Inter-Agency Platform on Culture for Sustainable Development
Proposed terms of reference

●●● Context

The Inter-Agency Platform on Culture for Sustainable Development is convened by UNESCO to streamline and leverage international cooperation efforts with a view to accelerate the impact of culture for sustainable development. The development of the Platform takes place in a challenging, yet favorable global landscape. Indeed, whilst the COVID-19 pandemic has exposed preexisting faultlines and vulnerabilities within the culture sector globally, it has also brought to light the critical contribution of culture to societies' resilience, wellbeing, and prosperity, thus prompting world leaders to acknowledge the dividends of the culture sector on the global economy. This growing recognition of the impact of culture on sustainable development is reflected notably by **(i)** the reinvestment of global policy dialogue on culture for sustainable development at the global and regional levels, illustrated by the UNESCO Forum of Ministers of Culture; **(ii)** the unprecedented inclusion of culture in the G20 policy mechanisms, leading to the approval of the first G20 ministerial Declaration on culture on 30. July 2021; **(iii)** the momentum propelled by the International Year of the Creative Economy for Sustainable Development in 2021; **(iv)** the upcoming adoption of the UN Resolution on Culture and Development, which further reflects and amplifies countries' commitment, **(v)** the growing contribution of culture to sustainable development policies and frameworks, notably as part of UN country teams or interagency programmes.

●●● Main objectives

- **Strengthen the relevance, efficiency and cohesiveness of international and regional cooperation strategies and actions in areas relevant to culture**, both regarding the cultural sector itself and the contribution of culture to other policy domains, with a view to better address needs expressed by countries through the pooling of resources and the sharing of experiences;
- **Facilitate interagency dialogue knowledge sharing, and new perspectives on culture and the SDGs through joint mechanisms and initiatives**
- **Federate efforts in supporting countries in their respective policies** at the national level to inform and strengthen cultural policies and promote the inclusion of culture in other public policy areas; including through data, analysis and evidence; including the monitoring, documenting, and analyzing the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the cultural sector (cultural heritage,

social inclusion, tourism and CCIs), thus leveraging culture's contribution to the socio-economic recovery at national, regional and global levels;

- **Strengthen advocacy efforts on the role of culture for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals**, in particular in the context of the Decade of Action, with a view to upscale, accelerate and further demonstrate the impact of culture on sustainable development processes and frameworks.

●●● Working modalities

The work of the Platform will be structured around **three transversal thematic areas**, which cut across the different domains of culture while also reflecting core components of culture's contribution to the SDGs (see details below).

Working sessions will be organized initially over the first year, **from September 2021 to September 2022**, with a view to share and develop a common understanding on key concepts related to culture and sustainable development. through thematic workshops on the three thematic areas.

For each of the thematic areas, **specific areas of focus and expected outputs** were determined on the basis of the exchanges and outcomes of the first two meetings of the Platform (on 11 May and 30 September 2021) with a view to streamline the working process.

The outcomes of these workshops will provide avenues for strengthened and concerted cooperation and spearhead joint initiatives across the UN system that focus on profiling the culture-related dimension in sustainable development processes. Reflection will also aim at exploring the opportunity of informing the UNESCO World Conference on Cultural Policies for Sustainable Development – MONDIACULT 2022, to be hosted by Mexico in September 2022, as an intergovernmental and Ministerial-level conference, which will further reinvigorate the global commitment on culture and sustainable development.

The IPCSD webpage – currently under development - will be hosted by UNESCO to foster the sharing of resources, better profile collaborative work, and ensure wider visibility to the Platform. Participating agencies will be invited to contribute key resources in the relevant thematic areas to be shared online.

