G20

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CULTURE WORKING GROUP
Issue Note

वसुधैव कुटुम्बकम्

**ONE EARTH · ONE FAMILY
ONE FUTURE**

> *India firmly believes in the philosophy of **Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam** – the earth is one family – the concept that all individuals are collectively responsible towards each other and their shared future. This shapes India's vision of sustainable living.*
>
> *India's G20 Presidency aims to nurture, celebrate, and incorporate the cultural diversity of the member states while striving towards achieving holistic living and building a pro-planet society.*

I. BACKGROUND

Culture, in all its manifestations, has a profound transformative impact on human lives. As the vehicle for inter-generational transmission of knowledge, culture provides vital resources to address the myriad challenges of our times, directly nurturing diverse, resilient, and sustainable societies. Culture plays a pivotal role in fostering multilateral cooperation, social cohesion, and inclusive sustainable development. Cultural rights are human rights and are critical to peaceful and harmonious coexistence of peoples and communities.

At the global level, culture has been recognised as an enabler of growth and sustainable development. In 2021, the Rome Declaration of G20 Ministers firmly positioned culture as an engine for propelling sustainable socio-economic recovery. The UNESCO World Conference on Cultural Policies and Sustainable Development – MONDIACULT 2022, adopted a Declaration affirming culture as a 'global public good'. These historic declarations have anchored culture at the heart of public policy and international cooperation by recognising its intrinsic value for sustainable development.

The cultural and creative sectors play a significant role in the diversification, resilience and rejuvenation of economies and societies. They account for 3.1% of the global GDP and 6.2% of all employment and are crucial drivers for sustainable development.[1] In addition, cultural industries also contribute to the promotion of the diversity of the world's cultural expressions.

The COVID-19 pandemic exposed the structural fragilities and inequalities in the cultural sector. In the last few years, there has been a significant increase in the illicit trafficking of cultural property.[2] At the same time, the cultural sector also emerged as a powerful instrument driving resilience and recovery. In the face of these challenges, individuals, businesses and governments successfully leveraged technology to drive innovation and enhance accessibility to cultural heritage.

The global health crisis has led the international community to recognize the catalysing power of culture in building consensus to ensure that all cultural resources are truly protected as 'global commons'. It has firmly established culture as a 'global public good' to be integrated as a specific goal in the post-2030 development agenda. In order to

empower the global developmental scenarios, it is imperative to build upon the pillars of culture, commerce, connectivity, and collaboration.

II. PRIORITY AREAS

Under India's G20 Presidency, the priority areas of focus for the Culture Working Group (CWG) shall be the following: **(i) Protection and Restitution of Cultural Property; (ii) Harnessing Living Heritage for a Sustainable Future; (iii) Promotion of Cultural and Creative Industries and Creative Economy; and (iv) Leveraging Digital Technologies for the Protection and Promotion of Culture.**

PRIORITY 1
PROTECTION AND RESTITUTION OF CULTURAL PROPERTY

PRINCIPLES

1. Reaffirm the protection and restitution of cultural property as ethical imperatives, at the core of international cooperation, solidarity and peace, while endorsing the right to cultural heritage as an essential component of cultural rights, particularly in view of exacerbated natural and human made threats on cultural heritage.

2. Renew the commitment towards fighting against illicit trafficking of cultural property and facilitating an open international dialogue for its return and restitution.

KEY FOCUS

Tangible cultural heritage not only connects latent linkages with the intangible but also helps societies redefine their cultural histories, contemporary identities and future civilisational ethos.

Strengthening the fight against illicit trafficking of cultural property requires enhanced efforts towards prevention, notably through the establishment of inventories, raising awareness and a more effective regulation of online trade.

Enabling an open international dialogue for the return and restitution of cultural property, including illegally exported property, to countries of origin, addresses the growing aspiration of peoples and communities to exercise their right to cultural identity and heritage, thereby, upholding cultural heritage as an intrinsic dimension of cultural rights.

