

Changsha Declaration

of the occasion of the International Youth Forum
on Creativity and Heritage along the Silk Roads

17-22 April 2017

We, young people from the 65 countries along the Silk Roads, high-level national / provincial / municipal government officials from China, representatives from civil society in membership in WFUCA, members of academia and invited experts, and UNESCO representatives from Headquarters and Beijing Cluster Office, have gathered here in Changsha, Hunan Province, China, for the *International Youth Forum on Creativity and Heritage along the Silk Road*, organized within the frameworks of the 1972 Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, the 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and the UNESCO Operational Strategy on Youth, to affirm our desire to promote peaceful coexistence and sustainable development through recognition and celebration of Silk Road creativity and heritage. We thank UNESCO, the Government of the People's Republic of China, and the Changsha Municipal Government, for jointly organizing this groundbreaking Forum.

We affirm our belief in the new vision for inclusive and sustainable global development represented by Agenda 2030, adopted by United Nations Member States in September 2015, which put forward 17 Sustainable Development Goals for "People, Planet and Prosperity", and commit to contributing our efforts and creative talents to support its achievement by 2030, to ensure that no one is left behind.

We recognize the importance of Culture as a "glue" that holds Silk Road nations and communities together; as a vital expression of human dignity and freedoms, and as a solid foundation for peace, understanding and common ground for all Silk Roads' peoples; and express our resolution to protect and promote cultural expressions and our individual and common heritage along the Silk Roads, and beyond.

Aware of global and regional challenges - such as youth unemployment, gender inequality that diminish opportunities for young women and girls, climate change,

trafficking networks of heritage, and violent conflicts that displace current and future generations, robbing them of precious historical roots, and others - we reassert the importance of ensuring youth full engagement in creative endeavors that can bring new ideas and solutions for the benefit of all, through creative industries and arts, education, and opportunities for partnership.

We therefore:

Commend the Changsha Municipal Government for establishing an awards program to cultivate international young talents in creativity

Welcome the launch of an internship program for young artists from countries along the Silk Road to work and learn at creative companies based in Changsha;

Express appreciation for the opportunity for youth in countries along the Silk Road to participate in the UNESCO global pilot project on the Creation of an Open Digital Library on Traditional Games;

Undertake to enhance visibility about the outcomes of this International Youth Forum upon return to our home countries, including through engaging in actions, in our own countries and local communities or through international youth networks to which we belong, to protect and preserve our tangible and intangible heritage and to promote creativity.

We, the youth of the International Youth Forum on Creativity and Heritage

- A. Encourage the development of cultural exchange programs between countries.
- B. Promise to stay open-minded and tolerant to different cultures and peoples.
- C. Call for the opening up of opportunities and spaces for dialogues between youth including youth with disabilities, and with other citizens, to promote sharing on cultural heritage and creativity through the organization of model UN conferences, heritage walks, online platforms.
- D. Encourage the development of youth initiatives through the establishment of sustainable capacity building programs.
- E. Call for increased efforts to sustainably rescue and protect heritage in places which lack technology awareness and resources.
- F. Recommend that sufficient resources are allocated for cultural education programs targeting people of all ages, from primary school students to the

elderly

- G. Encourage, and promise to increase youth participation in finding creative and innovative ways such as through media, films, and theatre, to promote diversified expressions of cultural heritage.
- H. Recommend that Member countries of UNESCO include youth as an equal partner in decision-making processes.
- I. Call for the promotion of youth organizations and the creation of cultural festivals to highlight tangible and intangible forms of cultural heritage not only for the benefit of our cultures but for all cultures around the world.
- J. Call for the promotion of sustainable tourism along the Silk Roads and for the organization of joint tourism programs among Silk Road Countries, including programs that can provide youth employment opportunities in Silk Road Countries.
- K. Call for increased efforts to protect the heritage of Silk Road countries suffering the effects and for the implementation of all necessary procedures to stop illegal trafficking of cultural heritage objects.
- L. Welcome the increased engagement of youth in UNESCO programs and activities; call on youth to organize local events on UNESCO themes; and recommend WFUCA to stay in direct contact with the participants of this Forum and other youth events.

As young Forum participants, we commit ourselves to

- A. Demonstrate our own cultures to youth from other nations and share our experiences of other cultures with youth in our own country.
- B. Inspire co-operation with younger generations to raise their awareness of the importance of creativity and heritage conservation.
- C. Engage in educating and inspiring people in our countries to appreciate, preserve and promote our national cultures at both local and international level.
- D. Respect other nation's cultures, to promote tolerance towards others within our countries, and to respect the aesthetical, ethical, and spiritual dimensions of all cultures.
- E. Work towards the full participation of all minorities, rural and ethnic groups in

efforts to preserve heritage.

- F. Work as volunteer guides for youth of other nations' online and offline platforms aimed at the development of creativity and heritage
- G. Engage in intergenerational and intercultural activities and works such as Model UN and Model UNESCO debates.
- H. Promote culture-based economic-driven solutions to solve social and environmental problems.
- I. Create a database with records of cultural heritage to reduce the risk of its disappearance.
- J. Empower indigenous people who have been highly contributing to the development of culture and heritage.
- K. Work for and encourage the transmission of traditional knowledge and skills from knowledge-holders such as the elderly to the young people.
- L. Prepare a small book or short film about several countries' heritage and publish it worldwide to increase awareness of the beauty of our common heritage, and
- M. Stand in solidarity with people who are being discriminated against because of gender, ethnicity, and religious beliefs.