



Vancouver Statement of First Meeting of Coalitions and Cultural Organizations of Asia-Pacific States

Representatives of cultural organizations from 10 Asia-Pacific states gathered in Vancouver, Canada, March 27-29, to discuss the implications and opportunities presented by the UNESCO Convention on the protection and promotion of the diversity of cultural expressions. At the conclusion of their discussions, they agreed on the following declaration:

Recognizing the distinctive nature of cultural goods and services as transmitters of values, identity and meaning in addition to culture's dimension as a key pillar of sustainable economic and social development, we, as representatives of cultural organizations from across Asia-Pacific, urge all UNESCO member states from the region that have not yet done so to ratify the Convention on the diversity of cultural expressions on a priority basis.

We urge these same states to meaningfully involve and support civil society, including cultural organizations, in the process for implementing the Convention at the national, regional and international levels—notably through consultation and engagement in the application of policies and other measures to support domestic cultural industries.

We also call on all Asia-Pacific states to ensure coherence in their actions, and to not only ratify the convention, but to uphold and observe its principles and objectives in other international forums—notably by refraining from liberalization commitments in trade negotiations that would constrain their right to apply cultural policies and other measures in support of their domestic cultural sector.

We undertake to work together to advocate ratification and meaningful engagement of civil society in implementation of the Convention by expanding the mobilization of Asia Pacific cultural organizations, and to explore the creation of national Coalitions for Cultural Diversity in our own countries to pursue these objectives.

We urge States to publicly affirm their intention to ratify the Convention and engage in its effective implementation through the adoption of statements in such forums as the ministerial meeting of the International Network on Cultural Policy (INCP), the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting, and appropriate meetings of the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN).

Adopted March 29, in Vancouver, Canada by representatives of cultural organizations from Australia, Brunei, Canada, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, New Zealand, the Philippines, Singapore and South Korea.

The meeting was presented by the Canadian Coalition for Cultural Diversity in association with the Commonwealth Foundation and the International Federation of Coalitions for Cultural Diversity (IFCCD)