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*CULTURE: KEY TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT*

**PRESENTATION BY FESPACO GENERAL DELEGATE**

**THE CONTRIBUTION OF CREATIVITY  
TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

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The United Nations Organization, through its special agencies, is to be commended for reviving over the last few years the dialogue on the interaction between culture and development, since this dialogue is more than necessary to definitely establish the link between culture and development, and also to consider this in our public development policies.

The cultural sector is wide and diversified, which gives it a remarkable economic weight. Therefore, by attempting to identify the various cultural niches to come up with their developmental impact, one is aiming at deepening the reflection to better grasp the connections between culture and sustainable development.

As far as we are concerned, this dialogue on “***The contribution of creativity to sustainable development***” calls for a methodological approach to better understand the matter being discussed.

**First:** A definition of the concept of creativity seems to be of critical importance;

**Second:** Being one of the components of a wider culture sector, what is the impact of creativity on this sector?

**Third:** How creativity can contribute to sustainable development?

## **I. CREATIVITY: A BROAD CONCEPT**

Creativity is commonly defined as the art of creating something new. In other words, creativity describes in general the ability of an individual or a group to devise or design and implement a new concept or to discover an original solution to problem.

As defined, creativity covers a wide range of areas including, and without limitation, literature, painting, and cinema. Creativity is expressed by the ability of a painter, filmmaker, and writer to work out an original solution to a problem through his or her artwork.

## **II. CREATIVITY AS A KEY COMPONENT OF CULTURE**

The culture sector includes cultural and creative heritage and industries, tourism, literature and cultural infrastructure, and creates wealth and jobs. The cultural economy is increasingly and significantly contributing to the global economy.

The creativity component in the cultural economy is quite dynamic. The creative economy that is developing around cinema in Hollywood (US), Bollywood (India), and Nollywood (Nigeria) gives us remarkable examples. The “Mangas” phenomenon in Japan has conquered the world and made of creative and entertainment economy a key leverage of this country’s economy. These examples, though not supported by figures, are strong evidence that creativity can generate wealth and foster growth.

## **III. THE CONTRIBUTION OF CREATIVITY TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

Among all the definitions of culture, we have preference for the less scientific one but most revealing of its substance, stating that ***“Culture is the border for understanding the effects of poverty”***. Indeed, true poverty starts in a community where the benchmarks have collapsed without community members being able to reflect on the reasons and

consequences for changes, where people do not or no longer have the instruments enabling them to reflect on the changes affecting their environment and, therefore, their identity. From this statement, it clearly appears that **“Culture is a key, if not, key to development”**.

In this vain, creativity may be considered as a fertilizer for development. Artists and people of culture, creators of sense and thinking, contribute tirelessly to development, as mediators who can and must guide the processes. People of culture must ensure that everyone keeps some clues to the changes affecting him or her.

The second point is an observation by experts through various studies confirming the beneficial linkage between creativity and sustainable development. Indeed, the relationship between abundant cultural creation, economic growth and development of political liberties has been explored on many occasions in different historical and geographical contexts.

The evolution of mankind reveals that cycles of economic prosperity and technical inventiveness in societies coincide often with the renewal of artistic and cultural expressions. This means that creative culture is neither an obstacle nor a secondary component of development, but an engine.

Development is not only about growth, it is also about access to satisfactory intellectual and spiritual existence; it is not only about **“having more”**, but also about **“feeling better”**.

It is with this strong belief in the fact that creativity contributes to the attainment of sustainable development that I will be sharing with you some simple ideas:

- In a knowledge society and creative economy, the knowledge and know-how of people may be a significant asset and an important deposit of values and wealth;
- By prompting the dialogue and autonomous thinking, by helping to raise the challenges and seeking to communicate, arts and cultures bring together, more than any other areas, the creative, inventive and innovative functions at the centre of any development strategy;
- These development strategies can not exist outside civil societies and must involve namely artists and professionals of the culture industry;

By way of conclusion, the choice of arts and cultures as new paradigms for sustainable development is not only a challenge over time, but also over a civilization of intelligence. And this gives today a new status to culture and development alike. Culture becomes fundamental again as it is the source of any abilities and identities, both individual and collective. Creative culture means here **“development”** and **“connection of abilities”**.

But for we Africans, this vision is another opportunity, as from now on Africa can fully develop its potential, through a “capability approach involving the artistic, the creative and mankind”, in a context of expanding creative economy. Then, the new combination **“Culture and Development”** may fully become an engine for growth and well-being for our nations and economies.

The only thing left now is the political will!

**I thank you!**