

Washington, USA, 6 April 2004

Board of international arts agency network meets in Washington DC

The board of the International Federation of Arts Councils and Culture Agencies (IFACCA) concluded its two-day meeting in Washington DC today. The meeting was hosted by the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) and the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies (NASAA).

Founded in 2001, IFACCA is the first global network of arts funding agencies, with a membership covering 47 nations. The board comprises senior arts policymakers from Finland, England, Viet Nam, Singapore, Colombia, Canada and South Africa and is chaired by Risto Ruohonen, Director of the Arts and Cultural Heritage Division, Finnish Ministry of Education.

High on the board's agenda were topics such as government's role in supporting arts in education, and the increasing demand for methods of measuring the benefits of funding the arts.

Prompted by a lengthy paper prepared by the IFACCA secretariat, board members discussed the monitoring and evaluation of arts and cultural policies and the desirability of creating practical and robust statistical indicators. With many analysts and organisations around the world working independently on developing 'cultural indicators', the board noted an urgent need to encourage dialogue and coordination. The first step will be the release of a discussion paper in mid 2004.

Proposals to host the Third World Summit on the Arts and Culture were considered by the board and a final decision will be announced mid-year. The board noted that the high standard set by the Canada Council and the National Arts Council of Singapore in staging the previous World Summits had created a challenge for future hosts.

The board also discussed its corporate plan, finances, research program and future projects. The board approved two new national members; from Viet Nam and from the Belgian Flemish community.

Guests to the meeting included the Chairman of the NEA, Dana Gioia; the inaugural Chair of IFACCA, Dr Shirley L Thomson CC; and Dr Jonathan Katz, CEO of NASAA. The board met with representatives of the local arts and diplomatic communities at a reception hosted by the President of Americans for the Arts, Robert Lynch.

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