



*Third International Meeting  
of cultural professional organizations  
Troisièmes Rencontres Internationales  
des organisations professionnelles de la culture  
Terceros Encuentros Internacionales  
de las organizaciones profesionales de la cultura*

세계문화기구를 위한 연대회의 · Korean Coalition for Cultural Diversity

## **Declaration of the Third International Meeting of Cultural Professional Organizations**

### **(The Seoul Declaration)**

We, the 400 delegates of organizations representing authors, performers, composers, directors, musicians, technicians, writers, and visual artists as well as independent producers, publishers, broadcasters and distributors from 57 countries who gathered from June 1-4, 2004, in Seoul, Korea, to defend and promote cultural diversity, endorse the following declaration.

Holding in common the following principles:

- That cultural contents and artistic expressions are essential vehicles of a people's identities, experiences and values, and as such are innately different from other goods and services.
- That the citizens of every country must have meaningful access to cultural contents and artistic expressions from their own country, and that artists and creators must similarly be able to reach out to their fellow citizens with their creations.
- That a balanced exchange of cultural contents and artistic expressions among all countries fundamentally contributes to a better understanding among peoples and in the process can contribute to a more cooperative and peaceful world, realizing the promise of a globalization that truly reflects the needs of humanity.
- That meaningful levels of domestic cultural production in all countries are an essential precondition for a balanced exchange of cultural goods and services among countries at the international level.
- That market forces alone will not ensure meaningful levels of cultural creation and production in each country, and for this reason states must be able to continue to pursue unencumbered cultural policies, including public service institutions, that ensure culture is created and extensively circulated within their own country, and around the world.

- That for all of these reasons cultural goods must not be subordinated to the rules of international trade agreements—whether at the World Trade Organization (WTO), or at the regional or bilateral levels—and the sovereign right of states to have cultural policies must be unequivocally affirmed in international law through a convention on diversity of cultural contents and artistic expressions, now being developed at UNESCO, that would reaffirm the sovereign right of states to have cultural policies, while fully respecting human rights, freedom of expression and artistic creation.

Accordingly, as representatives of cultural professional organizations from 57 countries, we commit to:

- Engage each of our organizations in support of the campaign for a strong convention on diversity of cultural contents and artistic expressions at UNESCO, while working to ensure that trade negotiations—whether at the WTO, or at the regional or bilateral levels—do not erode the ability of states to develop, implement and maintain cultural policies;
- Work collectively at the national level—through coalitions bringing together the full weight of organizations from all sectors of culture in each of our countries—in support of our objectives; and
- Reach out to the leaders of governments at the national, regional, and international levels to persuade them of the importance of supporting this campaign.

Consistent with this mobilization, we call on the leaders of all countries to:

- Resist the pressure from international trade negotiations—whether at the WTO, or at the regional or bilateral levels—by abstaining from liberalization commitments affecting culture that would jeopardize their country’s ability to enact cultural policies; and
- Build support for the process now underway at UNESCO, ensuring that the convention on diversity of cultural contents and artistic expressions is adopted at UNESCO’s 33<sup>rd</sup> General Conference in 2005.

In developing the convention, we urge UNESCO and its member states to:

- Continue their work to ensure the convention on diversity of cultural contents and artistic expressions is a strong convention—a legally-binding instrument that will fill a void in international law by providing a legal foundation for countries to develop, implement and maintain cultural policies, thereby serving as a counterweight to the pressure on culture from international trade agreements.
- Adopt the convention at its 33<sup>rd</sup> General Conference in 2005.
- Recognize the particular importance of this convention to developing countries, for which the need is fundamentally to preserve the latitude to introduce cultural policies in the future that will nurture the growth of meaningful domestic capacity for cultural production; to this end, we urge UNESCO to incorporate into the convention concrete

measures for supporting such capacity building among developing nations, along with mechanisms for cooperation among developed and developing nations in support of this same goal, and we particularly urge developed nations to commit their own financial resources in support of capacity building in a manner that complements measures initiated through UNESCO.

- Build on UNESCO's decision to grant the International Liaison Committee of Coalitions for Cultural Diversity observer status by ensuring that organizations representing cultural professionals are meaningfully involved throughout the process for developing the content of the convention.

Adopted June 3, 2004, Seoul, Republic of Korea