

## **Sindh government formulating policy on culture: Sharmila**

Andrew Senior, a consultant of the UNSECO and an international expert on culture and creative economy said on Monday that Pakistan had tremendous opportunities to boost rich cultural and creative sectors for socio-economic and sustainable development.

Speaking at the opening of the consultation meeting on policies for Pakistan's creative sector, he said that the contemporary creative arts scene including audio-visual and performing arts and crafts, music, publishing and interactive media, design and creative services were rapidly emerging and opening new horizons from rural areas to urban cities in the country.

The consultations are organised by UNESCO Pakistan with the support of Centre for Culture and Development with funding from the Government of Denmark. Both federal and provincial government representatives were also present and engaged in the discussions. The consultations come at a very timely moment as the provincial and federal governments are in the process of drafting culture policies.

"UNESCO has launched a series of consultations to engage key stakeholders such as government actors, representatives of civil society organisations, including women, youth, media and marginalized groups as well as young entrepreneurs to raise awareness, and to discuss key challenges, and opportunities, and make policy recommendations for Pakistan's culture and creative sectors," he said adding that the purpose of these consultations was to build support for signing of the 2005 UNESCO Convention for the protection and promotion of diversity of cultural expressions.

Andrew Senior expected that success stories would be collected to demonstrate the creative sector's contribution to economic growth, job creation and social inclusion in Pakistan.

Speaking at the session, Sharmila Farooqi, Sindh Minister for Culture congratulated UNESCO Pakistan for holding the consultative dialogue. She said her ministry was committed to ensure that all stake-holders and a cross section of people and institutions were engaged in protection, promotion and respect for diverse cultural expression and culture of the province.

"Nations that allow their sense of history, culture and diversity to be lost, are ultimately themselves lost in the history," she said.

Farooqi said that her ministry was in the process of articulating a policy on culture for the province. Endorsing the UNESCO initiative, she said she was delighted to be part of the process and wished for the process to feed and inform policy making on culture in Pakistan.

In his address, Noor ul Haque Baloch, Secretary Culture Balochistan emphasised that each province needed to articulate its own culture policy by engaging general public along with experts and policy makers for deliberation at each level. He highlighted that the policy should be reflected by the experience and cultural aspirations of the people.

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