not necessarily reflect the exact views of each one of its members. Please refer to each one of the members of the campaign for these individual views.

The members of the campaign would like to thank all people that have participated in making this report possible.