●●● Areas of focus and expected outcomes

❶ Culture for Reduced Inequalities

- **Rationale**

'Leave no one behind' is the overarching motto of the 2030 Agenda, in a world marked by increasing disparities characterized by inequitable access to jobs, basic services, education, health, culture or the digital realm. These inequalities are conducive to increased fragmentation of the social fabric as well as disparities within and between societies – a situation further exacerbated by the current pandemic. Culture can be a driving force towards a more inclusive world, by creating job opportunities – including for the most vulnerable – notably through the creative economy and cultural tourism. It also contributes to greater societal wellbeing, through upholding cultural rights and benefits linked with decent work. Boosting Technical and

Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in relation to the cultural and creative sectors, including in non-formal education settings, is thus particularly important in fostering youth employment and entrepreneurship in the cultural sector. The cultural sector is also particularly strategic to foster gender equality and active engagement of youth, especially as more young people 15-29 are employed in the sector than any other fields of economic activity.

- **Areas of focus**

   i) Job creation; **ii)** Sustainable and inclusive digital transformation; **iii)** Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) for youth engagement and for employment; **iv)** Social security, working conditions, including fair remuneration, equitable access to labour market, intellectual property; **v)** Intercultural dialogue, social inclusion and social cohesion; **vi)** Data and evidence (notably related to the afore-mentioned areas).

- **Expected outcomes**

  - ➢ Strengthen policy engagement and research to support a more sustainable and inclusive digital transformation, with a view to foster social cohesion through equal access to culture, the protection of online cultural and linguistic diversity, including through increased digital cooperation to provide appropriate regulation of online platforms so as to ensure equitable access and cultural diversity in the digital environment ;
  - ➢ Build on the cultural and creative economy to stimulate access to labour markets, job creation and promote sustainable and inclusive growth patterns, which are more embedded in local economies and more conducive to social inclusion, notably to engage informal workers; as well as marginalized groups such as women, migrants, refugees,, IDPs, young people, rural communities, indigenous peoples , ;
  - ➢ Strengthen regulation and public support schemes to ensure social protection and fair remuneration (online and offline) of cultural professionals, providing an enabling environment to cultural employment through training, income and tax conditions, mobility and enhanced freedom of expression, including by reinforcing the cooperation between labour and cultural institutions
  - ➢ Develop innovative partnerships to collect data and document the socio- economic weight and contribution of the cultural sector, thus opening-up pathways for more inclusive and sustainable economic models;
  - ➢ Expand synergies between culture and education by bolstering policy schemes and investment in TVET, artistic education heritage education and expand quality education with a view to spark the most needed adaptation and innovation skills and promote respect for human rights, thus preparing learners to adapt to fast-evolving labour markets and work patterns including in non-formal education settings
  - ➢ Build synergies across different policy areas to promote cultural tourism as a driver for sustainable development, notably by fostering inclusive, socially responsible tourism patterns as well as local and environment-based approaches.

❷ Culture for Climate Action

- **Rationale**

  The effects of climate change on cultural heritage are already being felt around the world, bearing increasing threats for the safeguarding of cultural sites and local practices. Meanwhile, culture provides a widely untapped reservoir of responses and solutions to both mitigate and adapt to climate change impacts. UNESCO's designated sites, including World Heritage properties, Biosphere Reserves and Global Geoparks, allow to protect some 10 million square kilometers of cultural and natural sites around the world, thus contributing to global climate change mitigation action. Living heritage, in the form of local and indigenous knowledge, is a particularly vital source of resilience which provides adaptation strategies including through traditional food security mechanisms and water and land management techniques. While cities account for more than 75% of global greenhouse gas emissions, they also lead creative and innovative efforts to promote more sustainable production and consumption patterns, as well as by tapping into innovative approaches and materials building on creativity and design. Most of the 246 members of the UNESCO Creative Cities Network demonstrate how cities can adopt more sustainable practices for individual or collective action, reduce the carbon footprint of the cultural and creative industries, or spark debate about climate change in the urban context through a wide array of creative fields from literature and design, to gastronomy. Culture-based approaches can help shift the focus of climate negotiations from competing interests to shared values and the common good. As such, culture can have an impact on diverse policy areas related notably to urban planning, food security, social inclusion, and sustainable tourism.

