

**Final Report of the  
International Meeting on Cultural Policy**

*Putting Culture on the World Stage*

**Ottawa, 1998**

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***Preface -***

***Message from the Prime Minister of Canada, the Right Honourable  
Jean Chrétien***

**T**he *International Meeting on Cultural Policy* was an important step in a broader process of putting culture on the world stage.

**T**he Ottawa meeting advanced our collective thinking in a number of key areas in international cultural policy. I am pleased and encouraged that Ministers of Culture who attended this meeting have agreed to continue this important work by means of an international network. I very much look forward to following the results of their ongoing efforts in this area.

**L**a *Rencontre internationale sur la politique culturelle* aura été la première étape d'un processus plus large qui vise à faire de la culture une priorité internationale.

**L**a rencontre d'Ottawa a permis d'enrichir la réflexion sur un nombre de secteurs clés en matière de politiques culturelles internationales. Je suis heureux que tous les ministres de la Culture qui y ont participé aient constitué un réseau international afin de poursuivre ensemble leur travail. Je me promets de suivre avec intérêt les résultats de leur réflexion dans ce domaine.

Jean Chrétien

## *Overview by the Minister of Canadian Heritage*

This meeting marked the first time a globally representative ministerial-level group has come together outside of a formal context to discuss international cooperation on cultural policy. The ultimate goal is to strengthen cultural policies so that the world might create an environment that values diversity of identity, creativity and freedom.

The International Meeting was built around three themes: cultural diversity and development; the role of culture in global relations; and culture and trade.

There was strong consensus at the meeting on the need to promote and pursue cultural diversity and creativity in the face of globalization. Social and cultural diversity were identified as essential tools for sustainable development.

Several recommendations were put forward to ensure that cultural policies reflect cultural diversity and contribute to economic development by making it truly sustainable. Economic plans should respect and reflect cultural traditions. It was recommended that this dialogue on cultural diversity be expanded to include international financial organizations.

The use of 'soft power' (leadership through attraction rather than coercion) and mass communications systems were identified as important instruments to ensure the link between culture and international cooperation.

Several recommendations were made regarding how best to accommodate the role of culture in global relations, and to ensure that small and developing nations are able to participate in, and lead programs. It is important to organize and form networks both domestically and internationally. These networks should include civil society as important players, given the extent to which popular culture influences the attitudes of people. International meetings provide excellent opportunities to pursue and enhance bilateral and multilateral relations through dialogue. Good governance, mutual respect, pluralism and democracy were emphasized as the essential ingredients for global peace and security.

In considering the impact of culture on international trade agreements, some participants called for exemptions for culture, while others cautioned not to lose sight of the benefits of trade liberalization. Many of the delegates warned there is a need for particular sensitivity to smaller and developing nations. All agreed, however, on the need for everyone to reap greater benefits in the area of culture from such agreements.

It was agreed that viewing globalization as purely economic and technical ignores the social impacts related to globalization. A balance needs to be achieved between national and international cultural objectives and ongoing trade liberalization.

A clear definition of culture is an important starting point. This definition should be broad, and acknowledge that culture is not simply another commodity. All governments should work to ensure that cultural considerations are on the political agenda. Networks, including civil society, need to be established. Of particular importance is the need to examine the areas of trade that

affect culture, including investment policy, competition policy, the services sector and intellectual property rights. Solutions, however, must not be generic but, rather, reflect each country's needs and circumstances.

### **Looking Ahead**

The key outcome of the *International Meeting on Cultural Policy* was the establishment of the International Network on Cultural Policy (INCP), comprising culture ministers committed to promoting the importance of cultural diversity in the face of technological, economic and social changes. A Contact Group has been formed to coordinate the activities of this network whose initial members include Sweden, Canada, Mexico and Greece. As founding chair, Canada is honoured to provide the network secretariat for the first year.

Several encouraging prospects for the future emerged in response to the desire to see this process continue. Broadcasting leaders were asked to examine the concept of a global cultural diversity television initiative. The World Bank initiated a lending program for culture and development and hosted its first-ever conference on this matter, in Washington in September 1998. Ministers agreed to work with the Organization of American States to develop its first cultural plan. Croatia announced that it will host a world meeting on culture and violence in year 2000. Canada hosted a mission from South Africa on cultural policy and broadcasting. Barbados made culture and trade the central theme at this December's Forum of Latin American and Caribbean Ministers. The CBC is leading an international project to build a network of cultural Web sites. Ministers agreed to cooperate in enhancing the UNESCO/Council of Europe CULTURELINK Web site, located in Zagreb. Ministers are supporting international comparative research; and ministers are forging new partnerships with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) from around the globe.

I am delighted that this important dialogue will continue with meetings in Mexico in 1999, and Greece in 2000 with the start of the Cultural Olympiad. We have built a new informal international network of Ministers of Culture which will provide an opportunity to pursue our overall objective of promoting cultural diversity.

Since June, several countries have joined the Network, including Austria, Cameroun, China, France, Guyana, Hungary, Jamaica, Malaysia, Norway, Philippines, Russia, Senegal, and Slovakia, and a number of other countries have expressed an interest in joining. The need for such a new cooperative mechanism internationally continues to be reinforced.

Now we are looking forward to the next meeting of Ministers in Mexico in 1999 and to increasing the membership of the Network. The results of the Ottawa meeting, in particular the INCP, are encouraging evidence of growing interest worldwide. With the continued support from culture ministers around the world, we can ensure that cultural and linguistic diversity are embraced as a priority for international cooperation on cultural policy, and demonstrate that culture is central in global thinking on development, access, governance and identity.

## ***Theme I: Cultural Diversity and Development***

*Any policy for development must be profoundly sensitive to culture.*  
(Sheila Copps, Canada)

### **Overview**

International development has traditionally been focused on economics, production and income. More recently, development has come to be seen as a process that enhances the effective freedom of people to pursue whatever they have reason to value. This modern view focuses on quality of life and the physical, mental and social well-being of every citizen.