AREAS OF DISCUSSION

By shaping the identities of peoples and communities across time, cultural heritage empowers countries to appreciate and take pride in their history and cultural legacy. It also provides a reservoir of knowledge and basis for innovation to support the adaptation of societies to contemporary and future challenges. However, the vicissitudes of history have deprived many countries of portions of their rich inheritance. In addition, the illicit

trafficking of cultural property undermines the rights of peoples and communities to their identity and cultural heritage and erodes their collective memory and the opportunity to share it with future generations. This jeopardizes social cohesion and weakens the capacity of societies to shape their future.

Contesting claims over cultural ownership and the looting of cultural objects are arguably as old as the history of conquest itself. As a corollary, legislative deliberations and moral obligations in relation to cultural property have historically evolved within the context of war and conflict, but also posed new challenges in the digital age.

Since 1945, various international legislative instruments have been adopted at the multilateral and national levels to ensure the protection of movable and immovable cultural heritage, and notably to fight against illicit trafficking and facilitate the return and restitution of cultural property. These include the Hague Convention of 1954 and its two protocols, the UNESCO Convention of 1970, and the UNIDROIT Convention of 1995. These normative instruments have engendered a deeper understanding of the concerns and challenges at stake. At the same time, they have also specified concepts and provided operational tools and assistance to the countries to effect prevention and forge international cooperation for return and restitution.

The international community has also increasingly put the question of fighting illicit trafficking of cultural property on the global agenda, through different United Nations Security Council resolutions, and the G20 ministerial Declaration on Culture adopted in 2021 in Rome. More recently, the MONDIACULT Declaration, adopted unanimously by 150 States in September 2022, reaffirmed the international community's commitment to strengthen efforts in the fight against illicit trafficking of cultural property, highlighting areas of commitment regarding advocacy on the impact of illicit trafficking, introduction of penal or administrative sanctions in national legislations, enhanced capacity building measures, increased cooperation with art market actors and broader multi-stakeholder engagement, including through digital technologies and online platforms taking into account the recent spurt in online trade of cultural property.

However, the afore-mentioned international conventions apply from the date of their coming into force and do not apply retrospectively under the principle in international law of non-retroactivity of treaties, thus leaving out critical issues such as the return and restitution of colonial-era or pre-1970 cultural property.

The universal ratification of these legal instruments is key in ensuring their efficacy in combating illicit trafficking of cultural property. Even after more than 50 years, only 75% of all countries have ratified the 1970 Convention. Among other challenges encountered in this field are the emergence of newer natural and human-made crises, the rise of a largely unregulated online market, the lack of inventories, and the absence of effective laws. In this regard, therefore, it is imperative to strengthen national legal frameworks by urging ratification of key international normative instruments such as the 1970 and 1995 Conventions incorporating their principles into national legislation with necessary operational mechanisms.

Increased awareness at individual and societal levels, and enhanced access to information and sharing of knowledge on trafficked cultural objects with the countries of their origin is also critical to reducing illicit trafficking. In this context, the virtual museum of stolen cultural objects announced by UNESCO in cooperation with INTERPOL and other technical partners will be a powerful tool for drawing global attention to the scale of illicit trafficking and heritage impoverishment of affected countries while also providing an initiative that G20 countries may like to support.

Another core challenge to be addressed is ensuring that museum collections are documented with accurate provenance and transparency. National inventories will also need to be continuously updated to significantly reduce the illicit trafficking of cultural property. Many countries have built capacities in this field, however, there are still gaps in terms of technical skills of museum managers, curators, and provenance researchers. This requires developing and implementing capacity building programs such as participatory activities, seminars, training sessions, and workshops to enhance the skills of museum professionals in order to ensure clean collections and strengthen the fight against illicit trafficking.

Supporting the return and restitution of cultural property, including in contexts that do not fall under the above-mentioned international treaties, also requires adapting national regulatory frameworks – a perspective which is particularly relevant in cases where the concerned cultural assets are considered 'inalienable national properties'. This requires substantially reducing legal disparities, strengthening penal sanctions, and proposing a 'general law' to facilitate more restitution and eliminate the need for specific legislation.

