

# DAWN

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## **‘UNESCO convention to widen creative sectors outreach’**

LAHORE: By signing the UNESCO Convention for Protection and Promotion of Diversity of Cultural Expressions, Pakistan’s creative sectors will be facilitated to access domestic and international markets where their artistic works can be recognised and compensated.

This was a consensus among the participants in the first consultation on policies for the country’s creative sectors arranged by UNESCO in collaboration with Danish Centre for Culture and Development and Diversity of Cultural Expressions at a local hotel on Thursday. UNESCO representative in Pakistan Vibeke Jensen said creative economy had grown extremely fast over the last 20 years and it was worth \$4.3 trillion per year, contributing to 6.1pc of the global economy.

“Pakistan possesses a diversity of cultural goods and services that has a huge potential for being harnessed for economic, social and sustainable development. In Pakistan, total exports of cultural goods have increased from \$60 million in 2004 to \$276 million in 2013,” she said.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) carried out a comprehensive mapping of the stakeholders, identified gaps and needs, examined existent policies related to the culture sectors with the financial support from the Danish Centre for Culture and Development, funded by Denmark government, added Ms Jensen.

Starting from Lahore, the second phase would focus on raising awareness among the stakeholders regarding 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 said UNESCO would also organise 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.

Jan Riemer, Chargé d’Affaires of the Embassy of Denmark, said the support his country was extending to art, culture and creative industries contributed to the ongoing Danish efforts in Pakistan for poverty alleviation and human rights.

“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.

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## **An initiative to promote culture of creativity**

LAHORE: Arts, culture and creativity are the driving forces that foster intercultural cooperation, social cohesion, peace and sustainable development and contribute increasingly to economic development. The observation came from young Pakistani entrepreneurs who gathered at 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.

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

Speaking at the opening, Ms Vibeke Jensen, UNESCO Representative to Pakistan, emphasised on the important role of creative entrepreneurs in promoting diversity of cultural expressions. She said the purpose of engaging young entrepreneurs was to develop case studies about the businesses of creative professionals. These examples will be used for 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.

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 recognises 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.

**Source:** <http://www.dawn.com/news/1271166>

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