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Get to know the No Future Without Culture Campaign

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No future without culture – Culture2030Goal campaign calls out neglect of culture in the Pact for the Future zero draft and invites UN member states to add specific wording.

The Summit of the Future, the milestone UN event of 2024, is intended as an opportunity to make key improvements to the global governance system's ability to deliver on the goals of peace and security, sustainable development, and human rights.

The Culture2030Goal campaign has given evidence that a critical determinant of success in these efforts is how well, at all levels, cultural factors and actors are integrated into policy making and delivery. This evidence is extensive and science-based. It is the result of specific reports and consultations with UN member states, Major Groups and key stakeholders of sustainable development at a local, national and international level.

It is for this reason that it is deeply disappointing that the zero draft of the Pact for the Future – the planned key output document from the Summit – makes only cursory reference to culture. The Pact promises to be "a force for change", but its current formulation risks confirming a business-as-usual approach. This is no longer viable. At this stage, in 2024, it has become obvious that there is No Future Without Culture. The efforts of humanity towards peace and security, sustainable development and human rights will never be achieved unless Culture is at the centre of action.

The zero draft fails to consider the clear emphasis on the importance of culture, not only as a goal in itself, but as an essential driver of success across the board, in a wide range of consensus documents agreed by governments in regional and international fora over the past year and a half. These include, among others, the most recent reports of the OHCHR Special Procedures' Special Rapporteur in the field of Cultural Rights,

the Ministers' Declaration of UNESCO's MONDIACULT 2022 conference, the commitment of the BRICS group Johannesburg II Declaration (August 2023), the G20 Leaders Declaration (September 2023), and the SDG Summit Declaration (also in September 2023). Across the sum of these, all UN Member States have reaffirmed the role of culture as an enabler of sustainable development.

Culture needs to have a clear place in the Pact for the Future, but currently all we see is a glaring neglect of the cultural aspects of socio-economic life, the impact of culture on accelerating the achievement of the SDGs and other agendas, and the central role of a strong and dynamic cultural sector and coherent policy approach.

The absence of culture represents a source of insecurity, a narrowing of our understanding of society and what makes it work, a break on the imagination needed to envisage the future for coming generations, and an impoverishment of the toolkit available to the global governance system to achieve its objectives.

There is nonetheless time to correct this mistake. The final version of the Pact can and will give positive and substantive recognition of the role of culture. Just as the Declaration of the SDG Summit only incorporated text on culture after the actions of Member States, intergovernmental organisations and civil society (that is, between June and September 2023), Culture2030Goal campaign believes that the same can be achieved here.

Culture2030Goal campaign stands ready to propose text that would remedy this situation, working with the co-facilitators, the Member States and all stakeholders, and urge that the voices and experience of cultural actors be heard throughout the negotiation process.

Read the full report here