Besides bilateral and multilateral treaties, promoting alternative dispute resolution mechanisms such as negotiation, mediation, conciliation, and arbitration is equally vital for the return and restitution of cultural property. In this regard, the Intergovernmental Committee for Promoting the Return of Cultural Property (ICPRCP) provides a mediation platform in cases that are not covered by international conventions.

Flexible, non-judicial solutions allow for the accommodation of historical and ethical considerations and contexts. The return and restitution of cultural property should not be viewed only through the perspective of international law and legal obligations but also as an ethical imperative through the lens of transitional justice. Furthermore, it is equally important to gather and maintain accurate, comprehensive, and up-to-date information on the restitution efforts of member states to efficiently target policy interventions in this area.

KEY QUESTIONS

1. How can G20 member states prevent illicit trafficking and facilitate the return and restitution of cultural property?

2. How can G20 member states enhance the effective implementation of existing international normative instruments to prevent illicit trafficking of cultural property?

3. How can G20 member states work on reducing the legal disparities in their respective national legislations on prevention of illicit trafficking and return and restitution of cultural property?

4. How can G20 member states strengthen the efficacy of alternate dispute resolution mechanism and build cooperation amongst themselves for the return and restitution of cultural property?

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

1. Achieve significant reduction in illicit trafficking of cultural property in G20 countries by 2030; strengthen regulation of online trading platforms and social media; and promote awareness raising and educational campaigns for the general public.

2. Increase the ratifications of key conventions and enhance access to information and sharing of knowledge by promoting interoperability among existing tools and databases at the disposal of stakeholders, notably the databases on stolen cultural property and national cultural heritage legislations, thereby preserving the cultural rights of people by ensuring equitable access to cultural heritage.

3. Promote an open and inclusive international dialogue to facilitate alternative dispute resolution mechanisms pertaining to the return and restitution of cultural property.

4. Support cultural institutions and museums to enhance the skills of their professionals by developing and promoting capacity building programs such as participatory activities, seminars, training sessions, and workshops that would assist in provenance research of their collections as well as establishment and improvement of inventories.

PRIORITY 2
HARNESSING LIVING HERITAGE FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

PRINCIPLES

1. Promote the role of living heritage in sustainable development, expanding the notion of 'sustainability' originally forged by the Brundtland Commission.

2. Harness living heritage to achieve sustainable development goals by building on G20 member states' initiatives such as environment conscious living, based on Mission LiFE - or, Culture for LiFE - as a campaign for collective participation led by India.

3. Mainstream living heritage practices in policy frameworks across domains such as healthcare, natural resource management, and climate action among others.

KEY FOCUS

Living heritage encompasses the gamut of cultural practices, traditions and expressions including oral traditions, performing arts and crafts, social practices, rituals and beliefs concerning nature and universe among others, transmitted from generation to generation. The living heritage of communities, including indigenous peoples, is built upon the underpinning philosophy of reverence for natural resources instead of their exploitation. Their approach towards lifestyle is holistic, based upon ecocentrism and inclusion as opposed to anthropocentrism.

Communities and groups continuously recreate this living heritage in response to their environment, interaction with nature, and history. It provides them with a sense of identity and continuity, thus inculcating respect for cultural diversity and human creativity.

Living heritage is a source of community-based resilience that can effectively contribute to sustainable development along socio-economic, environmental and cultural dimensions. This repository of knowledge systems predicated on symbiotic relation with nature makes all living cultural and creative practices potent tools for policy formulation. The safeguarding and propagation of living heritage is also essential if communities around the globe are to realize a sustainable future for all.

AREAS OF DISCUSSION

Living heritage strengthens the bridge between nature and cultural traditions and practices to provide sustainable and balanced solutions to contemporary global challenges. It necessitates the preservation of intangible heritage for sustainable living through the promotion and exchange of traditional cultural practices and knowledge systems among member states. Living heritage practices and know-how provide valuable insights for achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Until recently, the role of diverse local or culturally rooted practices and knowledge systems in addressing critical development and environmental issues have not been accorded the importance they deserve.

