

Third International Youth Forum on Creativity and Heritage along the Silk Roads: Youth Creativity and Innovation in the Age of Media Arts

31 March to 6 April 2019

I. Introduction

The *International Youth Forum on Creativity and Heritage along the Silk Roads 3* is organized as a follow-up to and building on the successes of the first two International Youth Fora (IYF) held in Changsha and Quanzhou, in April 2017 and in Changsha and Nanjing in May 2018. Changsha Media Arts Festival and the “Literature and Publishing” section of the 8th Nanjing Historical and Cultural Cities Expo, were incorporated into the Forum with a view to raising awareness of the role creativity and literature can play in development.

After the successful completion of IYF2, Ms. Hannah Getachew, a youth representative who participated in the International Youth Forum (IYF) on Creativity and Heritage along the Silk Roads wrote to President Xi Jinping of China to share the experience during the Forum and express the youths' appreciation for the platform of communication and exchange. She said, *“Young women and men from Silk Road countries were given the opportunity to experience first-hand the power of culture in its various manifestations to promote human dignity, understanding between peoples, peaceful, existence, and sustainable development.”*

In his reply, President Xi wrote, *“Young people are the future of a nation” and encouraged young people to “make their own efforts in building a community with a shared future”.*

The third edition IYF will be held in Changsha and Nanjing, from 31 March to 6 April 2019, focusing on the theme of “Youth Creativity and Innovation in the Age of Media Arts”. It is expected that approximately 120 youth delegates and entrepreneurs, including 10 young artists who will participate in the “Experience Changsha Media Arts Residency Programme”, will participate in IYF3. Among them, 60 will come from countries along the terrestrial and maritime Silk Roads in Arab States, Asia and the Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean and Europe. In line with UNESCO’s Global Priority for Africa, the number of participants from African countries will be doubled to 20, while a further 40 will come from China. In all, 120 delegates and entrepreneurs are expected to take part.

II. Background

The United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development acknowledges the key role of culture, emphasizing the function of heritage and creativity, to solve sustainable development challenges. This recognition resonates with the UNESCO Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (1972), the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003) and the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (2005). Youth can play an important role in realizing the SDGs as Critical thinkers, Change-makers, Innovators, Communicators, and Leaders. According to the UNESCO Operational Strategy on Youth – 2014-2021, UNESCO will apply a comprehensive and future-oriented vision recognizing youth as agents of change for sustainable development. In that regard, young people should be engaged, actively participate in policy formulation and have their capacities built.

In harmony with UNESCO's Strategy and the broader UNESCO Mandates, Chinese President Xi Jinping said that "*Young people are the tomorrow of the motherland and the hope of the nation, who should dare to become pioneers and make the best of youth through innovation and entrepreneurship*". Today, more than ever, young women and men have the creativity, the potential and the capacity to advance meaningful solutions – for themselves, for their societies, and for the rest of the world. Throughout the globe, youth are driving social innovation, claiming respect for their cultural identity and heritage, and seeking new opportunities to learn and work together for a better future.

On one hand, young people are the most dynamic group with full imagination, innovation and creativity. More and more young women and men are participating, contributing, or leading the innovation and creativity at a local, regional or a global level. On the other hand, the future of our remaining heritage will depend largely on the decisions and actions of the present generation of young people who will soon become the leaders and decision-makers of tomorrow. They are eager to find new ways to build commitment and strengthen action in favor of preserving tangible cultural and natural heritage – including World Heritage and safeguarding intangible heritage. Their efforts will benefit not only the present generation but also the generations of the future.

Simultaneously, youth are not only beneficiaries but also essential actors in finding solutions. Their energy and leadership has been demonstrated across the world, and they must be fully engaged and supported in these fields.

III. Normative Instruments/documents to which this Forum contributes:

Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (1972)

Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003)

Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (2005)

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development – Goal 11 on Sustainable Cities and Communities seeks to make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable, with a target of strengthened efforts to protect and safeguard the world's cultural and natural heritage (Target 11.4).

UNESCO Operational Strategy on Youth – Axis III seeks to engage young women and men engage as active citizens towards democratic consolidation, sustainable communities and peace.

IV. Objectives and Expected Outcomes

The objectives of the International Youth Forum are to give young people an opportunity to voice their interests and concerns on advancing creativity through the promotion of tangible and intangible cultural heritage towards a sustainable future. IYF3 will also seek to mobilize youth inclusion in the cultural and creative industries that promote urban sustainable development through the vast array of Media Arts.

The expected outcomes of the Forum include:

- A cadre of youth from countries along the Silk Roads equipped with skills to advance their works and ideas in the cultural and creative industries and in both tangible and intangible cultural heritage protection, promotion and preservation;
- Inauguration of the second "Experience Changsha Media Arts Residency Programme"
- The Forum will culminate with the adoption by the participants of the Changsha Initiative.

V. Participants

A total of 120 young people aged between 18 and 30 from more than 60 countries along the terrestrial and maritime Silk Roads are expected to participate in the International Youth Forum. 70 delegates and entrepreneurs who are already skilled or majored in the creative and cultural industries or in heritage protection from Silk Roads countries in Africa, Arab States, Asia and the Pacific, and Europe, will be invited to IYF3. A further 10 international skilled or majored in Media Arts will be selected to participate in the “Experience Changsha Media Arts Residency Programme”, 5 will be recommended by UNESCO and 5 will be selected by Changsha. 40 youth delegates from China will also join the IYF3.

Prospective participants will be invited to apply for selection to attend the IYF via a number of different networks and channels, including those of UNESCO. Successful candidates will be selected based on objective criteria such as years of experience implementing projects in the cultural and creative industries or in heritage protection or safeguarding. In order to ensure equal representation, gender considerations will also factor into the selection process.

Senior Officials from the UNESCO Creative Cities Network and other leading figures will also be invited to deliver short and dynamic presentations on the theme of *Youth Creativity and Innovation in the Age of Media Arts*. Members of the China National Commission for UNESCO will participate in the IYF3 as well as UNESCO staff based at the Beijing Office and Headquarters in Paris.

VI. Detailed Arrangements for the IYF Week

Dates and venues:

31 March to 3 April 2019: Changsha, Hunan Province, China.

3 to 6 April 2019: Nanjing, Jiangsu Province, China

Themes:

The themes of the Forum will focus on two main areas:

Changsha: Youth, media arts and urban sustainable development;

Nanjing: Youth, heritage, creativity and urban sustainable development

Modalities:

The Forum is envisioned as a dynamic and participatory event utilizing a combination of panel discussions, parallel sessions and field visits.

Languages:

Simultaneous interpretation Chinese/English will be provided during plenary meetings and panel discussions. Consecutive interpretation is available during the field visits.

NB: The parallel sessions and training workshops will be conducted in English-only.