The concept of culture has also evolved to encompass a whole complex of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features that characterize a society or social group.

Cultural development is most likely to flourish in a democratic society rooted in the principles of freedom of expression. A cornerstone of building democratic societies is a strong commitment to cultural pluralism. Policy makers must strive to create an environment in which respect for diverse cultural communities can thrive.

Governments should work to incorporate cultural policy as a main component of sustainable development policy, in coordination with policy in other social areas.

***The Honourable Diane Marleau, Minister for International Cooperation and Minister responsible for La Francophonie, Canada Chair, Session I***

I am delighted to have the opportunity to discuss with you the importance of culture, and cultural diversity in particular, and to talk about its connection to development.

I would like to thank those of you who have come from Africa, Asia, America and Europe to share your experience with us.

I am convinced that we will be able to go some way toward making culture and cultural diversity a concern for the entire world.

Canada has contributed to this effort. Culture is one of the objectives in our 1995 foreign policy statement.

For my part, I make sure that culture is a consideration in all the areas in which I am responsible for Canada's activities.

As Minister for International Cooperation and Minister responsible for La Francophonie, I am well aware of the importance of culture and cultural diversity.

La Francophonie, the international forum at which I represent Canada, is one of the multilateral organizations promoting cultural diversity and its expression around the world.

Within La Francophonie, the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) helps communities gain access to the information super highway. It also supports audiovisual co-productions between developed and developing countries.

In this way, Canada facilitates cultural exchanges and makes other countries aware of the socio-cultural realities of developing countries.

CIDA celebrated its 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year. From the very beginning, CIDA has made efforts to take into account the cultural elements unique to those communities where it carries out development assistance projects.

CIDA has ties with more than 100 developing countries and countries in transition. Many Canadians are involved abroad in development assistance and cooperation programs. They act as ambassadors of a country that values multiculturalism and democracy. These values can be seen in CIDA's programs and policies, which we adjust in order to respect the culture and values of many different communities. CIDA recently described these efforts in a document entitled *The Cultural Dimensions of Sustainable Development: Orientations and Initiatives*. I would invite all of you to become familiar with it.

Respect and understanding are valuable attitudes on their own, but where development is concerned, they serve a larger purpose: ensuring that the benefits of development initiatives will last.

Over the past decade, as CIDA defined its framework for action, it specifically described cultural viability as one of the pillars of sustainable development. Last year, we reaffirmed this principle in our strategy entitled *Our Commitment to Sustainable Development*. This view has been echoed by the international community.

Countries from around the world met in March in Stockholm to discuss these issues at the UNESCO *Intergovernmental Conference on Cultural Policies for Development*. As we follow up on that meeting today, we should remember that one of its recommendations urges us to define cultural policies in ways that foster sustainable development.

One last point about CIDA and our purpose: We are here to define new international cooperation opportunities which will enhance cultural diversity. As we discuss these, you may want to bear in mind that the Government of Canada, when it allocated CIDA's budget this year, specified a number of priority spending areas.

Two of these - youth and governance - are related to culture, cultural diversity, and development. Youth relates to these issues, since a culture can survive only if language, values and traditions are passed on to the young. Governance relates to these issues as well, since the very likelihood of expressing cultural diversity depends on the freedom and the opportunity granted by governing bodies to all their citizens.

These may then be some areas in which we can work together in the near future.

**Summary of First Discussant, Session I: Dr. Hedy Fry, Secretary of State  
(Multiculturalism, Status of Women), Canada**

Canada's approach to diversity creates a climate for a cultural menu that is rich, varied and filling.

Canadian policies seek to promote cultural identity and cultural diversity. In 1971, Canada was the first country to adopt a multiculturalism policy with the objectives of social justice, identity, and participation of all citizens within society. This approach was reinforced by passage of the *Multiculturalism Act* in 1998. Such policies have great implications for an open global economy as Canadian support of cultural and linguistic diversity has strengthened links between Canada and her global trading partners.

To preserve the roots of creativity, including heritage languages, cultures and places, this is the *raison d'être* behind the *International Meeting on Cultural Policy*.

## **Summary of Second Discussant, Session I: Morocco**

Cultural diversity can benefit technical development and globalization and provide a means of freeing people from poverty. At the same time, it is important to ensure freedom of movement and cultural expression for all people and to see cultural diversity as a shared responsibility, and not as that of each nation and individual separately.

Despite their own cultural richness, many countries of the South lack strong cultural industries or the financial resources necessary to promote their own cultural wealth and diversity. These industries could help counter violence and feelings of exclusion, and help to integrate youth and reconcile them to their societies.

Morocco suggests converting one percent of developing countries' debts into investments in culture which could assist countries in their own attempts to reconcile cultural diversity with globalization.

# SESSION I: SYNTHESIS

## CULTURAL DIVERSITY AND DEVELOPMENT

*Culture illuminates difference, brings people together, despite their origin and economic condition and unites them in one community with one common goal.*

(Francisco Weffort, Brazil)

Culture is about the values we share as a people and as a nation. While culture constitutes the true identity of a people, cultural development seeks to improve the quality of life of a people.

*In protecting cultural diversity, humanity has a rare opportunity to turn technological development and globalization into instruments of liberation rather than factors in hegemony and impoverishing uniformity.*

(Mohamed Achaari, Morocco)

The Honourable Mark Fisher, United Kingdom, acknowledged concerns of threats from economic imperatives that may lead toward one market, one view, one language.

*The advent of global economic and technological convergence has also meant that there is an increased pressure on cultural diversity throughout the world, leading to what many, such as Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, refers to as the homogenization of culture.*

(Hedy Fry, Canada)

The Honourable Rafael Tovar y de Teresa, Mexico, pointed out that social and cultural diversity are indispensable for development, even though what we are witnessing could be understood as cultural levelling. Ultimately, it is not possible for a global monoculture to emerge because there cannot be identical patterns of development for different groups, each with unique aspirations and particular cultures. The Honourable Francisco Weffort, Brazil, also said that the disappearance of national cultures is not an automatic outcome of globalization. In fact, he suggested that globalization tends to reinforce cultural specificities. Nevertheless, the efforts of all nations are required to preserve the roots of creativity, including heritage languages, cultures and places.