Living heritage practices and knowledge systems transmitted across generations have influenced many modern day practices and contemporary innovations with space to accommodate all segments of the population. Indigenous communities, groups and in some cases individuals, play an important role in the production, safeguarding, maintenance and intergenerational transmission of cultural heritage, thus helping enrich cultural diversity and human creativity. Encouraging research and documentation of case studies can help shape local approaches to sustainable development.

Traditional practices and indigenous knowledge systems can play a significant role in ensuring food security. Traditional food ways and indigenous farming, pastoral, fishing, hunting, food-gathering, and food-preservation systems can significantly contribute to food and nutrition security. Communities have accumulated a wealth of traditional knowledge based on a holistic approach to their specific rural life and environment. The

continuous strengthening and viability of these systems are crucial to ensuring food security and quality nutrition for many communities around the globe.

Indigenous and local communities play a central role in the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity. Traditionally, women have played a major role in breeding food crops and preserving seeds in many societies by growing and conserving multiple seed stocks to hedge against diseases and unpredictable climate. These seed stocks constitute a precious botanical repository of indigenous knowledge. In this context, farmers, herders, fishers, and traditional healers, among other local knowledge holders, are the significant custodians of biodiversity.

Culture and living heritage are crucial components for achieving sustainable and quality healthcare. Communities worldwide have created various health-related knowledge and practices that provide efficient and cost-effective therapies, frequently based on utilizing local natural resources. Today, frequent references are made to holistic healthcare practices such as acupuncture, ayurvedic medicine, herbal mixtures, and yoga, some of which have existed for centuries, even millennia. Integrating indigenous healthcare systems in national and international health planning agendas is critical to achieving inclusive healthcare.

Throughout history, local communities have demonstrated their ability to design sustainable water management methods and achieve access to clean water. These water management practices can lead to equitable access to clean water and sustainable water management, notably in agriculture and other livelihoods. The key to developing sustainable solutions to water-related environmental and development challenges lies in recognizing and respecting the diversity of water resource management systems, their enhancement and continued transmission.

Likewise, living heritage is strongly connected with formal and non-formal education, thereby playing a crucial role in safeguarding living heritage and supporting its transmission to younger generations. Providing context-specific content and pedagogy for education programs, it has the potential of increasing the relevance and quality of education and improving learning outcomes. Learning with and about living heritage contributes towards appreciation of diversity while sustaining skill adaptation and inter-cultural dialogue.

Living heritage also contains locally rooted knowledge and practices that provide a source of resilience against changing climate conditions and helps protect biodiversity. The significance of intangible cultural heritage practices for environmental sustainability in the fields of biodiversity conservation, natural and water resource management, disaster risk reduction, natural disaster preparedness and response mechanisms is widely acknowledged.

In this context, Mission LiFE, predicated on climate-friendly cultural norms, beliefs, and daily household practices of globally diverse cultures, was announced by PM Modi during the 26th UN Conference of the Parties (UNFCCC COP26), in 2021. LiFE envisions

mindful and optimal utilization of natural resources and harmonious coexistence between humankind and nature. Based on concepts such as circular economy, it emphasizes an environment-conscious lifestyle rooted in cultural ethos to address challenges such as environmental degradation and climate change. Mission LiFE, by way of Culture for LiFE, can be a valuable initiative for the G20 members to harness living heritage for achieving sustainable development goals.

Groups and communities frequently rely on their intangible cultural heritage to sustain their way of life. Local knowledge, skills, and practices, preserved and refined over centuries, offer a subsistence livelihood to many people. In this regard, traditional handicraft is often the primary source of revenue and decent work for many people, including poor and vulnerable ones. It is a source of income for artisans, their families, and those involved in transporting and selling craft products or gathering and manufacturing raw materials.

