



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization

Organisation  
des Nations Unies  
pour l'éducation,  
la science et la culture

Organización  
de las Naciones Unidas  
para la Educación,  
la Ciencia y la Cultura

Организация  
Объединенных Наций по  
вопросам образования,  
науки и культуры

منظمة الأمم المتحدة  
للتربية والعلم والثقافة

联合国教育、  
科学及文化组织

2005  
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1945

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## Cultural Industries

Cultural products are at the same time bearers of identity, values and meaning and factors of economic and social development. The preservation and promotion of cultural diversity must lead to the encouragement of the development of cultural industries that are able to make an impact on a local and worldwide level.

**C**ultural industries produce and distribute cultural goods or services *'which, at the time they are considered as a specific attribute, use or purpose, embody or convey cultural expressions, irrespective of the commercial value they may have'*, according to the terms of the **Convention on the protection and promotion of the diversity of cultural expressions** adopted by UNESCO in 2005.

These industries include publishing, music, cinema and audiovisual production and multimedia. Also included are crafts and design, which are not, strictly speaking, industries, but which are very similar in their management, for example in the creation of small & medium-sized companies.

The concept has been widened to that of *'creative'* industries, by including architecture and different artistic categories: visual arts, performing arts, etc.

All these industries already constitute one of the most dynamic sectors of the economy and of world trade, and will grow more in the future, giving new trade perspectives to developing countries. On a global level, they currently represent more than 7% of gross world product, and, according to recent forecasts, they will reach around 10% in the years to come.

The paradox is that if creative cultural resources abound in developing countries, the world map of cultural

industries reveals a major gap between the North and the South. It is fundamental to understand the causes of this, above all the structural ones, and attempt to remedy them.

In the South there are already cases of major successes, for example in India, South Africa, Colombia, Venezuela, China, Brazil or in other Latin American

countries, where the music industry represents 4 to 5% of worldwide turnover, but much remains to be done to improve the participation of most developing countries in these high added value sectors. As an example, quality crafts, which are in the foremost rank of resources born from creativity, are a real reservoir of employment

in many countries.

Furthermore, the respect of copyright is everywhere an essential condition for the continued strengthening of cultural industries. Conversely, piracy often nullifies the efforts made by countries, especially developing countries. Hence the necessity of preventive measures, which concern both raising the awareness of the public and training those professionals who are the most concerned by it. UNESCO has always striven to support the States in their initiatives to establish efficient sectoral cultural policies. It has provided its expertise and supplied instruments for more than thirty years, first in the field of books and publishing, which remains its main field of activity, in crafts, and later in other cultural industries.



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# Cultural Industries



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**The Global Alliance for Cultural Diversity** is a UNESCO action programme that supports the emergence or strengthening of cultural industries (books & publishing, cinema, recorded music, multimedia, crafts) in developing countries and countries in transition, in order to enable the creation or growth of local markets and access to worldwide markets, which is favourable to sustainable development. The originality of the approach lies in the creation of a new kind of partnership, associating the public sector, the private sector and civil society. Launched in 2002, the Global Alliance today has a network of 500 members and many other partners. It has set up around fifty projects and created tools (manuals, case studies) for decision-makers.

It was a pioneer in this field, starting in the early 1950s, and then later again, especially through the *Copyright Conventions* and the *Agreement on the free circulation of cultural materials* (the so-called 'Florence Agreement'). In recent years it has carried out very intensive **normative action**, which in 2005 led to the adoption of the *Convention on the protection and the promotion of the diversity of cultural expressions*, mentioned above, and innovative **operational action**, based on the initiative of the *Global Alliance*, the encouragement of public-private partnerships and partnerships with civil society, in order to reinforce international solidarity at all levels.

Close cooperation between Headquarters and the Field Offices makes it possible to harmonize this revitalized methodological approach with actions in the field.

In all areas, above all in those that involve making major investments, regional, sub-regional, (South-South) or triangular (South-South-North) co-operations also appear more and more necessary.

Finally, it is necessary to observe that, within the United Nations, there is a constantly increasing recognition of the importance of creative & cultural industries by a large number of agencies or organizations, such as the International Labour Organization (ILO), the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), as well as UNIDO, UNDP, the Global Compact

and NEPAD. This is also seen during Summits and Ministerial Conferences, such as the Conference of Ministers of Culture of the African Union in Nairobi, Kenya (10-14 December 2005) that approved a Plan of action on: '*Cultural industries for the development of the Africa*'.

The Culture Sector and the Communication and Information Sector, through the '*Programme for creative content*', are the main units involved in UNESCO, together with its decentralised offices. As the measurement of international flows of cultural goods and services is important data, cooperation with the International Institute for Statistics is also essential.

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## To Find Out More

[www.unesco.org/culture/industries](http://www.unesco.org/culture/industries)  
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(Global Alliance)