*Unity is based on mutual respect and understanding with a view to reach a common goal. Preservation of each and every one of our roots is to be seen as the necessary seat from which richness and progress bloom for the benefit of all. It is the only way to build a truly peaceful world community.*

(Francisco Weffort, Brazil)

Cultural diversity should be the bedrock of cultural policies. One of the objectives of the Stockholm Action Plan was to contribute to the integration of cultural policies of various nations within the development strategies of all societies.

*The respect for culture as a development resource can alone enable countries or communities to preserve their individuality in relation to others, to maintain or encourage dynamic diversity within themselves and creatively respond to the challenges of the globalization and intellectualization process.*

(Bozo Biskupic, Croatia)

By restricting cultural diversity, a country jeopardizes its own development because it sacrifices people's creativity.

*Cultural industries, which can both enhance cultural diversity and protect threatened cultures, can provide a modern tool for including young people in the public life of their societies.*

(Mohamed Achaari, Morocco)

The role of language in cultural development is an important consideration. A language represents a cultural tradition, a way of living, and a primary mode by which people identify themselves. Although there are an estimated 4,000 to 6,500 languages spoken in the world, linguists estimate that a language dies every two weeks. In fact, Mohamed Achaari reported that each day one language is lost in the countries of the South. Languages are more than just means of communication.

Mark Fisher, United Kingdom, looked at some other challenges facing cultural development, including threats from the global market, development agencies and their priorities and policies, and the greatest threat - poverty. In discussing the role of international development agencies in the area of cultural development, Mr. Fisher noted that the desire for short-term results sometimes gives primacy to economic development over cultural development.

It is because economic development may damage cultural diversity that the role of culture should be taken into account. In fact, cultural diversity may be able to contribute to economic development in making it truly sustainable. Cultural diversity can give roots to economic plans so that they grow from the traditions, work methods and rhythms of life of a people affected by the economic development. Cultural diversity can sustain and give ownership over that development, rather than economic development being a matter of well-intentioned patronage.

*Investment in culture generally draws and attracts new and diversified investments and has a multiplying effect in terms*

*of contribution to social developments of our people.*  
(Francisco Weffort, Brazil)

*We want development, but it s got to be sustainable.*  
(Mark Fisher, United Kingdom)

*...it does become critical to identify strategic spaces for accentuating  
and safeguarding a cultural dimension in international trade policy.*  
(Brigitte Mabandla, South Africa)

Mia Mottley, Barbados, agreed with Mark Fisher, on the importance of involving international financial institutions, but she went on to say that this cannot be done in a narrow context. It is critical that international development agencies recognize the differences in cultures. Development indices should incorporate an assessment of how quality of life and, hence, aspects of our culture have impacted our economic development. The need is not only to sensitize development agencies and international financial institutions to the role of culture, but also to the cultural impacts of their practices and their assistance.

Ms. Mottley identified another problem and extended a warning. Many of the existing conventions call for forms of action which may or may not conform to a country s moral and cultural inclinations. Inability to conform then excludes nations from participation in a number of international fora, or from being the beneficiary of other international rights and benefits. We need to ask whether the universal prescription as to what should constitute acceptable behaviour, in fact, reflects the diversity of cultural groupings across the globe. Greater sensitivity is also needed when defining those principles that uphold the dignity of human beings and that invariably are reflected in principles of human rights and democracy.

*The question of how to deal with cultural diversity is not simply  
the generic prescription that has come into vogue in the last three  
to five years, that cultural diversity is equal to democracy, or that  
cultural diversity is equal to the respect of human rights.*  
(Mia Mottley, Barbados)

*We cherish our diversity, our distinctive cultural institutions and  
therefore, in order for us to participate fully and equally in the  
global village, we need an image of ourselves at a global level.  
The balance between sovereignty, independence, homogeneity  
and diversity is crucial in this regard.*  
(Brigitte Mabandla, South Africa)

## ***Theme II: The Role of Culture in Global Relations***

### **Overview**

Globalization has an ever-increasing impact on cultures. There is a need to ensure that cultural policy is seen as a crucial matter for international cooperation and policy making. Further, it is important to focus on how international development, trade liberalization and foreign relations interact with national cultures.

Cultural policy makers and advocates need to focus on bringing culture in front of the margins to the centre of policy making, at both the national and international levels. The use of 'soft power' concepts could be employed to bring cultural policy issues to the international fora.

The influence of NGOs in international cultural relations has grown over the years, as has that of the private sector. Many private-sector leaders recognize that social cohesion is a necessary element for healthy global commerce and economic progress. Many NGO private-sector partnerships are forged on behalf of culture, with or without government involvement.

It is vital to recognize cultural policy as an increasingly important dimension for global cooperation.

## *The Honourable Lloyd Axworthy, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Canada Chair, Session II*

It is a true pleasure to be present with you, here in Ottawa. I have the honour to chair our discussion on a very important subject: The Role of Culture in Global Relations. As someone once said, God help the Minister that meddles with Art, and it has probably been proven many times since then, which makes me even more cautious, wondering why a Foreign Minister is here surrounded by distinguished Ministers of Culture from various countries. It fills me with some trepidation to venture into the fields that you have been so carefully and cautiously dealing with. But I think it is fair to say that cultural relations increasingly is becoming a matter of major interest in the foreign policy of many, if not all, countries.