As a driving force of cultural diversity and sustainable development, intangible cultural heritage has received international recognition, and its safeguarding has become a significant priority for the international community. The G20 member states can play a crucial role in further ensuring that the contribution of living heritage to sustainable development is recognized and fully realized.

The 2003 UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage is the first international treaty to provide a legal, administrative and financial framework to protect intangible heritage. It recognizes the 'importance of the intangible cultural heritage as a mainspring of cultural diversity and a guarantee of sustainable development.' It is imperative that the G20 member states acknowledge the importance of intangible cultural heritage, safeguard it, and strengthen its role within different dimensions of sustainable development. Initiatives for protecting intangible cultural heritage may include researching, identifying, and documenting such knowledge systems and practices. It also includes preserving, promoting, enhancing, and transmitting living heritage through formal and non-formal education.

Moreover, there exists an urgent need to preserve, revitalize and promote indigenous languages which continue to disappear at an alarming rate worldwide. The UN General Assembly has proclaimed 2022-2032 as the 'International Decade of Indigenous Languages' to draw attention to their critical loss and to take urgent steps at the national and international levels for their preservation. The G20 member states may take the lead in sustaining indigenous languages as a vehicle of living heritage and biodiversity, notably through the Global Action Plan of the International Decade of Indigenous Languages.

KEY QUESTIONS

1. How can G20 member states promote and safeguard living heritage to support the transmission of knowledge and know-how to future generations and contribute to education more broadly?

2. How can G20 member states draw upon living heritage practices to combat global socio-environmental challenges and achieve sustainable development goals?

3. How can G20 member states integrate living heritage practices in policy frameworks to build a more comprehensive approach to culture and enable systemic linkages with other policy areas such as health and well-being, education, climate action, and disaster risk reduction, among others?

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

1. Mainstream sustainable and eco-friendly cultural practices and know-how spanning diverse areas such as food security, health and well-being, education, biodiversity conservation, climate change, natural resource management, and responsible consumption, among others.

2. Develop instruments, mechanisms, and conceptual studies for integrated analysis and determining the role of intangible cultural heritage in achieving sustainable development goals.

3. Create a repository of reliable evidence and data on living heritage practices by 2025 to shape local approaches toward sustainable development.

4. Strengthen the framework for sharing knowledge and good practices on living heritage among the member states to mainstream them in policy frameworks.

5. Enhance synergies between tangible and intangible cultural heritage, notably through movable and living heritage, in educational systems, including in non-formal education settings, with a view to acknowledging and valorizing cultural diversity and cultural resources.

6. Sustain indigenous languages as a vehicle of living heritage and biodiversity and ensure participation in - and access to - all forms of culture are enhanced for Indigenous Peoples, notably through the Global Action Plan of the International Decade of Indigenous Languages (2022-2032).

PRIORITY 3
PROMOTION OF CULTURAL AND CREATIVE INDUSTRIES AND CREATIVE ECONOMY

PRINCIPLES

1. Increase, support and monitor the contribution of cultural and creative industries to global GDP and international exchange of goods and services.

2. Recognize the status of cultural practitioners across the cultural value chain and safeguard their social, economic, and cultural rights through formalization of the sector.

3. Prioritize policy interventions that secure the resilience of cultural and creative industries and enhance cooperation efforts for the sector.

KEY FOCUS

Cultural and creative industries are in the spotlight because they account for 3.1% of global GDP, provide 6.2% of all employment and hire more people aged 15-29 years than any other sector. As a result, they are key to socio-economic progress and innovation, and at the same time contribute to social inclusion and sustainable development. Even though their nature and scope varies across nations, cultural and creative industries are increasingly being supported by world leaders as evidenced by the inclusion of the culture track in G20. Unlocking the full potential of cultural and creative industries and creative economy, therefore, requires enhanced institutional support. Promotion of this sector is important for increasing its share in the global GDP, creating employment opportunities, and enabling sustainable growth.

However, despite their significant contribution to the global economy, cultural and creative industries have not received adequate level of policy investment, which may impede its growth in the long run. Therefore, it is essential to create conducive policy frameworks to professionalize the sector and recognize and safeguard the status of cultural practitioners. These measures would help design knowledge-exchange mechanisms to increase cooperation opportunities and facilitate the equitable exchange of cultural goods and services.

