



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

Organisation
des Nations Unies
pour l'éducation,
la science et la culture

Organización
de las Naciones Unidas
para la Educación,
la Ciencia y la Cultura

Организация
Объединенных Наций по
вопросам образования,
науки и культуры

منظمة الأمم المتحدة
للتربية والعلم والثقافة

联合国教育、
科学及文化组织

Address by Irina Bokova,

Director-General of UNESCO

on the occasion of the Second Creative Cities Beijing Summit

Beijing, 6 June 2016

Excellency Ms Liu Yandong, Vice-Prime Minister of the People's Republic of China,

Honourable Mr Anshun Wang, Mayor of Beijing,

Excellency Mr Hao Ping, Vice-Minister of Education, and President of the National Commission of the People's Republic of China for UNESCO,

Honourable Mayors and Deputy Mayors of *UNESCO Creative Cities*,

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am honoured to be here for this *Second UNESCO Creative Cities Beijing Summit*.

I recall well the First Summit, held in Beijing in October 2013 – and I wish to thank Excellency Ms Liu Yandong once again for her personal engagement and leadership.

Less than three years have passed, and we have seen dramatic change.

In 2013, the world was working to implement the Millennium Development Goals and craft a new vision of sustainable development.

The *UNESCO Creative Cities Network* then brought 38 cities to Beijing from across the globe.

This year, the world is taking forward 17 new Sustainable Development Goals, set forth in the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, embodying a new vision for sustainability, humanity, the planet, for the next 15 years.

This is complemented by the historic *Paris Climate Change Agreement*.

Today, the *UNESCO Creative Cities Network* includes 116 cities from 54 different countries.

The world is changing quickly, and cities stand at the heart of this transformation.

More than half of the world's population today lives in the cities.

In one generation, this will rise to two thirds.

Cities are our greatest motors of dynamism, poverty elimination and 'living together.'

They are also sources of injustice and exclusion.

Urbanization has always been a force for transformation – we must ensure this transformation is just and sustainable, and based on shared values.

Infrastructure planning, water and energy supply – these are essential 'hardware' for sustainable cities.

They need the right 'software' to work.

This requires sharper policies, stronger cooperation, wider knowledge-sharing.

Launched in 2004, the *UNESCO Creative Cities Network* promotes cooperation among cities that have identified creativity as a strategic enabler for sustainable urban development.

This is not a vague commitment.

Examples abound of cities that have harnessed the power of creativity to boost urban spaces, to stimulate wider participation in cultural life, to promote local cultural industries, to transform cities as living environments to empower people.

This is the spirit of Sustainable Development Goal 11 -- to “*make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable*”, with culture as essential levers for action.

UNESCO has highlighted these priorities in its recent global report -- *Re/Shaping Cultural Policies* -- and I am pleased the Chinese version will be launched during the *World Culture Forum*, in Macao, on 7-9 June.

The forthcoming *UNESCO Global Report on Culture for Sustainable Urban Development* will be another key contribution to this debate in *Habitat III*, in Quito, Ecuador, next October.

I wish to take this opportunity to thank the Government of China for its leadership.

The Government has made culture one of the pillars of its development strategy -- a driver, in the words of President Xi Jinping, of the “*Chinese dream*.”

With eight members, China is the best represented country in the *UNESCO Creative Cities Network*.

I wish to single out Beijing for its outstanding leadership and pay a special tribute to the Honourable Mayor, Mr Anshung Wang.

Beijing joined the UNESCO Network in 2012, as home to more than 30,000 design students... 30 cultural and creative clusters... some 250,000 people in the design industry, bringing in some 180 billion yuan per year.

Beijing hosts some of the world’s most celebrated architectural designs – and it is not by chance that three years ago, Beijing hosted at the very same time the first *Creative Cities Summit* and the first *International Conference on Learning Cities*, to build education, lifelong learning, innovation and creativity at the heart of the future of cities.

Beijing is today one of the world’s leading cities, for exchange, for innovation, for education, for cultural exchanges....

Last November, the 38th session of the UNESCO General Conference approved the creation of the *Beijing International Centre for Creativity and Sustainable Development*.

This is the first UNESCO Category II Centre addressing culture and creativity, and I am confident it will open new horizons for cooperation.

The *UNESCO Creative Cities Network* provides a unique platform to harness the full of power of culture for more inclusive, more innovative and more sustainable cities.

To move further, we need a wider Network, improving further its geographic and thematic balance.

We need stronger governance of the Network, and deeper ties across the seven creative fields.

We need also deeper support to the Network, more predictable and long-term funding.

I wish to thank such cities as Beijing and Shenzhen, Santa Fe and Fabriano, for their support – I appeal to all members for their full engagement.

I am deeply grateful to the Beijing Municipal People's Government and the National Commission of the People's Republic of China for UNESCO for hosting this event.

I thank every Honourable Mayor for their commitment to building culture and creativity into urban policy-making.

Cities stand at the intersection of the past and the future.

They are places where tradition meets modernity, where the 'local' and the 'global' interact, where the economic, social and cultural dimensions of sustainability interweave most tightly.

In this spirit, I wish the *Second Creative Cities Beijing Summit* every success.