

HIGHLIGHTS:

- Second Congress of the IFCCD: the Coalitions For Cultural Diversity call for concrete action to achieve the full potential of the UNESCO Convention
- Australia's Ratification Takes Convention Across Century Threshold
- Visibility, Information Sharing on the Convention's Intergovernmental Committee Agenda for December
- Participants Attending Santiago Gathering of Coalitions for Cultural Diversity of the Americas and MERCOSUR Focus on Concrete Actions for Diversity

SECOND CONGRESS OF THE IFCCD: THE COALITIONS FOR CULTURAL DIVERSITY CALL FOR CONCRETE ACTION TO ACHIEVE THE FULL POTENTIAL OF THE UNESCO CONVENTION

The Second Congress of the International Federation Of Coalitions For Cultural Diversity (IFCCD) held from November 5-8, 2009 in Salvador de Bahia, Brazil, closed with the adoption of a series of resolutions stressing the importance of effectively implementing the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions to ensure the right of governments to apply cultural policies and other steps to support their cultures.

Founded in Seville, Spain, in 2007, the IFCCD is composed of 42 national coalitions for cultural diversity representing more than 600 professional cultural organizations in the fields of book publishing, the movie, television and music industries, the performing arts, visual arts and new media sectors.

Joining local Brazilian participants were representatives from 40 countries at the Congress—delegates of 30 national coalitions, and some 10 international observers.

[In their final resolutions](#), the delegates in attendance at the Congress focused on the importance of keeping cultural cooperation initiatives clearly distinct from trade agreements and timetables, and on ensuring the comprehensive exemption of all cultural sectors from such trade agreements.

They also called on the UNESCO Convention's Intergovernmental Committee to tackle the issue of promoting the principles and objectives of the Convention in other international forums. As well, they called on governments to act to quickly make the International Fund For Cultural Diversity operational and to incorporate culture into their sustainable development strategies.

In Salvador, delegates of IFCCD member coalitions elected new members to the Federation's Board of Directors.

At the first meeting of the new Board, held November 6, Board members re-elected Rasmané Ouedraogo President of the IFCCD for a second two-year term. Mr. Ouedraogo, President of Burkina Faso's Coalition, is a well-known African actor.

Mané Nett of the Chilean Coalition was elected Vice-President for the Americas. Beat Santschi of the Swiss Coalition remains Vice-President for Europe and Peter Shannon of the New Zealand Coalition remains the Vice-President for the Asia-Pacific Region. Solange Drouin of the Canadian Coalition also remains the Treasurer and was elected the IFCCD Secretary as well.

In addition to the General Assembly of IFCCD member Coalitions, the Salvador Congress included two days of public presentations and discussion panels on important issues relating to implementation of the UNESCO Convention.

During this section of the Congress, invited legal experts and government officials joined artists and other cultural practitioners in discussions focusing on effective policy approaches to strengthening national cultural sectors; the need to promote the principles and objectives of the Convention in other international forums, particularly trade forums; the importance of integrating culture into sustainable development strategies; and the importance of continuing vigilance and action by civil society to ensure its voice is heard in the implementation process;

The IFCCD in particular wishes to thank the host Brazilian Coalition, without which the holding of this event would not have been possible; it also expresses its thanks for the financial support of the Ministry of Culture of the Government of Brazil, the Government of the State of Bahia, the Canadian and French coalitions, the Organisation internationale de la Francophonie, the Commonwealth Foundation, the Government of Québec and the Department of Canadian Heritage.

For more information, visit the Website of the Congress at <http://www.eidc.com.br/>

AUSTRALIA'S RATIFICATION TAKES CONVENTION ACROSS CENTURY THRESHOLD

The UNESCO Convention on The Protection and Promotion of The Diversity of Cultural Expressions officially surpassed the threshold of 100 ratifications in October, a little more than two years after it entered into force, and has now reached a total of 103 ratifications.

This achievement is all the more encouraging since Australia, which had abstained at the time of the adoption vote on the Convention in 2005, officially became the 100th country to ratify it. Australia's ratification points to the potential for enlarging the ultimate base of ratifications of the Convention beyond the 148 States that originally voted for it. UNESCO's membership in fact totals 193 Member States.

The Netherlands, the Dominican Republic and Saint-Vincent-and-the-Grenadines are the three other countries to file their ratification documents with UNESCO since September.

Although passing the 100-ratification mark in such a short period of time is a remarkable achievement, many challenges lie ahead—in particular, achieving greater geographical balance among the signatory States. And growing the overall number of ratifications remains essential: a quick look at other to other significant international treaties (e.g.: Convention on Biological Diversity: 191 ratifications, Children's Rights Convention: 193 ratifications) makes it clear that the Convention will need to surpass a minimum threshold of 150 ratifications to maximize its legal and political clout on the international stage.