AREAS OF DISCUSSION

Cultural and creative industries have distinguished themselves as outstanding drivers of innovation, economic growth and diversification, social inclusion, cultural diversity, pluralism, and human development. In the era of rapid globalization, they are built upon the pillars of culture, commerce, creativity, and collaboration. The creative economy is in the focus at a time when innovative and sustainable solutions are needed to overcome contemporary global challenges.

Cultural and creative industries are one of the major sources of employment that generate important spill-overs to the wider economy and society. Besides their economic impacts, they vastly influence various sectors such as health and well-being and promote social inclusion and capital. The 2021 International Year of Creative Economy placed cultural and creative industries and cultural economy at the forefront of innovative solutions required to address global concerns. The United Nations General Assembly resolution 74/198 outlined that the creative economy is advancing the SDGs in numerous ways.[3]

Today, cultural and creative industries are among the most dynamic in the world and provide new opportunities for developing countries to leap into emerging high-growth

areas of the world economy. As per UNESCO, they account for 3.1% of the global GDP, provide 6.2% of all employment, and hire more people aged 15–29 years than any other sector.[4]

Cultural and creative industries constitute a set of knowledge-based activities that generate tangible and intangible cultural goods and services. Seven of the top 10 exporters of creative goods are members of the G20.[5] Additionally, in the People's Republic of China, France, India, Italy, Turkey, and the United Kingdom, creative goods account for more than 5% of overall exports.[6] G20 countries may, therefore, take a leading role in furthering international cooperation and solidarity with the Global South for more equitable exchanges of cultural goods and services. This is in line with the UNESCO 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, and particularly its Article 16, thus facilitating a more equitable global cultural market.

Creativity is a renewable, sustainable, and limitless resource. The creative economy relies on creative talent as the primary source of value, calling for a more systemic policy investment in professionalization and upskilling of cultural practitioners and entrepreneurs. The demand for skilled creative workers is strong and evolving. However, while cultural and creative industries are growing rapidly, a significant proportion of the workforce in this sector operates in the informal economy. Therefore, it is frequently unaccounted for in official labour force statistics and their contribution to GDP. This hampers evidence-based, inclusive, and participatory policies for creativity. To boost, cultural and creative industries as vital forms of income generation, it is important to strengthen data collection, and build regulatory frameworks as well as improve the status, rights and public participation of cultural practitioners. This is outlined in UNESCO's 1980 Recommendation on the Status of the Artist.

Cultural and creative industries are evolving rapidly, and definitions can vary vastly between countries and international organizations depending on their resources, knowledge systems, socio-economic and cultural contexts. Adopting a harmonized definition of the creative economy can enable innovative, evidence-based, and multidisciplinary policy-making in this sector.

The devastating impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on certain cultural and creative industries has exacerbated the underlying vulnerabilities of the sector. Approximately 10 million job losses were reported in the cultural and creative sectors during the pandemic, which contracted to $750 billion worldwide in 2020.[7] In Africa, in particular, performing arts, visual arts, and heritage were reported to be the most affected sectors, as they are characterized by high informality, and precarious working conditions including a high proportion of freelancers, and the prevalence of short-term contracts, with limited or no social safety nets.[8]

Culture and creativity have untapped potential to deliver social, economic, and spatial benefits for cities and communities.[9] That is why adequate public support and recovery initiatives are urgently needed. In this regard, it is also necessary to strengthen the social,

economic, and cultural rights of artists and cultural professionals. The shrinkage of cultural and creative sectors could have detrimental effects for sustainable urban and rural development, citizen well-being, and the vitality and diversity of cultural expressions. Another critical challenge for the G20 members is determining how to enhance opportunities and international cooperation for the sector.

KEY QUESTIONS

1. How can G20 member states synergize their efforts to ensure the resilience of cultural and creative industries and creative economy in regular and in disruptive times?