It is trite to say that we are going through changing times, but the kind of tectonic shifts in the international geology that we are facing has put a new emphasis on the fundamental questions of exchanges of ideals and values and influences. There has been a term coined by an American political scientist, Joseph Nye, called soft power. Professor Nye, an international specialist at Harvard University, talked about the fact that as you go about assessing the various equations of who can influence world events, that the traditional indices of military economic power are now giving way to those assets, or those interests that really put a premium on ideas, on communication, on the influence of values, the capacity of foreign partnerships, the ability to use information. These increasingly are becoming the tools of the trade for people in my business. And the notion of soft power is really that of international leadership through attraction, rather than through correction. You can get so far with intimidating people, but you can get much further by influencing people. And, as a result, it puts the onus and discussion on how the changing nature of the world that we are facing opens up possibilities, and raises some very serious questions.

First, the new communications systems and networks, which have geometrically multiplied in the last decade or two, open up an enormous potential for the projection of culture, information and ideas in a multiplication of ways. Public discussion in foreign policy of publics is no longer an exclusive activity. It has now become the global commons if you like. A place where people have become actively engaged. We certainly discovered that as we went into the campaign for the Treaty on Landmines. This was very much a phenomenon driven by ideas, by the power of public opinion, in which artists around the world played a very important role. It was through song, art, writing and theatre in which much of the identification of the tragedy to humanity that landmines represent was communicated on television screens, on the Internet and became part of the way in which that new tool of worldwide communication was used to mobilize views and opinions throughout.

At the same time, I think it is also important to know the opportunity that new communications offer really puts at a premium, the transference of values. I think much of the quite positive movement toward a higher level of democracy and a greater attention to human rights is very much because these new communication tools have provided venues in which the ideas of artists have been expressed in a diverse way from one culture, from one country to another. So, for these reasons, we are here to join forces, those of you with responsibilities in culture and those of

us who have responsibility for foreign policy. And not to do so in isolation, or in parallel tracks, but to do so in an integrated way.

In Canada, we have identified culture as the Third Pillar of our foreign policy. This is an attempt to link a variety of activities that we promote overseas and internationally to enhance Canada's capacity to develop the platforms, through which our artists and our cultural community can not only make Canada better known but can also be part of international, universal exchanges. We have also started work, about a year ago, on what we call a Canadian International Information Strategy. We are trying to coordinate, through a variety of government departments, the way we present ourselves to the outside world and the way we use new technologies. This is a way of trying to take the global village that Marshall McLuhan, the Canadian, talked about almost 30 years ago, and to actualize it in a real way. We are trying through this information strategy to examine the most effective ways in which we can be hooked in with other countries, both at a bilateral and multinational level. So, before introducing our speakers, from my own experience in trying to come to grips with these matters, I would just like to pose some opening questions.

First, a key one, is the growing role of civil society. I talked about how the new information technologies have made it impossible for governments to maintain monopolies on information. In other words, states are not the only entities with the assets of soft power. It is now shared widely by NGOs, international organizations, and a wide variety of groups that now have access, capacity, skill and information that they can share in a global sense. This can be a very powerful force for good, as we have seen. And it has led to a quite fascinating new sense of partnerships around the world. And cooperative interests between these civil groups and governments have advanced a number of issues. I just came back a few weeks ago from the Rome meetings on the International Criminal Court where again, this amazing partnership between civil society and governments is forging a brand new international institution. But, at the same time, and this is the question I raise, the increased ability of any and all groups to promote their views through television, radio or the Internet can also provoke severe problems when, for example, the promotion of one culture is to encourage, or is used to encourage, distrust of another. Certainly, much of the source of our civil strife that occurs around the world today has been based upon the use of cultural tools to set one group of people against another.

This leads to another key issue of how you balance appropriate controls with the necessary freedoms. So, if we are discussing how you can improve the world through the power of ideas, through soft power, rather than coercion, we must also create an environment that encourages the free exchange of diverse perspectives and, at the same time, does not give licence to those who would abuse that privilege and that opportunity. We must find the ways for societies to better understand each other, but also to prevent the dissemination of propaganda of hate and the use of cultural tools that build barriers and walls rather than breaking them down.

A third issue is that of how to maintain one's cultural identity while promoting global exchange. This is not an easy issue. It is one for which I am certainly looking forward to your comments. As we internationalize ideas and aspirations and values, it creates new pressures to maintain a degree of national cohesion and support for a sense of identity and pride at home.

So those are some of the ideas that intrigue me as we work on this matter in our own Ministry to try to deal with the Third Pillar of our foreign policy. I very much look forward to the opportunity

to welcome, and to listen and hear from you, your views and comments on similar questions and others.

## **Summary of First Discussant, Session II: Greece**

Greece would be pleased to host the *International Meeting on Cultural Policy* in the year 2000 to coincide with the start of the Cultural Olympiad.

The link between culture and international cooperation is the essential theme of this session. Cultural exchange is an initial step in any rapprochement between two countries. While culture, with its roots in language, traditions and national identity, has often been the source of conflict, it remains an ideal platform for international collaboration. For instance, travel by artists and their participation in international events foster international cooperation and the transition of culture. Further, globalization has facilitated the sharing of culture through modern communication technologies, electronic media, audiovisual products, and so on.

Culture has an evolving relationship with other aspects of policy, such as economics and trade. Recent negotiations in the World Trade Organization are evidence of possible new relationships.

To help ensure broad approaches to culture outside the economic sphere, Minister Venizelos proposed to UNESCO in 1997 the idea of a Cultural Olympiad. As part of an ongoing international foundation, the Cultural Olympiad would cooperate with the city hosting the Olympic Games to sponsor concurrent cultural events. The four themes of the Cultural Olympiad are the culture of peace, the culture of social cohesion, the culture of post-industrial society and culture as the meeting place for innovative transitions. Each of these themes should underlie cultural policy.

## **Summary of Second Discussant, Session II: Ivory Coast**

There are deep concerns about the threats globalization presents to nations, particularly to periphery countries. There are negative implications on family, education and society in general, and it is argued that it is legitimate for periphery countries to resist globalization. The major challenge facing developing countries is to embrace globalization in a way that is to the advantage of their populations, or risk being left behind.

