

PRESS RELEASE

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Consultation on policies for Pakistan's culture and creative sector started in Islamabad

ISLAMABAD: Culture and creative sector stakeholders from GB, ICT, AJK, FATA and KP underlined today in a meeting in Islamabad the importance of diversity of cultural goods and services which are possessing enormous potential for socio-economic and sustainable development of Pakistan. They urged for a participatory process for policy making and made recommendations for the signing of UNESCO 2005 Convention for the protection and promotion of diversity of cultural expressions. They reaffirm their commitment for continuous advocacy to devising effective policies and strategies for Pakistan's Culture and Creative Sectors both at federal and provincial levels.

UNESCO Pakistan has organized last consultation meeting on policies for Pakistan's culture and creative sector. Earlier, similar consultations were held in Lahore and Karachi with representation from the Government of Balochistan. The consultations are funded by the Government of Denmark under a program implemented with support from Centre for Culture and Development (CKU) which aims to empower governmental and civil society actors including the private sector to take part in a participatory policy making for the creative sector and to sign the 2005 UNESCO Convention for the protection and promotion of diversity of cultural expressions.

Speaking at the opening ceremony, UNESCO Representative to Pakistan, Ms. Vibeke Jensen informed that the recommendations coming out of the three workshops will be shared in meetings later this year with both federal and provincial governments and parliamentarians to encourage a signing of the Convention. More than a 144 UNESCO Member States have signed the Convention since 2005 when it was adopted. She stressed that the Convention advocates for the introduction of policies and measures that nurture creativity, provide access for creators to participate in domestic and international marketplaces where their artistic works/expressions can be recognized and compensate and ensure that these expressions are accessible to the broader public.

Addressing the stakeholders, Mr. Mohsin S Haqqani, Secretary National History and Literary Division, Government of Pakistan reaffirmed the Government of Pakistan commitment to promote the diversity of cultural expression and initiatives for boosting Pakistan's creative sector. He extended his profound gratitude to UNESCO for the organization of the consultation. He mentioned that the creation of a policy working group and key recommendations from these consultations will help the government in adopting appropriate and transparent policies for culture and creativity. He also mentioned that the government is undertaking preparations to sign the UNESCO 2005 Convention. Senator Rubina Khalid were also present on the occasion and deliberated on the culture and creative sector policy.

Ms. Ammara Durrani, Programme Advisor CKU Pakistan Programme, congratulated UNESCO and the Government of Pakistan for organizing these country wide consultations as part of UNESCO's project. She briefed about the two-year CKU Pakistan Culture and Development Programme being implemented in Pakistan in partnership with national and international organizations, such as UNESCO, to support and promote rights-based art, cultural activities, creative industries and inter-cultural dialogue and cooperation at national and provincial levels. She lauded UNESCO's key role in facilitating a national platform for stakeholder dialogue that is aimed at recommending a robust and effective policy framework for Pakistan's culture sector to leverage and harness its dynamic potential and opportunities.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development highlights the important role of culture in relation to education, sustainable cities, food security, the environment, economic growth, sustainable consumption and production patterns, peaceful and inclusive societies. Globally, the creative economy has grown extremely fast over the past twenty years and is today worth an estimated USD 4.3 trillion per year, contributing to 6.1% of the global economy. In Pakistan, total exports of cultural goods have increased from USD 60 million in 2004 to USD 276 million in 2013. It is therefore a very opportune moment for Pakistan to explore how the policies and governance of the culture and creative industries can be strengthened.

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