

PRESS RELEASE

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Stakeholders consulted for effective policy to promote diversity in cultural expressions

The first consultation meeting held in Lahore on 14 July gathered governmental and civil society actors including representatives from the private sector to discuss the state of affairs of Pakistan's culture and creative sectors and to make recommendations on policies for the creative sector and the signing of the 2005 UNESCO Convention for the protection and promotion of diversity of cultural expressions.

Lahore: Pakistan possesses a diversity of cultural goods and services that has a huge potential for being harnessed for economic, social and sustainable development. Globally, the creative economy has grown extremely fast over the past twenty years and is today worth an estimated USD 4.3 trillion per year, contributing to 6.1% of the global economy. In Pakistan, total exports of cultural goods have increased from USD 60 million in 2004 to USD 276 million in 2013. These remarks were made by Ms. Vibeke Jensen, UNESCO Representative to Pakistan at the opening of the first consultation on policies for Pakistan's creative sectors that took place in Lahore today. Similar consultations will follow in Karachi and Islamabad covering the rest of the country next week.

She explained that with financial support from the Danish Centre for Culture and Development, funded by Government of Denmark, UNESCO has carried out a comprehensive mapping of stakeholders, identified gaps and needs and examined existent policies related to the culture sectors. The second phase that started in Lahore today is focusing on raising awareness among a wide range of stakeholders on the benefits for Pakistan of signing the UNESCO 2005 Convention for the Protection and Promotion of Diversity of Cultural Expressions and make recommendations to be incorporated in relevant national policies. She mentioned that, UNESCO is also organizing a series of workshops with young Pakistani creative entrepreneurs to establish a list of success stories on creative industries and businesses to be used for advocacy purposes. The recommendations and success stories from these consultations will be shared with relevant government officials and decisions makers in other meetings later this year.

Participating in the consultative session, Mr. Jan Riemer, Chargé d'Affaires of the Embassy of Denmark, said that Denmark's support to art, culture and creative industries contributes to the ongoing Danish efforts in Pakistan for poverty alleviation and enhanced human rights. Mr. Riemer underlined that culture remains an important element in building up vibrant, free and democratic societies and more generally, is a catalyst in development processes. "Pakistan is a very unique country when it comes to diversity. Each region has its own rich history of progressive art and culture, which is why it is important to protect and promote the diversity of cultural expressions. By supporting the art and culture sector in Pakistan, our aim is to create opportunities for more intercultural dialogue and collaboration and strengthening of freedom of expression for artists and cultural actors as well as enhance economic growth through creative industries", said Mr. Riemer.

Pakistan has not yet signed the Convention for Protection and Promotion of Diversity of Cultural Expressions which was adopted by UNESCO Member States in 2005. By signing the Convention, the creative sectors would be facilitated in accessing domestic and international marketplaces where their artistic works/expressions can be recognized and compensated. Once signed, Pakistan's public sectors, NGOs and creative professionals will become eligible to apply for the International Fund for Cultural Diversity <<http://en.unesco.org/creativity/ifcd>> (IFCD) which has an annual open call for funding requests up to USD 100,000.

Download Event Photographs here: <https://we.tl/O5bpzc1sRI>

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Creative and cultural industries have a growing share of Pakistan's economic development.

Arts, culture and creativity are the driving forces for fostering intercultural cooperation, social cohesion, peace and sustainable development and contribute increasingly to economic development.

Lahore: Pakistani young entrepreneurs gathered in a consultative workshop in Lahore to discuss the needs, challenges, opportunities and potential of creative economies and exchanged views for designing creative and cultural policies to further strengthen Pakistan's creative industry. Participants were entrepreneurs from design, fashion design, visual arts, music, performing arts, publishing, audio-visual and social media and young academics in the field of economics, geography and sociology.

The workshop was organized by UNESCO Pakistan in collaboration with the Centre for Culture and Development, and funded by the Government of Denmark. Both federal and provincial government's representatives were also present and engaged in the discussions. The consultation comes at a very timely moment as the Government of Punjab is in the process of drafting a culture policy.

Speaking at the opening, Ms. Vibeke Jensen, UNESCO Representative to Pakistan emphasized on the important role of creative entrepreneurs in promoting diversity of cultural expressions. She said that the purpose of engaging young entrepreneurs was to develop case studies about the businesses of creative professionals. These examples will be used to advocacy materials to demonstrate the creative sector's contribution to economic growth, job creation and social inclusion. She also underlined the importance of participatory processes of policy making which will have to meaningfully engage civil society, individual creators, creative entrepreneurs and citizens at large.

Why UNESCO?

As the only UN agency with a mandate in culture, UNESCO over the years has developed a series of standard-setting instruments for culture. The 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions provides a policy framework for the good governance of culture. It includes the contemporary culture and creativity and how various people's experience of culture and creativity presents remarkable opportunities for a creative expression from Pakistan to find an audience in Latin America or Japan or Canada or anywhere in the world. It recognizes the distinctive nature of culture as an important contributor to economic and social development and ensures that artists, creative professionals, practitioners and citizens worldwide can create, produce, disseminate and enjoy a broad range of creative goods, services and activities, including their own. Pakistan has not yet ratified the 2005 Convention, while it is currently developing a national cultural policy.

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