It is important to encourage international cooperation, without any kind of strings attached and the need to develop new policies. Those countries lagging behind in the development process must have the necessary resources to regulate the widespread global and cultural information technologies that permeate their schools, family lives and countries.

The international debate on cultural policies is very important for Africa and, specifically, for the Ivory Coast. Fora such as this *International Meeting on Cultural Policy* and the Stockholm Conference are encouraging, and the Ivory Coast desires to partake in international cooperation efforts are encouraging. At the same time, countries of the North can learn from many countries which live on a daily basis with the threat of losing their cultures.

## SESSION II: SYNTHESIS

### THE ROLE OF CULTURE IN GLOBAL RELATIONS

*A mosaic of cultural diversity is an essential part of global civil society.*  
(Bjorn Bjarnason, Iceland)

Soft power is very much connected to the new communications systems and networks emerging in this era of globalization. Soft power offers enormous potential for the projection of culture, information and ideas in many ways. It also presents the opportunity to share, exchange and transfer values more easily and move more quickly toward higher levels of democracy and human rights.

*Developing new means of distribution and broadcasting to showcase cultural programs alongside existing commercial distributors may be a way to ensure that the world's high-quality television programs reflect cultural creativity and diversity.*  
(Vincenzo Vita, Italy)

*We consider the future world cultural dimension as one of a huge mosaic, each part of which is extremely important for realization of a global objective.*  
(Dmytro Ostapenko, Ukraine)

The essential theme which emerged from these discussions was that of the importance of linking culture and international cooperation.

*Culture is the ideal platform for international cooperation, whether it be, for example, archeological research or looking into the heritage of the country, and the legacy of the country and contemporary art, for example.*  
(Evangelos Venizelos, Greece)

*Culture becomes the vehicle of peace, friendship and cooperation between countries and people.*  
(Evangelos Venizelos, Greece)

*We appreciate the role of cultural expansion and globalization in the context of overall development, but it should not be the driving force in diminishing or weakening the national cultural identities or cultural diversity.*  
(Roland Sharoyan, Armenia)

Bjorn Bjarnason, Iceland, stressed the importance of organizing international cooperation on a scale that makes it possible for small nations to participate in, and lead, international cultural projects and programs.

David Streiff, Switzerland, and Roland Sharoyan, Armenia, both expressed their belief that fora such as the *International Meeting on Cultural Policy* provide opportunities to pursue and enhance bilateral and multilateral relations through dialogue.

*Cultural cooperation, cooperation through words, through souls, through culture, is somehow the way of balancing political considerations around the world.*

(Roland Sharoyan, Armenia)

*We are going to have to seek common values in different cultures as the basis of dialogue amongst cultures. And dialogue requires also the acceptance of the respective differences amongst our cultures.*

(David Streiff, Switzerland)

Mia Mottley, Barbados, noted that the role of culture in global relations should be considered with a view that popular culture influences the attitudes of people, and should also take into account the fact that popular culture is not necessarily reflected by those in power. Popular artists, such as Bob Marley, shape many of the attitudes of individuals within our populations, which in turn, through their behaviour, morals and attitudes influence whether people act prejudicially or in a manner that is tolerant of each other. Ms. Mottley suggested that concepts of tolerance can ultimately be best promoted through formal and informal education: formal education through a curriculum and by merging people in schools, and non-formal education through music, literature, film, information technology, multimedia applications and other forms of artistic expression.

*Culture evolves largely from the symbiotic relationship of different people interacting and the capacity to which elements of their heritage will inform them as to how they merge.*

(Mia Mottley, Barbados)

Bjorn Bjarnason, Iceland, explained that it is our duty to focus on diversity both within our own countries and at the international level.

*We can only ensure the heritage of future generations through artistic creativity of today. Only by protecting and fostering its culture can any nation use culture as a source to generate economic progress.*

(Bjorn Bjarnason, Iceland)

## ***Theme III: Culture and Trade***

### **Overview**

Culture is not a commodity like any other commodity. Culture reflects a society's perceptions and beliefs, common experiences and heritage. Many nations believe that domestic cultural expression is the mainstay in defining their societies and communities as unique. These countries have the strong view that the production and distribution of cultural works cannot be left to the marketplace alone. They contend that government action is, at times, required to guarantee a full range of choices for citizens.

A rules-based trading system is a catalyst to the growth of both developed and developing economies. The interplay between domestic cultural policies and international trade and investment obligations has, nonetheless, become increasingly contentious over the past decade.

As the world becomes increasingly interconnected, cultural policy makers are faced with new considerations. Some forms of government support of culture may conflict with present or future trade and investment rules. As well, some nations question the concept of the unique nature of culture within trade and investment regimes.

The challenge is to make domestic cultural policy objectives and international trade objectives complement one another. The goal is to ensure that citizens enjoy the maximum economic and cultural opportunities and benefits.

The exponential advancement of technology has greatly enhanced the ability to produce and disseminate domestic cultural products. At the same time, ever larger volumes of foreign cultural content are also available. And that is the conundrum. While technology provides increasing access to cultural content from around the world, thus helping to promote diversity, it is essential that attention be paid to ensuring that there is space at home for domestic content and that real choices are available for citizens.

## ***The Honourable Sheila Copps, Minister of Canadian Heritage Chair, Session III***

From Canada's perspective, as outlined in the comments made by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Secretary of State for Multiculturalism and the Status of Women, and the Minister responsible for International Development, we do see culture as unique.

*It is not a business like any other business. It is not just a product, and it is not a bargaining chip to be bartered away in exchange for some trade advantage. We believe that culture is indeed the heart, the soul, the mind and the spirit of nations and you don't trade away your heart, your soul, your mind or your spirit.*

(Sheila Copps, Canada)

That's why the role of culture in trade negotiations and investment opportunities is not just a matter for a few negotiators. It is a matter for politicians and, more importantly, it's a matter for people.

