



BULLETIN

Canadian Conference of the Arts ~ Conférence canadienne des arts

Sixty years strong, the Canadian Conference of the Arts is the national forum for the arts and cultural community in Canada. It serves as a leader, authority, and catalyst to ensure that artists can contribute freely and fully to a creative, dynamic, and civil Canadian society.

For more information on the CCA's current advocacy work, please visit our website at www.ccarts.ca

For more information about the INCD or the *Convention*, please contact:

Garry Neil
Executive Director
International Network for
Cultural Diversity
(416) 268-5665

41/05

Please post and/or distribute. When reprinting CCA Bulletins, please give appropriate credit.

Bulletins are provided as a benefit to our members. If you would like to receive the CCA Bulletin directly, please visit our membership page at www.ccarts.ca and become a member of the CCA.

International Network for Cultural Diversity Celebrates UNESCO Victory

Ottawa, October 20, 2005 – The International Network for Cultural Diversity congratulated UNESCO and its member States for today approving the Convention on the protection and promotion of the diversity of cultural expressions. The INCD and its member organizations from every corner of the globe celebrated the overwhelming positive support, as 148 countries voted in favour of the final text. This new legal instrument recognizes the value of cultural diversity to national and global well being and acknowledges that cultural goods and services have more than an economic value. But, the Convention is only one step in a long campaign to achieve cultural diversity, and to prevent trade and investment agreements from further eroding the right of States to support their own artists and cultural producers.

"The strong support for the Convention is a watershed moment in the history of the cultural diversity movement," said Garry Neil, INCD Executive Director, "and we are proud of the role INCD and others civil society groups played in reaching this moment. But, there is much more to do. Civil society will continue to play an active part in the next phase of the work and we call today on all States who voted in favour to ratify the Convention, to make it as effective as possible, and to commit to supporting cultural diversity both within their own territories and globally."

INCD urged governments to work with each other, with civil society, intergovernmental institutions and their own artists and cultural producers to achieve the real promise of the Convention. "After all, we need to collaborate against the continuing pressure from those who want trade in cultural goods and services to be covered fully under the World Trade Organization and regional and bilateral trade treaties. We also need to ensure that developing countries have the resources they need to bring their stories, music and other artistic works to local and global audiences."

INCD urged governments to include provisions of the new Convention into their bilateral and multilateral cultural agreements. "The Convention only establishes minimum standards, and we want the richer countries of the north to make specific and concrete commitments to countries of the south to help them develop creative industries and cultural capacity. We also want the richer countries to open their markets to artistic works from countries of the south," continued Mr. Neil.

INCD urged the world's culture ministers, organized in the International Network on Cultural Policy, to renew their commitment to this work. Culture is significant in all dimensions of governance, including trade, security, development and human rights, and this is only beginning to be understood. The INCP must strengthen its resolve to continue, must build its membership and prepare for the next round of cultural diversity work in UNESCO, as well as the important upcoming work with finance and trade ministers, and heads of government.

Since 2000, the INCD has been in the forefront of the campaign to advocate for a legally binding convention on cultural diversity to halt the growing pressure on cultural policies caused by the multilateral and bilateral trade agreements. Its membership includes more than 400 non-governmental cultural organizations in 71 countries.

Canada was a leader in the formation of both the INCP and the INCD, and the Canadian Conference of the Arts has served as the home of the INCD since its inception. The CCA is proud of what Canada, the INCP, the INCD, and above all, what UNESCO have achieved in the long struggle to win international approval of the Convention on the protection and promotion of the diversity of cultural expressions.