

[I'm assuming that the introduction will say that the message was recorded in the UK, where I'm based. That I'm one of UNESCO's panel of experts on the 2005 Convention. That I set up the British Council's programme of work on the creative economy in 1999 and led that programme's strategic development for over a decade. That I'm currently working on UNESCO's CKU-funded project in Pakistan, which seeks to develop wider understanding and ratification of the 2005 Convention in Pakistan.]

Good afternoon everybody and greetings from a verdant but otherwise rather grey and dull England.

My sincere apologies for not being able to be with you today to celebrate this World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development.

I am deeply honoured to be invited to make the opening remarks at your conference today, as you begin your voyage of enquiry into UNESCO's 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions and the meaning and potential of the creative economy.

Arguably, the creative economy is nothing new. Artists, whilst driven to create also have to eat, so they have always sought either payment for their work or the patronage of a wealthy individual. The Mughal courts, provide us with a fine example of this with their investment in the arts, literature and science. So this is also nothing new to Pakistan.

Cultural artefacts are all around us but the 2005 Convention isn't about artefacts, there are other UNESCO treaties that cover heritage. The 2005 Convention is about contemporary culture and how our experience of culture in the 21st century presents remarkable opportunities for a cultural manifestation from Pakistan to find an audience in Latin America or Japan or Canada or anywhere in the world, if it resonates in a way that can engage an audience there. So it is about how this trade in cultural experiences has both cultural and economic value, and how these can play a critical role in the development agenda.

And it can play a critical role for two reasons. The first is because this creative economy is hugely valuable. For a country like the UK it is now

the second most valuable part of our economy, the global market for the UK's cultural good and services is huge.

The second reason is because creativity is the only natural resource that is evenly spread around the world. Wherever there are people there is creativity, which means that every place has the potential to participate in this economy. Every place has things to bring to the table. Every place can use the creative economy as a tool in its development.

Our appreciation of this economic value is fairly new. In fact it is less than 20 years old. Arguably in those 20 years, the creative economy has gone from having an unrecognised value to being identified as a global sector worth an estimated US\$4.3 trillion per annum. US\$4.3 trillion, which is 20% larger than the German economy and 2.5 times greater than what the world spends on arms each year.

In 2005 – over a decade ago – the creative economy was calculated to be 6.1% of the global economy. In the intervening decade the value of exports of creative goods and services grew by over 130%, which suggests that – at a time when the global economy has contracted – the creative economy's share of the global economy will have grown significantly.

But these economic statistics are only part of the picture. Because to really understand the potential of the creative economy we have to understand the link between CULTURE, CREATIVITY and COMMUNICATIONS.

These 3 C's are at the heart of the potency and power of the creative economy.

- Culture is this thing that surrounds us. The mechanism through which we understand our selves and our society. The part of our identity that is reflected in what we eat, what we wear, how we sound, how we behave and how we expect others to behave.
- Creativity is the innovative force that has for millennia ensured that culture is dynamic rather than static. Creativity challenges culture to respond to a changing world, whether that be the truth or hypocrisy of that world, its suffering or its joy.
- Communication – or perhaps more precisely communication technology – is the mechanism which has changed the way in

which the creative economy functions and is increasingly changing our appreciation and experience of culture.

And since 2005, there has been a revolution in communication technology, with the growth in a variety of social media platforms and mechanisms to distribute content digitally.

All of this has also accelerated growth within the sector because two things have changed, the business models of creative businesses, and our understanding of culture.

Today, a kid in Tokyo, Tampa or Toulouse can as readily be listening to Slow Spin or watching Burka Avenger as a kid in Lahore, Lagos or Liverpool. And for that kid, this bit of contemporary Pakistani culture, streamed into their home, not onto the TV but onto their MP3 player, mobile phone, or tablet is personal to them. It can resonate with them and it can become part of their culture, part of their identity.

In the same way that thousands of Pakistani kids feel such a strong attachment to Harry Potter.

In the past decade, we no longer talk so much about the physical forms of cultural content – books, records, CDs – for one simple reason, the principal mechanism of consuming these things is becoming digital. And not digital in the sense of a TV screen which all the family watch but digital in the sense of personal portable devices – mobile phones.

And this communications technology is doing something else – it is allowing all of us to become more creative. It is providing us with the technology to make films, to take photographs, to record music ... and then to distribute those personal creative products to friends and family, anywhere in the world, in a moment.

At the moment, the trade in creative goods and services is still fairly heavily dominated by the largest economies and the dominant global cultures but these things are changing and Pakistan, as a country that speaks the global language of English, has every opportunity to compete in that global market ... and not only in English.

One of the key trends in the majority native English-speaking countries today is a new preparedness to engage with content in foreign languages, not dubbed but sub-titled. The key factors are the quality of

the story telling and the quality of the production. If you can get those things right, then what you produce can travel.

So what does this mean for Pakistani culture, particularly in its more traditional manifestations. The 2005 Convention seeks to protect and promote the diversity of cultural expressions. This means two things. That it recognises the importance of every culture, no matter how minority, understanding their contribution to humankind. But it also recognises that not everything can survive – as is the nature of life – and that, in fact, to survive cultural manifestations have to be able to adapt to ensure that they remain relevant to the understanding and experience of each new generation.

So, a traditional form might reach an audience or market, which may allow it to survive but for it to thrive it has to be able to adapt to engage with a wider audience. And that adaptation can be in form or substance or it can be as simple as how it is marketed and communicated.

For me, this is one of the most important conversations that we can have as people. It is a conversation that affects every geography and level of human society, because it is about the essence of who we are as people, communities and individuals. and how we, as individuals and as nations, can fulfil our potential in ways that are both meaningful and respectful of others and the different cultures, norms, traditions and values that make up our increasingly globalised world.

It is about culture, creativity and communication but it is also about jobs, and hope, and development.

Aid is important, particularly humanitarian aid and disaster relief, and people of every faith and none, share an understanding of the importance of responding to need and crisis. But aid isn't a sustainable system of development, it's a sticking plaster when governments fail their people or when nature asserts its independence.

So much more important is development that is about self-fulfilment and sustainability. The creative economy offers this opportunity.

Through this event today, and the programme of work that we are now undertaking, I hope that we will see new jobs and new creative businesses created, and new dialogues, partnerships and opportunities

emerge. Allowing Pakistan to become more at ease with its own cultural diversity and better understood internationally. Your discussions today are one small step in that direction but it is a step on the right path.