

Address to the 4th Ordinary Session of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions at UNESCO Headquarters, Paris 30 November 2010

My name is Sarah Gardner Executive Director of the International Federation of Arts Councils and Culture Agencies (IFACCA), the secretariat of which is located in Sydney, Australia. This Friday marks the 10th anniversary of the founding of IFACCA at the first World Summit on Arts and Culture hosted by the Canada Council for the Arts in Ottawa.

The Federation's members include the Ministries of Culture and national arts funding agencies in 75 countries representing all continents. So while IFACCA's observer status in this meeting is as an NGO, we are in fact a network of government agencies.

Our focus is on the policies and strategies that support contemporary arts practice. We view the arts as central to the broader context of culture and cultural policy.

For ten years we have worked with our members to build an infrastructure to share knowledge and expertise on good practice in the field of arts and cultural policy. In that time we have published research reports on 30 different areas of cultural policy; we have published 200 editions of ACORNS a cultural policy e-bulletin; have archived well over 10,000 items of news about cultural policy, and maintained a directory of ministries of culture in over 160 countries. We also manage ConnectCP, the international database of experts in Cultural Policy which contains profiles of nearly 1,000 experts from over 100 countries.

We have also staged four World Summits on Arts and Culture as well as numerous international mini-summits. Specifically in relation to this Convention, we have published a *Briefing Note for National Arts Funding Agencies* in three languages which has been circulated internationally.

This year IFACCA has been in discussions with the Council of Europe and the ERICarts Institute – the founders of the highly regarded *Compendium of Cultural Policies and Trends in Europe* – about creating an international version of this cultural policy database.

Such a database would serve as a tool for government policymakers, researchers, advocates, civil society and the global community.

I draw your attention to this project in the context of discussions of the operational guidelines for Article 19, as such a database would provide a useful mechanism to support the sharing of information on policies to support cultural diversity, and to support capacity building to this end.

While the planning of this initiative is still in its early stages, the level of interest has been remarkable and we already have the confirmed or in-principle interest of several national, regional and intergovernmental organizations.

In Asia this includes the Korean National Commission for UNESCO, the Asia Europe Foundation, the Korean Ministry of Culture, UNESCO Bangkok office and the ASEAN COCI secretariat.

In the Pacific, it includes the Secretariat of the Pacific Community, the Australia Council for the Arts and UNESCO Office for the Pacific States in Apia.

In Africa, it includes the African Arts Institute and Arterial network.

And with the support of the European Cultural Foundation and Cairo-based Culture Resource (Al Mawred Al Thaqafy), profiles of eight Arab countries have been published and will be added to the international database.

In the Americas we have had preliminary discussion with the Organisation of American States (OAS) and the Organization of Ibero-American States.

Through a partnership of these agencies – and many other organizations and national government agencies that we will approach in coming months – we intend to create a central, web-based and regularly updated database of country-specific profiles of cultural policies. The project is guided by a detailed operational plan and a working group of the partners.

The partners have the collective expertise and networks to manage the relationships needed to deliver this project, and the technical and marketing know-how to maximise its impact.

This Friday IFACCA's Chairman, the CEO of Arts Council England, Alan Davey, and I will present the project to staff here in the Culture Division of UNESCO.

In summary, this project will benefit national governments and civil society by providing, for example:

- Reliable, comparable cultural policy information, data, research and analysis that reflects the different contexts in which policies for culture are developed and implemented;
- A consistent format and methodology for storing information, making it easier to keep up-to-date; and....
- A mechanism for assisting in the reporting on the UNESCO 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions and other similar instruments;)

Accordingly, I would propose that, in relation to Article 19 and indeed Articles 9, 10, 12, 14, 15 and 21 of the 2005 Convention, the committee note the offer of this international cultural policy database project as well as IFACCA's existing ConnectCP database, as potential mechanisms to support exchange, analysis, and dissemination of information on policies to support cultural diversity and to support capacity building to this end.