CITIES AND CULTURE

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

[1 WHY CITIES?

For the first time in human history, more than half of the world's population now lives in urban areas, a figure that is expected to climb to 70% by 2050. This rapid urbanization has exacerbated old challenges – poverty, inequality and environmental degradation – but also created new opportunities. In line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and in particular SDG 11 on sustainable cities, UNESCO believes that culture is key to making cities livable for urban residents, encouraging urban development that is truly sustainable. The evidence pointing to the importance of culture for sustainable cities is overwhelming. The cultural and creative industries are among the fastest growing in the world, representing 30 million jobs and 3% of global GDP. Cultural activities foster social inclusion and dialogue among diverse communities, while tangible and intangible heritage are integral parts of a city's identity, creating a sense of belonging and cohesion. Many of the world's most dynamic cities have placed culture at the centre of their economies and societies; the cultural industries account for 16% of all jobs in Mumbai and 12% in London alone. UNESCO, therefore, works to promote a culture-based approach to urban development as a means of ensuring that the cities of tomorrow are safe, inclusive, resilient and sustainable.

[2 HOW DOES UNESCO WORK TO SUPPORT A CULTURE-BASED MODEL OF SUSTAINABLE URBAN DEVELOPMENT?

i. **Advocacy**. Through the Culture for Sustainable Urban Development Initiative, UNESCO supported Member States in advocating for a prominent place for culture in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which includes a target on safeguarding the world's cultural and natural heritage in SDG 11 on sustainable cities. UNESCO also ensured the integration of culture into the New Urban Agenda, adopted at Habitat III in Quito, Ecuador, in October 2016.

ii. **Policy guidance**. Launched in 2016, UNESCO's Global Report on Culture for Sustainable Urban Development, *Culture: Urban Future*, aims to promote a culture-based approach to urban planning, regeneration and development, in line with the 2030 Agenda and the New Urban Agenda. The 2013 Special Edition of the *Creative Economy Report* demonstrates how the cultural and creative industries lie at the heart of local economies in the global South, forging "new development pathways that encourage creativity and innovation in the pursuit of inclusive, equitable and sustainable growth and development".

iii. **Normative tools**. UNESCO's 2011 Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape calls for the integration of the conservation of the built environment into the wider goals of urban development, suggesting a landscape approach for identifying, conserving and managing historic areas within their broader urban contexts.

iv. **Network mobilization**. Through the UNESCO Creative Cities Network, which is made up of 180 member cities from 72 countries, UNESCO is mobilizing cities around a culture-centred model of sustainable development. At its 2018 Annual Meeting in Krakow and Katowice, the UCCN launched the LAB.2030 initiative, a collection of case studies that spotlight how Creative Cities are integrating culture into their local policies for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda. Other relevant UNESCO city networks include the World Heritage Cities Programme and the International Coalition of Inclusive and Sustainable Cities (ICCAR).

v. **Partnerships**. As part of its ongoing partnership with the World Bank, UNESCO has launched a Position Paper on "Culture in City Reconstruction and Recovery", which provides guidelines for integrating culture into post-crisis city reconstruction.

vi. **International cooperation**. UNESCO highlighted the role of culture for resilience, recovery and sustainable development in cities at the 9th World Urban Forum in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia in 2018.

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KEY MESSAGES

🔑 **The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development** recognizes, for the first time, the essential role of culture as an enabler of the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development, particularly in SDG 11 on sustainable cities.

🔑 **More than 50% of the world's population now lives in urban areas** – a figure that is expected to climb to 70% by 2050.

🔑 **Cities are increasingly spaces where development challenges such as poverty, inequality and environmental degradation are the most apparent and acute**. Rapid and uncontrolled urbanization frequently results in social and spatial fragmentation, and in a drastic deterioration of the quality of the urban environment.

🔑 **Yet cities are also engines of development**, bringing together people of diverse backgrounds to exchange, innovate and create.

🔑 **The cultural and creative industries are among the fastest growing in the world**, representing 30 million jobs worldwide. Global trade in creative goods more than doubled between 2004 and 2013, and today the creative economy contributes to 6.1% of the global economy, representing 4.3 trillion USD per year. The creative economy also employs more people ages 15 to 29 than any other sector.

🔑 **Unlocking the potential of the creative economy** means promoting the overall creativity of societies, affirming the distinctive identity of the places where it flourishes and clusters, and improving the quality of life there. Apart from its monetary value, the creative economy generates non-monetary value that contributes to achieving people-centered, inclusive and sustainable development.

🔑 **Urban heritage, including its tangible and intangible components, constitutes a key resource for enhancing the liveability of urban areas**. The conservation of the built environment must be integrated into the wider goals of urban development, with a landscape approach serving as a means of maintaining urban identities.

🔑 **People-centred cities are culture-centred spaces**. Cities can foster social inclusion by integrating heritage and cultural activities into the planning, design and use of public spaces. Integrating heritage and traditional knowledge into urban strategies can also be a powerful source of resilience in the face of environmental concerns.

For more information, visit: http://en.unesco.org/themes/culture-sustainable-development