VISIBILITY, INFORMATION SHARING ON THE CONVENTION'S INTERGOVERNMENTAL COMMITTEE AGENDA FOR DECEMBER

The third regular session [of the Intergovernmental Committee](#) will be held at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris December 7-11. This will be the first meeting of the Committee since the kickoff of the second implementation phase of the Convention on the Diversity of Cultural Expression at the Conference of the Parties this past June.

The main items on the agenda include development of draft operational guidelines setting out approaches to increase the visibility of the Convention, as well as well as guidelines for Articles 9 (information-sharing and transparency), and 19 (exchange, analysis and dissemination of information).

The Committee will also work on developing a strategy to encourage additional ratifications, and a plan and timetable for getting the International Fund for Cultural Diversity up and running.

The International Federation of Coalitions for Cultural Diversity (IFCCD) will be represented at the December meeting.

One priority the IFCCD will be emphasizing is the need for the Committee to put the question of promoting the Convention's principles and objectives in other international forums on its agenda; this work is crucial to ensuring the Convention is established as a touchstone reference point when culture is discussed in such forums.

This question was not set as a priority by the June Conference of Parties, and is not on agenda for December. However, as previously detailed in the October issue of *Coalition Currents*, the Intergovernmental Committee's mandate as set out in the Convention explicitly gives it the scope to take on this question.

The documents relating to the meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee are available online by clicking this link:

http://portal.unesco.org/culture/en/ev.php-URL_ID=39859&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html

PARTICIPANTS ATTENDING SANTIAGO GATHERING OF COALITIONS FOR CULTURAL DIVERSITY OF THE AMERICAS AND MERCOSUR FOCUS ON CONCRETE ACTIONS FOR DIVERSITY

Representatives of 11 national coalitions for cultural diversity taking part in the Second Meeting of the Coalitions for Cultural Diversity of the Americas and MERCOSUR emerged from the meeting with an action plan setting out a coordinated approach to furthering civil society efforts to foster greater cultural diversity in the region.

The meeting was held September 2-4 at the headquarters of the Economic Commission For Latin America and the Caribbean (CEPAL) in Santiago, Chile, and also included a day-long seminar entitled "The Convention On The Protection And Promotion Of The Diversity Of Cultural Expressions: From Theory To Reality"

The coalition delegates in attendance, representing more than 150 professional cultural organizations from the region, stressed the need to apply the rights and commitments contained in the UNESCO Convention on the Protection And Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions.

To this end, they called on States that have already ratified the Convention to take concrete steps to realize its full potential by applying policies and other measures in support of their

domestic cultural sectors, while emphasizing the importance of States also promoting the principles and objectives of the Convention in other international forums.

Participants also emphasized the need to strengthen civil society's engagement in the implementation process. Consistent with this, delegates adopted [an action plan](#) focusing on four themes: the treatment of culture in free trade agreements to ensure states maintain the right to apply policies; UNESCO's implementation process for the Convention; implementation and awareness-raising; and actions to improve the circulation of cultural works.

The first area of focus lists actions for more systematic monitoring of free trade agreements to defend the right of States to develop cultural policies during trade negotiations.

The second focal point deals with participation in the implementation process of the Convention at UNESCO, including urging States to make significant and recurring contributions to the Convention's International Fund for Cultural Diversity, and to make the Fund operational on a priority basis.

The third area focuses on concrete action that can be taken to increase the visibility of the Convention, to favor a more balanced exchange of cultural content in the region, and to draw attention to cases where rights affirmed by the Convention are not being upheld.

Finally, under the fourth areas of focus, the coalitions undertook to collect and share, through the International Federation of Coalitions for Cultural Diversity (FCCD), information regarding new approaches to facilitating the broader circulation of cultural works.

September 3 consisted of a day-long public seminar focusing on themes relating to the UNESCO Convention, including effective approaches to applying the rights affirmed in the Convention, and the specific challenges facing cultural diversity in the Americas. Participants included Chilean Senator Jaime Gazmuri, Brazilian filmmaker Geraldo Moraes (representing the Brazilian Coalition For Cultural Diversity), Chilean journalist Faride Zerán, Colombian musician Nicolás Uribe (representing the Colombian Coalition For Cultural Diversity), Martin Hopenhayn, the Director of the Social Development Branch of CEPAL, Vice-president of the Chilean Coalition Paulo Slachevsky, Secretary of the Chilean Coalition Jorge Mahú, General Director of the Society of the national playwright of Chile (ATN) César Cuadra and Chilean filmmaker Bruno Bettati.

The Santiago meeting, which followed the first such gathering held in Asunción, Paraguay, in May 2009, was organized by the Chilean Coalition for Cultural Diversity in conjunction with the International Federation of Coalitions For Cultural Diversity and was made possible due to the support of the Chilean National Culture And Arts Council, CEPAL, the Chilean Copyright Society (SCD) and the Canadian Coalition For Cultural Diversity.