- **Areas of focus**

  i) Local and Indigenous knowledge; **ii)** Sustainable tourism; **iii)** Disaster risk management; **iv)** Sustainable management of natural resources; **(v)** Sustainable consumption and production patterns; **vi)** Food security and sustainable agriculture; **vii)** Civil society-led action.

- **Expected outcomes**

  - ➢ Leverage culture and heritage to foster sustainable planning of cities and human settlements , and minimize climate-induced displacement by stimulating urban-rural linkages and fostering urban sustainability, including by promoting culture-informed low-carbon solutions in areas such as housing, planning or mobility;
  - ➢ Foster capacity building and advocacy initiatives on local and indigenous knowledge to build more sustainable societies that respect the intrinsic linkages between cultural and biological diversity, notably by further including culture in climate science and policy fora related to food security, sustainable agriculture, water and land management, as well as by providing and supporting platforms for policy dialogue and knowledge sharing;
  - ➢ Promote UNESCO designated sites as learning laboratories for climate adaptation and mitigation to test resilient management strategies and frameworks for disaster risk preparedness, with a view to integrate culture into local, national and regional strategies and policy mechanisms on climate action;
  - ➢ Strengthen innovative partnerships, funding schemes and new technologies for research and innovation to build knowledge and evidence on the multifaceted linkages between culture in

all its forms – natural, tangible and intangible heritage, cultural and creative industries – and climate action;

➢ Support youth leadership and civil society organizations - including those initiated by women-led, refugee-led, on climate change through culture-based education, creativity and innovation – notably by involving artists, cultural and educational institutions – with a view to nurture knowledge, shift attitudes, values and behaviors to spark engagement and transformational change.

❸ **Culture for Dialogue and Peace**

• **Rationale**

As the magnitude, length and complexity of conflicts increase around the world, culture's role in conflict prevention and reconciliation must be fully acknowledged and systematically integrated into UN actions. Within a post-conflict and/or reconciliation context, cultural diversity should be harnessed as a capital for social cohesion and stability that can help reduce communities' vulnerability to external shocks, rather than a threat or an instrument for division. Such soft power of culture can be unleashed notably through building on the significance of heritage sites and museums, as places of exchange and knowledge that can enable a better understanding of cultural identity and cultural diversity and lead to the appropriation, safeguarding and transmission of cultural and heritage values, identities and memory that can help regain self-confidence and unity. As a critical condition for cultural diversity to flourish, the protection of cultural rights is equally central to sustaining peaceful and inclusive societies, building on existing achievements and mechanisms, notably embedded in the UNESCO Culture Conventions and in strengthening synergies between culture and education. Looking forward, expanding policy discussions on individual and collective cultural rights as well as strengthening related policy and legislation frameworks can lay a critical foundation for harnessing the power of culture for peacebuilding and dialogue.

• **Areas of focus**

i) Cultural rights for social cohesion, peacebuilding, and security; **ii)** Preventing violent extremism (PVE) through strengthened synergies between education and culture**; iii)** Rehabilitation and recovery of historic and urban centers; **iv)** Conflict prevention and mitigation**; v)** Intercultural dialogue and education.

• **Expected outcomes**

➢ Strengthen efforts to define the scope, legal framework and enforceability of cultural rights to sustain peaceful, diverse and inclusive societies;

➢ Encourage the integration of culture in humanitarian and development response, including into reconstruction and recovery strategies and interventions to foster people-centered and place-based approaches in conflict-affected areas and in areas hosting displaced persons;

➢ Promote culture and education as critical tools for conflict prevention including violent extremism (PVE), and poverty reduction by raising awareness among youth through tools and training to tackle disinformation and hate speech, in the digital environment; as well as by promoting an enabling environment for job creation;

- Strengthen policies legislation and multilateral cooperation mechanisms to fight the instrumentalization of culture and to ensure that conflicts do not target culture, thus undermining the stability of societies;
- Foster intercultural dialogue within the international community to promote a culture of peace and nonviolence, wider respect for diversity, freedom of expression, tolerance, thus fostering inclusive societies through culture-related activities.