*It is possible, and it must always be possible, for countries to stand up for trade and cultural interests at the same time. We want our children and our grandchildren to have global opportunities and we want all countries to have the same opportunities that those who benefited from the Industrial Revolution have. We want our children to have global opportunities that we never experienced, but we also want them to enjoy the cultural freedom that we have experienced. And striving for those two goals only lifts us higher.*

(Sheila Copps, Canada)

In Stockholm, we arrived at the conclusion that cultural goods and services must receive total recognition and must be treated in a fashion distinct from other goods. As Ministers of Culture, we have an important role to play so that reality is recognized and integrated into the whole question of international negotiations.

Canada is fully aware of the fact that as international rules of trade are developed it will be more and more difficult to attain cultural objectives, unless those rules reflect the specific roles of cultural policies in each society and economy. To be responsible for culture is to explain our point of view to the broader community and, as culture ministers, we are well placed to initiate that process.

*We need to develop positive messages that at once promote identities and respect global cooperation. This ambition is just plain ordinary common sense. Let us work to reap*

*benefits of trade and, at the same time, build respect for cultural diversity.*

(Sheila Copps, Canada)

### **Summary of First Discussant, Session III: Italy**

The UNESCO intergovernmental conference held in Stockholm earlier this year confirmed that many countries are aware of the need to reserve a special place for culture in the international arena as gaps in cultural development levels among different countries become increasingly large.

Culture cannot be reduced to a simple market dimension.

*Markets are a way for spreading culture around the world and a means to support it. But markets should not mean pure and unrestricted competition, or be given a total free hand to individual initiatives.*

For those cultural activities requiring financial support, we should develop partnerships with the business community in order to safeguard cultural heritage. Cinema and audiovisual media are often managed by large international companies which have sufficient power to impose their own priorities on governments. This is a phenomenon which must be closely checked.

Transnationally distributed, low-cost productions should not be allowed to erode the social, civil or educational purposes of domestic cultural activity. For this reason, many countries participating in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development multilateral investment negotiations, Italy among them, supported generalized cultural exemptions which could facilitate a better balance of interests.

We should endeavour to set a balance between the global goals of commerce and the artistic and social values of culture.

### **Summary of Second Discussant, Session III: Poland**

If the market devalues culture, should culture be considered in the same manner as all other industries and services? Would it not be wiser to have another type of treatment as, for example, a cultural exemption?

Cultural policy should become a collective effort to support a creative society, for without culture, we can produce, but we cannot create. Culture should be treated as something that belongs to society as a whole. Culture must be viewed for its power to mobilize human resources, promote creative occupations and employment, encourage creativity in an information and communication society, and build linkages among people.

A model of cultural policy should include the following: freedom of expression; conditions for the development of creativity; and decentralized decision making. These prerequisites would allow disadvantaged people to participate fully in cultural life; renew civil society; facilitate the exchange of values among nations; build networks and intercultural exchanges; promote cultural education; correct market problems; and protect intellectual property.

## SESSION III: SYNTHESIS

### CULTURE AND TRADE

*Special international rules should be granted to culture, different from those generally applied to commercial exchanges and to the selling of consumer products.*

(Vincenzo Vita, Italy)

Brigitte Mabandla, South Africa, expressed the idea that global cooperation should not be incompatible with the development of the diverse cultures of the people of the world.

*There is a need to conduct a systematic and comprehensive analysis of General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade and World Trade Organization agreements from a cultural point of view in order to understand the implications for culture at both the national and international levels and to identify strategic spaces for accentuating and safeguarding a cultural dimension in international trade agreements.*

(Brigitte Mabandla, South Africa)

Technological advancement and increased global investment should be harnessed for cultural development. Otherwise, global uniformity is effectively imposed over national public policies in the name of breaking down trade and investment barriers.

*The purpose must be to achieve a balance between national cultural objectives and the ongoing globalization and liberalization of trade.*

(Marita Ulvskog, Sweden)

People around the world are grappling with the effects of international trade agreements. Abdelbaki Hermassi, Tunisia, looked at the opportunities and obstacles cultural industries encounter in the face of trade liberalization and spoke of the potentially devastating effect the Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI) could have on countries in the South. The Tunisian Minister maintained that in order to effectively develop their infrastructures, cultural industries in developing countries need support within a regulated marketplace. He argued for the protection of cultural industries given that the threat of international trade agreements is much greater to countries in the South than to those in the North.

*These measures (referring to three clauses in the MAI), were they to be applied, would certainly have a very serious effect on the protection of cultural industries in northern countries. But in the South, they would have a devastating effect.*

(Abdelbaki Hermassi, Tunisia)

Mark Fisher, UK, offered a different perspective. While seeking to respond to the same issue (i.e.: how to balance the benefits and the dangers of globalization), he argued for the benefits of trade liberalization.

*The UK has a strong tradition of being committed to free trade and in our view the world economy has undoubtedly gained enormously from trade liberalization since the GATT was first signed in 1947. And we think that there still remains considerable potential for further gains...*

(Mark Fisher, United Kingdom)

Mia Mottley, Barbados, pointed out that larger countries which are members of organizations such as the World Trade Organization lack sensitivity to the particular needs of small island states. She argued that multilateral organizations must ensure that essential elements of cultural heritage are preserved in order for the small island states to maintain or reach levels of development that accommodate their nation's spiritual and psychological welfare, which is critical to their overall sustainable development.

Evangelos Venizelos, Greece, looked at the role of market protectionism in the cultural arena and concluded that a certain amount of support is necessary to ensure pluralism. He argued that there needs to be, to some degree, protection in order to respect and preserve political, aesthetic and ideological liberalism.

The UK disagreed with broad cultural exemptions. The UK position supports exemptions for the audiovisual sector, but is not convinced that ...the general exemption for everything that can be labelled culture would be justified. Mark Fisher argued for a very clear definition of culture in negotiating cultural exemptions in international trade agreements.