2. How can G20 member states strengthen the cultural, social, and economic rights of cultural practitioners to enhance and safeguard their status as workers that contribute to society's socio-economic development?

3. How can G20 member states enhance cooperation opportunities for the sector?

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

1. Agree on a standard definition of the creative economy and methodology for estimating its contribution to socio-economic development for facilitating evidence-based policy interventions.

2. Increase cultural data collection, building as relevant on existing frameworks, including as part of UNESCO conventions and programs.

3. Enhance the status of cultural practitioners by ensuring access to employment, innovation, infrastructure, and business support measures.

4. Sustain more systematically the upskilling of cultural practitioners and entrepreneurs including in the informal sector.

5. Define policy actions to increase the share of cultural and creative industries in the global GDP by 2033.

6. Support international collaboration to promote and protect the diversity of cultural expressions and the economic potential of the cultural and creative industries.

7. Develop common guidelines to formalize the sector and build knowledge-exchange mechanisms to strengthen cooperation.

PRIORITY 4
LEVERAGING DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES FOR THE PROTECTION AND PROMOTION OF CULTURE

PRINCIPLES

1. Advance the dialogue on the impact of digital transformation in the cultural sector regarding the cultural and linguistic diversity of online contents and equal access to culture as a global public good.

2. Inform the adaptation of cultural policies to the opportunities and challenges of digital transformation across different cultural domains.

3. Enhance the use of digital technologies for the protection and preservation of cultural heritage, widening its access to all, enabling its exploration, and fostering collaboration in research.

4. Raise awareness of cultural heritage and industries through digital platforms and social media.

KEY FOCUS

Digital technologies can be instrumental in supporting knowledge building, education, sustainable management, and dissemination of cultural heritage while enabling exchange networks involving communities and professionals. In this regard, the creation of open access digital platforms to explore cultural heritage, digital data sharing for public access, as well as exchange of expertise on innovative digital technologies and data recording are among the key areas of imminent and future engagement. Adapting to the digital landscape continues to be one of the main issues for developing national cultural policies globally in order to advance culture as a public good.

Digital divide in terms of access divide, use divide and quality of use gap exists between the Global North and Global South, urban and rural populations, and the disparity of internet access between men and women globally. The Broadband Commission estimates suggest that only 53.6% of the world's population now has access to digital technologies. The digital divide is more apparent in low and middle-income countries where digital penetration drops by 19% and globally 12% less women use the internet compared to men.[10] This points to a prevalent inequality not just in Global South but a global gender inequality to access the internet. Combined efforts by G20 member states to address the digital divide would help reduce costs for Global South to adopt new technologies enabling the preservation, protection, and promotion of cultural heritage.

Strengthening dialogue and cooperation among G20 member states is central to addressing challenges linked with the impact of digital transformation on the cultural

sector. These include ensuring equal online access to culture for all, protecting online cultural and linguistic diversity, and addressing disparities in the global exchange of cultural goods and services due to the unequal concentration of global cultural platforms.

Enhanced collaboration among G20 member states, relevant international organizations, NGOs, educational institutions, and technology firms is essential for harnessing digital technologies to monitor, conserve, protect, promote, and explore cultural heritage so as to ensure its transmission to future generations.

AREAS OF DISCUSSION

For all countries, the preservation of valuable cultural assets for future generations is a major public policy goal. Our cultural heritage is faced with numerous challenges of deterioration and destruction precipitated by climate change, natural disasters, pollution, wind erosion, improper maintenance, vandalism, conflict, and war, among other global issues.

The information technology revolution has transformed almost every single industry within the global economy. However, the cultural sector has yet to take full advantage of the potential of digital platforms and emerging technologies for the protection, conservation, monitoring, and dissemination of tangible and intangible cultural assets.

Addressing the digital divide is a critical endeavour to enable equitable access to online culture. Technology can aid in preserving and revitalizing cultural heritage, indigenous knowledge systems, languages, oral traditions while ensuring their transmission to future generations.

