

## The Debate on Culture and Development Moves On

**July 8, 2013 - Efforts to integrate culture into the post-2015 development agenda are pushing the debate to the highest levels of the United Nations.**

Following UNESCO's [Hangzhou Congress and Declaration](#) on culture and sustainable development in May, the debate was brought to the United Nations.

On 12 June, at the United Nations General Assembly in New York, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, H.E. Mr Ban Ki-moon, made [important statements](#) about the role of culture in development. These statements were part of the introduction to a day-long [high-level thematic debate on culture and development](#). During this debate UN officials highlighted the need to recognize the vital role of culture in poverty reduction and sustainable growth, and to ensure that it is integrated into the post-2015 development agenda. In her keynote address, UNESCO Director-General Irina Bokova told the meeting that no one would like to live in a world without music, art or dance, or with only one language: "No society in the world can flourish without culture. No development can be sustained without it."

Recently, this debate resumed in the High-level Segment of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) in Geneva. On July 2, a UNESCO Ministerial Roundtable on [Culture and innovation in the post-2015 development agenda](#) brought together Ministers of culture, science and technology. During the discussion, participants gave examples of how the creative industries increase trade, provide employment, especially for youth, act as a catalyst for social inclusion and drive a "new economy" which is also based on technology and innovation, and how investing in creativity can transform societies, build stability and peace and thus constitutes an investment in inclusive sustainable development.

### About the Post-2015 Development Agenda and Culture



In September 2000, world leaders adopted the United Nations Millennium Declaration, committing their nations eight [Millennium Development Goals](#) (MDGs) in order to reduce extreme poverty. These goals have a target date of 2015, and are now being reviewed. This has been an opportunity for the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) to advocate for the integration of culture in the post-2015 development agenda, as well as for the recognition of culture as the fourth pillar of sustainable development (along with the economic, social and environmental pillars). The introduction of culture into the future development agenda could have a significant impact on public policy and on public spending on culture.

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