



PRESS RELEASE

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The World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development commemorated in National College of Arts Rawalpindi

The United Nations Sustainable Development Agenda for 2030 acknowledges for the first time, the key role of culture, creativity and cultural diversity to solving sustainable development challenges, to advance economic growth and foster social inclusion. This recognition resonates with the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (2005), the 10th anniversary celebrated in 2015.

Rawalpindi: Celebrating Cultural Diversity means opening up new perspectives for sustainable development and promoting creative industries and cultural entrepreneurship. Key Cultural Stakeholders of twin cities join hands together at National College of Arts (NCA) Rawalpindi in a dialogue to address the Role of Diverse Groups in Cultural and Creative Industries and marked The World Cultural Diversity Day. The event was organized by UNESCO and the National College of Arts with the support of Danish supported Center for Culture and Development (CKU) and in collaboration with Centre for Culture and Development (C2D), Unicorn Black and Special Talent Exchange Programme (STEP). The event particularly focused on *The Role of Diverse Groups in Promoting Cultural and Creative Industries*.

The objective of the commemoration is to raise awareness of stakeholders on the UNESCO's 2005 Convention for the Protection and Promotion of Diversity of Cultural Expressions, and to highlight the role of diverse groups of the society including women, youth, persons with disabilities and other minorities in promoting creativity and development.

DR. Nadeem Omar Tarar, Director, NCA welcomed all the participants and discussed the role of NCA with respect to developing the potential of youth for contemporary culture and creative Industries. Moderating the overall session, he highlighted the role of marginalized community of transgender and invited the representative of trans-genders Group and Executive Director of WAJOOD, Bublil Malik who talked and demanded the provision for the need of education, skillful knowledge, health facilities and small loans under the Government schemes for transgender community to encourage respective livelihood and business opportunities.

In her opening remarks, Ms. Vibeke Jensen, UNESCO Representative to Pakistan highlighted that the event is organized within the framework of a UNESCO- Danish supported Center for Culture and Development (CKU) project which aimed at mobilizing a wide range of stakeholders on the importance of the Government of Pakistan for ratification of the 2005 UNESCO "*Convention for the Protection and Promotion of Diversity of Cultural Expression*", adding further that the event would be helpful to develop a comprehensive and inclusive culture policy. She expressed that Pakistan has an incredibly rich and diverse society in terms of culture, creativity and cultural expressions which should be harnessed in the development of a dynamic economy. She stressed that the 2005 Convention recognizes culture as a mainspring of an inclusive, sustainable development and suggests to Member States to adopt policies and measures that provide access to diverse range of creators to participate in domestic and

international marketplaces where their artistic works/expressions can be fully recognized and compensated.

Ms. Fouzia Saeed, Executive Director, Lok Virsa who was the chief guest said that women was an integral part of the sustainable development. She expressed that women should not be afraid of the cultural diversity and should express themselves through creativity. She mentioned that women are repository of the culture, and that women are the first place where the culture and diversity gets transferred to the next generation.

UNESCO's implementing partner, Center for Culture and Development (C2D) believes to promote and recognize the role of women in creative industries. Ms. Izza Khan, Executive Director, C2D emphasized on the importance and recognition of the diversity of roles of women at all levels for prosperity of the nation.

Mr. Abbas Saleem Khan, Head of Operations, UNICORN BLACK mentioned the success story of his media company with its's two projects, "Burka Avenger" and Tazzi and their positive impact on youth development. He described how technology products revolutionize problem solving via digital mediation mechanisms.

Mr. Atif Sheikh, Executive Director of Special Challenge Exchange Program, emphasized on the role of Persons with Disabilities in Creative Industry. He quoted examples of such talented people who were able to achieve economical independence despite of such physical dependencies. He said that Persons with Disabilities need to be accepted as diversified human resource in present modern economic system. It is duty of the Policy makers to focus on creating enabling environment to mainstream people with diversified capabilities in the economic development.

Mr. Andrew Senior, UNESCO's Expert on 2005 Convention and Creative Economy in his message from London mentioned that cultural artefacts are all around us but the 2005 Convention isn't about artefacts, there are other UNESCO treaties that cover heritage. The 2005 Convention is about contemporary culture and how our experience of culture in the 21st century presents remarkable opportunities for a cultural manifestation from Pakistan to find an audience in Latin America or Japan or Canada or anywhere in the world, if it resonates in a way that can engage an audience there. So it is about how this trade in cultural experiences has both cultural and economic value, and how these can play a critical role in the development agenda.

More than 100 participants from cultural, creative and industrial sector attended this event. The panel discussion was followed by an attractive display in the college gallery, where NCA, UNICORN BLACK and STEPS displayed their strength work.

Students of National College of Arts displayed their art work in context of the day. Mr. Mahmood Sheikh Professor for Product/ Package Design curated the exhibition. Unicorn Black showcased 'Burka Avenger' (a digital media product in animation medium) with its merchandise including Action Figures, Watches, Caps and Notebooks that was point of attraction for the students and youngsters. At STEPS stall, persons with disabilities presented the process of entrepreneurship through demonstration, guide books and information materials. It was interesting to see live cooking and sale of goods as successful enterprising story on the spot.

Download Event Photographs here: <https://we.tl/O9UVIDBUsl>

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