Digital technologies, particularly open access approaches to technology can increase and democratize access to cultural sites and experiences for all, thus facilitating the development of resilient communities. This opportunity and access to a plethora of cultural experiences can broaden and expand the demand for cultural goods and services, thus further accelerating the growth of the creative economy. Advancements made in 3D technologies, augmented and virtual reality, artificial intelligence, remote sensing, and GIS technologies have made important contributions to cultural heritage management and conservation. These technologies have also aided interest, appreciation, and awareness among larger audiences and the youth in particular. By leveraging social media, the outreach of curated digital cultural experiences can be made accessible to a diverse global audience. This will also help drive the global demand for cultural tourism.

To sustain this trend, it is vital to develop an ecosystem based on building synergies with international organisations, universities, technology firms and civil society. Emerging technologies such as, machine learning, big data, extended reality, and the metaverse can be critical in the protection and promotion of cultural heritage at risk of disappearing from collective memory.

Concurrently, it is increasingly important to combat the associated challenges arising around the digital ownership of cultural artefacts, including the need to compensate communities based in the Global South for digital commodities that are created and traded. In this regard, leveraging the knowledge and expertise of universities and international institutions to build capacities in digital recording, processing and modelling can enhance ownership of digital cultural data assets for all. UNESCO's 2017 Digital Guidelines provide a framework to implement the 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions in a digital environment. The guidelines call upon countries to provide digital equipment to educational institutions, museums and cultural centres. G20 member states can deliberate and develop on creating a mechanism which tracks the disbursement of the equipment at subsidised rates to public institutions which preserve, protect and promote culture. Online journals, web pages or online databases which comprise digital cultural heritage act as a repository that would help facilitate intercultural dialogue. As technology is rapidly evolving, digital cultural heritage based on old technologies needs to be interoperable with new technologies used to store research data. Collaboration between global digital platforms and public heritage organizations by a forum designed and developed by G20 member states would enable sharing of ideas, technical know-how, which would encourage making digital cultural heritage open and accessible for all.

To ensure digital data preservation, efforts are needed to implement international data standards and implement best practices for data management, such as FAIR (Findability, Accessibility, Interoperability and Reuse) so that digital heritage could be preserved for the interoperability between existing and future digital platforms ensuring longevity. G20 member states can collaborate to promote best practices not only for tangible, intangible cultural heritage and natural heritage but also for digital heritage. This is in line with the 2009 UNESCO Charter on Preservation of the Digital Heritage.

The cultural heritage sector has integrative and cross-cutting attributes sharing roots, reach and relevance across borders. Therefore, it is an opportune time for the G20 member states to deliberate on global standards periodically of evolving technologies for promoting and protecting cultural heritage for future generations.

KEY QUESTIONS

1. How can G20 member states advance the global reflection on the impact of digital transformation for the cultural sector, addressing challenges related with unequal access to cultural heritage through strengthened regulatory frameworks at national levels and enhanced dialogue with technology firms?

2. How can G20 countries ensure sharing of best practices for the digitization of cultural heritage?

3. How can G20 countries develop interoperable and connected digital heritage platforms and create accessible database or registries, at national level, of artists, art collections, and cultural property?

4. How can G20 countries leverage technology to enhance visibility and drive demand for cultural tourism?

5. How can G20 member states ensure sound and equitable digital preservation of culture-related assets produced through information technology with regards to compatibility and accessibility?

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

1. Expand and democratize public access for all to user friendly digital cultural experiences and sustain innovative ways of showcasing culture for wider outreach, making it the world's heritage.

2. Develop a digital inventory of tangible, intangible, and natural heritage assets thereby ensuring transmission to future generations.

3. Adopt a collaborative and participatory approach with international organizations, universities, technology firms, and communities to maximize the impact and sustainability of technology for culture.

4. Ensure accessible and affordable digital creative production tools to a diversity of stakeholders of the sector.

5. Curate cultural experiences for wider outreach by utilizing digital platforms and power of social media to drive demand for cultural tourism.

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