Many suggestions were put forward on how to begin the process of better incorporating cultural considerations into international trade agreements by addressing the cultural concerns of equality of access, diversity of content, and the rights of the creator.

There was wide support for the need to develop a clear definition of culture.

*We are all interested in using a very broad view of culture. And that is why we have to make culture an important part of many other political areas.*

(Marita Ulvskog, Sweden)

A broad view treats culture as more than just another commodity. Culture is about democracy and human dignity. It is important to create, and fight, to gain space for culture.

*Culture policy makers need to be proactive in inserting a cultural analysis into the purely technical analysis that underpins and drives trade agreements, that is*

*negotiations.*

(Brigitte Mabandla, South Africa)

Marita Ulvskog, Sweden, argued in favour of working domestically so that cultural issues are on agendas when there are meetings on trade, economic or social issues. To do that, it is necessary to organize and form networks. This point was reinforced by Evangelos Venizelos, Greece, who supported the need to build networks for cultural collaboration, co-production and distribution.

*The organization must be done at the political level, but our first duty is to animate the civil society because they bring out the talent, aspirations, all the cultural products.*

(Evangelos Venizelos, Greece)

Mia Mottley, Barbados, identified the need to examine those areas of trade that are capable of having an impact on the expression of culture. These include: investment policy, competition policy, the services sector and intellectual property rights. She recommended that there **not** be a generic solution to the concept of culture and trade. She suggested that the new international network recommend to respective governments that more serious attention is required when preparing for negotiations on culture and trade.

## **NGO Forum:**

*At Home in the World: An International Forum on Culture and Cooperation*  
*Ottawa June 29, 1998*

The UNESCO-sponsored *Intergovernmental Conference on Cultural Policies for Development* held in Stockholm set the stage for broader and more effective cooperation among member states in addressing common goals and in facing common challenges. The involvement of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in the conference was an initiative which proved to be of great value to the substance of the debate and the action plan which flowed from it, highlighting the importance of cooperation among NGOs in cultural development.

At the request of the Honourable Sheila Copps, the Canadian Conference of the Arts (CCA), Canada's major national arts advocacy organization, hosted an international meeting of non-government arts, cultural and development organizations in Ottawa. The meeting was entitled *At Home in the World: An International Forum on Culture and Cooperation* in recognition of the fact that human beings live simultaneously in distinct, diverse national and cultural contexts and in a world where nations and cultures are increasingly interdependent. Preserving and enhancing distinct cultures in the face of globalization is a major challenge for artists, cultural workers, cultural organizations, as well as nation states.

The purpose of the meeting was to begin developing an international alliance of NGOs to foster sectoral cooperation and grass-roots political support for the efforts of Ministers of Culture to preserve and enhance cultural pluralism and cultural diversity, to create an increased role for culture in international relations, and to deal successfully with international trade issues.

The main themes of the meeting were:

1. preserving, nurturing and enhancing cultural pluralism and cultural diversity;
2. supporting efforts to ensure that international trade agreements recognize and respect distinctive national and local cultures; and
3. encouraging the inclusion of cultural issues in development policies and an increased role for culture in international relations.

More than 170 people attended the Forum, including leaders of over 60 NGOs in the arts, culture and development.

This meeting was framed by two equally vital concepts, creation and access. Creators and artists must have opportunities to develop, create, produce and disseminate their work. Equally, the public deserves the broadest possible opportunity to participate in, be enriched by, and enjoy the art and culture of their time and place, their cultural heritage, and the cultures of other nations.

Participants agreed on the importance of forging valuable international cooperation to spur domestic content. In a global marketplace, it is becoming increasingly evident that partnerships between governments and civil society will grow stronger if they cross international borders.

The major preoccupation of the meeting was enhancing and nurturing cultural diversity and cultural pluralism, both within nations and across the globe.

The report the Forum produced outlines principles and practical, attainable actions for both the short, immediate and longer-term future. The Minister of Canadian Heritage incorporated the recommendations of the NGO forum into the heart of the ministerial *International Meeting on Cultural Policy*.

## ***Conclusion:***

### ***The Honourable Sheila Copps, Minister of Canadian Heritage***

#### ***Summary***

What we have seen today, first of all, is a coming together of an incredible number of ideas, which really do put culture front and centre on the world agenda. There are many different ways of achieving that. I think one of the things that came through loud and clear is that we need more collaboration on definition and more in-depth study in some of the areas of cultural diversity that we share but are, frankly, not as well defined as we might like them to be.

On a personal note, might I say how my Canadian colleagues and I are delighted at the participation here today. I know that a number of other countries would have liked to participate and since we wanted to keep the group manageable and give an opportunity for a real round table dialogue, this was a first step.

We know that today is the beginning of a Network. We are all committed to ensuring cultural diversity, but we all understand that the task ahead involves much greater understanding of what that constitutes and how individual countries should not use cultural diversity as an excuse to build walls or to spread ethos that are a violation of human respect.

Quite clearly, I think that we also need to do more to develop partnerships with the non-governmental sector, and having taken a page from the UNESCO book, the NGO conference that finished last night, I think also gave us much food for thought in how we might proceed. And I think we also agree that we need to do more to guarantee that culture is incorporated into global thinking and, indeed, in some form, into international negotiations.

We can place culture at the centre of the global agenda, without it being a hindrance or barrier, which should not be there. This is how we can ensure that cultural products are indeed treated as unique.

The Tunisian Minister made a very compelling case for the need to allow cultural products of every country and every language to be fully developed. Today, we did succeed in raising the levels of consciousness, in exchanging ideas, in beginning the sharing of best practices, in starting to identify research priorities and engaging in collaboration and, potentially, in making future recommendations to world organizations. These are all legitimate and also pragmatic objectives.

We do have work, and we do intend to pursue that work.

