MARKING OF THE TENTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE
UNESCO UNIVERSAL DECLARATION ON CULTURAL DIVERSITY

OUTLINE

Source: Resolution 31 C/25.

Background: This document is submitted to the General Conference to mark the tenth anniversary of the adoption of the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity. It is proposed to celebrate the anniversary by a Special Plenary meeting of the General Conference on 2 November 2011.

Purpose: In submitting the present document, the Director-General wishes to recall the importance of the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity as a fundamental ethical framework of universally recognized principles that engage the international community in acknowledging cultural diversity as a wealth and as an intrinsic constitutive element of humankind. She proposes the adoption of a resolution reaffirming UNESCO’s commitment to the implementation of these principles.

Decision required: Paragraph 8.

1. The UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity was unanimously adopted on 2 November 2001, at the 31st session of the General Conference, along with the main lines of its action plan (31 C/Resolution 25).

2. The adoption of the Declaration was the result of a long process initiated by the Ministers of Culture at the round table “Culture and Creativity in a Globalized World”, held on 2 November 1999. The principle of cultural diversity had previously been acknowledged and endorsed on the

1 An overview of the preparation process is available in the introduction of document 31 C/44.
occasion of two important landmark initiatives launched and promoted by UNESCO, namely the publication of the report *Our Creative Diversity* in 1995 and the organization of the Stockholm Intergovernmental Conference on Cultural Policies for Development, held in 1998.

3. By 160 EX/Decision 3.1.1(II), the Executive Board invited “the Director-General to identify the preliminary considerations for a UNESCO draft declaration on cultural diversity”. At its 161st session, the Executive Board decided to set up an ad hoc working group to help the Secretariat prepare a draft declaration with a view to adopting a text by the General Conference at its 31st session (161 EX/Decision 3.4.1). This open-ended ad hoc working group met on three occasions (20 June, 2 July and 9 July 2001), stressing the need for a clear and concise text and requesting the inclusion of several fundamental principles in the preamble. The draft declaration resulting from the above process and the main lines of its Action Plan were accordingly submitted by the Secretariat to the Member States for their observations (17 July-10 September 2001), before final submission for adoption at the 31st session of the General Conference.

4. The Declaration has opened up a new historic phase in the awareness of the importance of cultural diversity. It has reviewed the international cooperation models taking into account the culture-sensitive perspective in the implementation of development strategies and programmes, thereby facilitating the increasing recognition of the link between culture and development at both the international and national level.

5. By rejuvenating the vision of the existing standard-setting instruments in the field of culture, the Declaration has also explicitly triggered the elaboration of new legal instruments in the field of culture by addressing insufficiently explored areas of cultural expressions and advocating for their safeguarding and protection. The 2001 Declaration thereby also provided a more comprehensive and geographically balanced approach to the world’s cultural diversity. It laid the ground for new instruments that expanded and complemented our sense of the world’s cultural diversity in different domains, such as intangible cultural heritage (under the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage), multilingualism in cyberspace (through the 2003 Recommendation concerning the Promotion and Use of Multilingualism and Universal Access to Cyberspace), and the cultural expressions enshrined in contemporary means such as cultural industries (under the 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions).

6. The Declaration also underpinned the proclamation, in February 2003, by the General Assembly of the United Nations, of 21 May as World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development (Resolution 57/249). The Day represents an opportunity for both Member States and civil society to promote and consolidate the understanding of the value of cultural diversity among Members States and civil society organizations.

7. Ten years after its adoption, the Declaration remains a reference for cooperation agencies, governments, policy planners, decision-makers and civil society activists. The principles of pluralism, tolerance and dialogue enshrined in the Declaration, as well as their strong link to the implementation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, continue to possess a high inspirational value for UNESCO. In the present context, given that the pivotal role of culture for development is increasingly acknowledged on the international agenda, the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity continues to play an important role as an ethical and operational framework at different policy levels (national, international) and as a common ground to inform One United Nations common country programming strategies for achieving sustainable development at the national level. Accordingly, these frameworks acknowledge and build upon UNESCO’s standard-setting instruments in the field of culture.

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2 October 2000.
8. In light of the above, the General Conference may wish to take into consideration the adoption of the following resolution:

The General Conference,

Recalling 31 C/Resolution 25, of 2 November 2001, by which it adopted the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity together with the main lines of its action plan,

Acknowledging with appreciation the progress accomplished in the implementation of the principles of the Declaration and in the attainment of the objectives contained in its main lines of action plan, at the national, regional and global level,

Recognizing that considerable challenges remain to be faced to attain the full recognition of the principles of the Declaration and its implementation,

Urges the Member States to take further measures to promote the principles of the Declaration, to facilitate their application through the modalities they deem appropriate and to report to UNESCO thereon;

Invites UNESCO to work with other concerned intergovernmental bodies as well as partners to further raise public awareness on the importance of cultural diversity for sustainable development, ensuring a more effective integration of culture in development strategies and policies at all levels, notably in United Nations common country programming strategies, policies and programmes;

Further invites UNESCO to enhance international cooperation to develop strategies and policies that are conducive to culturally sensitive sustainable development;

Calls upon the Director-General to continue promoting and supporting the implementation of the standard-setting instruments in the field of culture and cultural diversity, notably by encouraging the adoption and application of appropriate national legislations;

Recommends to the Director-General to strengthen efforts for the evidence-based demonstration of the impact of culture on development.
The General Conference,

**Recalling** 31 C/Resolution 25, of 2 November 2001, by which it unanimously adopted the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity, together with the main lines of its action plan,

**Expressing** satisfaction with the important progress accomplished in the implementation of the principles of the Declaration and the attainment of the objectives contained in its action plan at national, regional and global levels,

**Recognizing** that important challenges remain to be faced to attain the complete recognition of the principles of the Declaration and its implementation,

**Reaffirming** UNESCO’s global commitment to cultural diversity, tolerance and dialogue among cultures as the best guarantees of international peace and security,

**Invites** Member States to take further measures which they deem appropriate to promote the principles of the Declaration and to facilitate their application;

**Invites** the Director-General:

(a) to continue the implementation both at normative level, through the standard-setting tools relating to culture and cultural diversity, and at operational level, by carrying out activities underpinned by the principles of the Declaration;
(b) to take into consideration the principles contained in the Declaration and the main lines of its action plan in the implementation of all UNESCO's programmes, namely in the 36 C/5;

c) to take further steps to ensure a larger dissemination and enhanced awareness of the principles of the Declaration among States, International Organizations, civil society (in particular youth), the private sector and donors.