



# CULTURE A TRANSFORMATIVE FORCE FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

“ Throughout history, culture has been able to bring creative responses to the challenges of our times.

AUDREY AZOULAY  
Director-General of UNESCO



In line with the United Nation's Decade of Action, UNESCO calls upon Member States in this first session of the SDG Moment to continue to harness the transversal potential of culture in the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

## CULTURE AND THE WORLD ECONOMY



The cultural and creative industries contribute **US\$2,250BN** to the global economy (3% of GDP) and account for

**29.5 MILLION** jobs worldwide

The cultural and creative sector employs more young people aged 15-29 than any other sector.

Cities account for

**70%**

of the global economy and there are

**246 cities**

in the UNESCO Creative Cities Network

Cultural tourism makes up nearly

**40%**

of world tourism revenues

The UNESCO World Heritage List includes

**1,121** sites globally, including

**50** ocean spaces in **37** countries

Nearly **20%**

by surface area of all existing marine protected areas (MPAs).

In 2013, the global trade of cultural goods amounted to **US\$190.5BN**

and the cultural and creative industries contributed

**US\$200BN**

to the digital economy



## CULTURE IN THE VOLUNTARY NATIONAL REVIEWS

Member States increasingly acknowledge the importance of culture in driving progress towards the 2030 Agenda in their Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs). Culture is the bridge that translates global ambitions into national and local realities; from social inclusion to tackling climate change, from food security to rebuilding communities following conflict, and from lifelong learning to stronger institutions.

➤ Since 2016,  
**205**  
VNRs were submitted by

**169** countries

➤ **63%**  
**OF THE 47**  
countries that submitted  
their VNR in 2020

have successfully  
integrated culture by  
mentioning concrete  
policies and initiatives.



Artists, cultural professionals and policy makers are drivers of innovative partnerships

The respect for cultural diversity - from the right to express and create to that of fostering access to cultural life - is inseparable from respect for human rights

Strengthening the link between cultural diversity and biodiversity fosters a more sustainable human-nature interactions

Protecting marine heritage helps achieve healthy and productive oceans

Traditional knowledge and skills build resilience to counter the effects of natural disasters and climate change

Culture can trigger behavioural changes towards more sustainable consumption and production patterns

Creativity and cultural heritage are at the heart of people-based strategies for more sustainable cities and communities

Respect for cultural diversity generates positive dialogue and social inclusion

Cultural infrastructure and creative professionals drive innovation and diversify economies

Culture helps eradicate the social and economic aspects of poverty

Local and indigenous knowledge promotes sustainable agricultural practices and food security

Culture strengthens communication and information for disease prevention

Arts education and linguistic diversity encourage intercultural dialogue, equipping young people with the skills to become global citizens

Fostering cultural participation helps to advance gender equality and women's empowerment

Community engagement in the safeguarding of cultural and natural heritage improves the sustainable development of water-related ecosystems

Energy consumption patterns are powered by cultural behaviours

The cultural and creative industries offer job opportunities adapted to local realities and needs

**HOW CAN CULTURE HELP FILL IMPLEMENTATION GAPS IN THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE 17 SDGS?**