We certainly thank Sweden for the proposal to form a Contact Group, and Canada is honoured to provide the Secretariat for the Contact Group and the Network for the first year. In our spirit of friendship and outreach, I would like to invite Mexico, which has already accepted to chair the

next conference, and Greece, the planner of the 2000 Cultural Olympiad, to be part of the Contact Group.

Our challenge is to foster limitless cultural expression, advance cultural collective and individual interests, and ensure that this network, indeed, is the beginning of a process where we see deeper and broader reflection on cultural issues as we reach the new millennium.

## *Sharing Experiences* (ANNEX G)

*We can all learn a great deal from each other's practices and other difficulties that we have encountered and the tensions between development and community and trade and all the other things it addresses.*

(Mark Fisher, UK)

*The Third Pillar of Canada's foreign policy (the projection of Canadian values and culture in the world) is an attempt to link a variety of activities that Canada promotes internationally to enhance Canada's capacity to develop the platforms in which Canadian artists and the cultural community can not only make Canada known, but can also be part of universal exchanges.*

(Lloyd Axworthy, Canada)

*One of the conditions for the flourishing of Icelandic society is that our cultural link to the past has not been broken. We still speak the same language as we did 1000 years ago, and understand with ease our literary heritage, the sagas of Icelanders written about 800 years ago.*

(Bjorn Bjarnason, Iceland)

*The unique nature of Ukraine's culture was shaped by centuries of statelessness, when the culture itself was almost the sole uniting factor of our national self-preservation and national self-identity. ... Today, our doors are open to really worthy experiences of both the west and the east, the south and the north. All our efforts go to safeguarding the revival and presenting before the world community all our best achievements.*

(Dmytro Ostapenko, Ukraine)

## Trinidad and Tobago

*The citizens and government encourage the celebration of our diversity, and we delight in our differences. The cultural environment gives rise to creativity and experiment and the creation of what we call cross-over cultural elements; in music, in song and in dance.*

(Daphne Phillips, Trinidad and Tobago)

Trinidad and Tobago's rich cultural tradition has been achieved through the assimilation of tensions associated with their colonial heritage, but in the context of a democratic environment which permits self-expression and self-assertiveness. Today, it is believed that development can be achieved only through unity. The motto of the government is national unity. We realize that the development of our culture is one very important avenue through which this unity can be achieved. In line with efforts to achieve national unity, Trinidad and Tobago is finalizing a national policy on culture, and is planning for the creation of a cultural infrastructure which includes technology, practical facilities, physical facilities, training, heritage preservation and funding for culture.

## Brazil

*In Brazil, culture has always been an aggregating and including force in spite of all other inequalities. The country is a result of the fusion of its founding roots. Brazil's strength resides in its culture.*

(Francisco Weffort, Brazil)

Essentially, what gives Brazil its individuality and uniqueness is a combination of three elements: the Portuguese language (spoken by the majority of Brazilians, a fact that has played a unifying role in its history), the idea that all cultural inputs are positive factors in the building of a nation, and a long process of assimilation. Brazilian culture is in constant transformation, enriched at every moment. Brazil is engaged in a permanent debate between the state and representatives of diverse cultural segments to design and perfect legal instruments to service and support the cultural sector.

## South Africa

*We intervene, as government, to establish institutions that promote the diversities of our culture.*

(Brigitte Mabandla, South Africa)

In redressing the imbalances created by apartheid, South Africa developed a constitution to protect both individual and collective rights. The most important institutional mechanism is the commission that promotes religious, cultural and language rights and, when negotiated, it was

intended to guarantee protection of minority interests in South Africa. There is also a language board which carries out the mandate of the constitution that recognizes 11 official languages. For the first time in its history, South Africa has a Ministry of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology, whose mandate is to promote arts and culture and heritage. One of the greatest challenges of South Africa's transition is that of recognizing the diversity of its people, while at the same time striving toward building a strong nation.

### Mexico

*[Mexico] has gone through this complex process [of development] without losing its cultural diversity and its capacity to transform the foreign into its own. There have been multiple identities of peoples; they're inter-related but not homogenic, and together constitute what we have so often called the culture or national identity.*

(Rafael Tovar y de Teresa, Mexico)

Mexico is a country that has met the challenge of maintaining its national sovereignty while encouraging diversity. The traumatic swallowing up of one civilization by another, as occurred during European colonization, did not stop indigenous cultures from surviving. Today, Mexican culture represents a rich pattern of ethnic diversity combined with western culture. Cultural pluralism finds expression in Mexico in the work done by different groups at the local, regional, national and international levels. It is also seen in the localization of resources, in the development of natural folklore and linguistic richness, and in multicultural approaches to education.

### Canada

*....if we are to found a nation of many people who live together in harmony and in peace, maintaining their dignity and truly belonging to Canada, they must also have a sense of their own identities.*

(Hedy Fry, Canada)

Canada has always been diverse. There were many nations among the country's first peoples, and even today, their descendants number over a million and speak more than 50 Aboriginal languages. With immigration, particularly during the past half-century, it is possible to say that the Canadian population represents the world. Canada's multiculturalism policy, adopted in 1971, led to the royal sanction of the *Multiculturalism Act* in 1988, and the appropriation of three main objectives which the Government of Canada believes are essential for the country's evolution, social justice, identity, and the participation of citizens.

## UK

*...we all need to get greater benefit from trade in cultural goods and services and the artists in all our countries, the creators, they need that too, to continue their work. So we need to get better value out of these industries.*

(Mark Fisher, UK)

In early 1998, the UK established a cross-government, horizontal cultural industries task force and for the first time defined and described the cultural sector. The UK is adopting a definition that includes cultural industries (i.e. recording, publishing, new technologies, design, etc) as well as the traditional areas of arts and heritage. The UK argues that while one cannot lose sight of the benefits of international trade, it is important to work on both the domestic and international issues simultaneously. Strengthening the infrastructure of culture and cultural industries is at least as important as regulating trade in cultural goods.