

## **UNESCO Creative Cities Network Meeting with the Coordination Group**

**6 October–2 p.m**

### **Opening Remarks**

- Mr. Ottone R., Assistant Director-General for Culture of UNESCO, thanked the Coordinators and Deputy Coordinators for their presence as part of the continued dialogue between UNESCO and its Creative Cities, with a view to exploring ways to reinforce the efficiency and sustainability of the UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN).
- Mr. Ottone R. recalled that the 2024 Annual Conference will be held in Braga, Portugal, and that a save the date will be sent to the member cities in October 2023. He also expressed the shared disappointment at the unprecedented circumstances that prevented the hosting of the Annual Conference this year in Istanbul, Türkiye, while highlighting the persistent efforts made by the UNESCO Secretariat to organize the event.

The Assistant Director-General for Culture also informed participants that the approval by UNESCO's General Conference, at its 42nd session of the Organization's Programme and Budget 2024-2025 (42C/5), would imply a stronger link between the UCCN and the 2005 Convention on Diversity of Cultural Expressions, and a dedicated budget. He also explained that in the next biennium, UNESCO aims to further involve its field offices in the implementation of its programme by encouraging the development of capacity building activities to raise awareness on the Network's action.

## **UCCN Online Meeting (23 October)**

- It was explained that the Online Meeting on 23 October would provide an opportunity for member cities to exchange good practices and contribute to anchoring the Network in the implementation of the Organization's priorities and culture programme.
  
- He underlined that under the theme "Culture: the key to unlocking sustainable development," city representatives would be invited to take part in open exchange sessions, focusing on the main thematic priorities of the MONDIACULT 2022 Declaration.
  - The first theme, "Boosting the Economic Potential of Creative Cities and Unleashing Creativity in the Digital Era," will delve into the role of urban policies in promoting socio-economic development, but also into the opportunities and challenges raised by the digital transformation of the culture sector.
  - Under the theme "Forging People-centered Urban Policies and Promoting Learning through Creativity," the second panel will explore how Creative Cities can take action to guarantee the respect of their citizens' cultural rights, as well as foster synergies between culture and education.
  - The third panel, "Advancing the Role of Culture in Building Climate and Crisis Resilience and Recovery," will address Creative Cities' response to climate change, and will touch upon other crises, from the global pandemic to unplanned growth of urban areas, and emergency preparedness and recovery plans.

It was also clarified that during the Online Meeting, the sub-network reports would be presented by the Coordinators, each of which will have a 6-minute time slot to provide an overview of the past and ongoing activities, and in particular joint projects at sub-network level, and that Braga would also make a presentation of next year's Annual Conference.

## Holding of the Annual Conference

- Three Coordinators (Film, Gastronomy and Media Arts sub-networks) underlined the need to enhance communication around the holding of the Annual Conference, such as setting up a time schedule for meetings in advance, with a view to reducing the impact of cancellation at municipal level, notably in terms of cities' budget allocations and the Network's reputation. The development of a mechanism to reduce such risks, for instance a binding agreement the Host City would have to sign an agreement at least 3 or 4 months in advance to the holding of the Annual Conference, was proposed. In response, Mr. Ottone R. highlighted that such deadlines exist for other UNESCO programmes, such as the World Heritage Committee, for which the signing of an agreement 8 months in advance is normally required. However, he noted that in practice agreements are often signed only 1 or 2 months beforehand due to delays in internal procedures. In addition, further reflections should be held on possible actions and solutions in the event that the agreement is not respected.
  
- He further informed the participants that, as UNESCO is an intergovernmental Organization, the hosting agreement needs to be signed by the Host Country with the national authorities concerned. UNESCO will further ensure stronger national endorsements for future Host City applications and require additional proof of support. In case of force majeure, in the future, the possibility of hosting the event at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris could be envisaged. However, this potential solution will imply needs for funding, notably voluntary contributions from member cities.
  
- Mr. Ottone R. confirmed that UNESCO welcomes the convening of regular meetings with the sub-network Coordinators and Deputy Coordinators, and informed participants that 2 meetings will be organized prior to next year's Annual Conference. In addition, he underlined the need to collectively identify fund-raising mechanisms to ensure a more geographically balanced representation of Mayors from all Creative Cities, but also from the Global South. He also questioned to what extent member cities could assist the Secretariat and advocate their respective National Commissions to allocate a dedicated budget to the UCCN.

- Finally, Mr. Ottone R. highlighted the strong commitment of Braga as the Host City of the next Annual Conference, and its willingness to integrate MONDIACULT in the 2024 Annual Conference.

### **Host City Selection Process**

- On this subject, Mr. Ottone R. informed the participants that the UCCN Secretariat is finalizing the technical modalities regarding the online voting for the 2025 UCCN Host City and that the link to the voting platform would be shared at the earliest opportunity.

### **Revised Reporting Mechanism**

- Mr. Ottone R. informed the Coordination Group that the UCCN Membership Monitoring and Reporting Exercise has been further revised to respond to the concerns raised during the meeting of April last. Reassuring them that the newly designed online form is aimed at better assessing member cities' contribution to sustainable development, but also establishing stronger synergies between the UCCN and UNESCO's Culture Conventions and Recommendations with a view to developing a sector-wide platform for knowledge sharing and the design of sustainable cultural policies, as well as integrating cities' contributions in the upcoming Global Report on Cultural Policies in 2025.

### **IOS Evaluation**

- It was confirmed that the findings of the IOS evaluation of the Network are expected to be presented at the UNESCO Executive Board in April 2024 and at the 2024 UCCN Annual Conference highlighting that the proposed recommendations will provide an opportunity to strengthen the relevance, coherence, effectiveness and sustainability of the UCCN.

- Information was also shared on the policy paper: *The impact of the UNESCO Creative Cities Network at local, national and international level*, soon to be published, which aims at highlighting the driving power of cities in addressing global challenges through culture and creativity, as well as UNESCO's support of its Creative Cities by providing an international platform for exchange, peer-learning and collaboration.

## 2023 Call for Applications

- Mr. Ottone R. thanked the Coordination Group for their strong support in the evaluation process of the 2023 Call for Applications and informed them that the Secretariat is consolidating the evaluation results, as further elements and clarifications from some sub-networks were yet to be received.

## Coordination Group Participants

<b>Media Arts sub-network</b>	
Chris Bailey	York (Deputy coordinator)
<b>Music sub-network</b>	
Sandra Wall	Norrköping (Coordinator)
Jacob Wagner	Kansas City (Deputy coordinator)
<b>Gastronomy sub-network</b>	
Eduardo Seijo	Merida (Coordinator)
Colleen Swain	San Antonio (Deputy coordinator)
Arisa Larios	San Antonio (Deputy coordinator)
<b>Literature sub-network</b>	
John Kenyon	Iowa City (Coordinator)
<b>Film sub-network</b>	
Jordi Hernández	Terrassa (Coordinator)
Hyejee	Busan (Deputy Coordinator)
<b>Design sub-network</b>	
Cindy Lee	Wuhan (Coordinator)
<b>Crafts and Folk Art sub-network</b>	
Byung Hoon Jeong	Jinju (Deputy coordinator)