



11th ordinary session of the Intergovernmental Committee UNESCO Convention 2005 on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions

Report on the participation of the ACPN
Mike van Graan (Chair)
Dounia Benslimane (Deputy chair)
Josh Nyapimbi & Aadel Essaadani (Membres)

This report reflects our participation in the 11th session of the IGC held at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris from 12 to 15 December 2017; and will address in particular the role of civil society in the process of implementing, monitoring and evaluating the 2005 Convention, the quadrennial reports as well as the report on the International Fund for Cultural Diversity.

CSO Forum

Useful link: CS reports presented at the IGC11 [in English](#)

Since June 2017, and for the first time, civil society organizations (CSOs), previously observers in the governing bodies of the Convention were invited to draft and present their reports on the Convention, the governing bodies of the Convention.

The ACPN was represented in an editorial group of 14 that attempted to draft the first Civil Society Global Report on the implementation of the 2005 Convention.

Through the process, it became clear that major Global South regions e.g. Latin America, the Arab region, the Pacific and Caribbean, etc would be absent from the report, which was being drafted mainly by representatives of organisations based in Western Europe (ten of the 14 editorial group were from this region, with two from Asia, one from Canada and the ACPN President representing Africa). Rather than have its perspectives mediated or watered down within the Editorial Group, ACPN withdrew from the process and prepared its own report. The Asian representatives then did the same. Finally, there were four reports from Civil Society presented to the IGC, one written primarily by Western European colleagues, the ACPN Report, a report outlining an Asian perspective and a report by a representative of the Public Service Media in Europe.

The responses of the IGC were positive as they heard first hand from African and Asian representatives (Dounia Benslimane and Anupama Sekhar respectively) about the challenges and possibilities of implementing the Convention in their respective regions.

There were clearly differences in priorities, perspectives and matters to do with representativity and governance between Global North and some Global South representatives, which included:

- The need for greater geographical representativeness in the Civil Society Forum with extra efforts having to be made to include delegates from outside Europe given that it was far more costly for such delegates to travel to, and be accommodated for meetings in Paris
- The issue of the market being a priority for the countries of the North while for delegates from the Global South, the challenges are more "basic" e.g. democracy, education, arts and popular education, freedom of expression, training, access to capital, artists' mobility, etc. The digital divide between the Global North and Global South is another example. With Global North concerned about copyright, monopolies, etc while Global South delegates, digital technology is important as a tool for popular education, literacy, communication and so on.
- There were also major differences on the question of governance with Global North delegates favouring a less transparent model biased in favour of Global North leadership (members of the CSO secretariat for example) and a Code of Conduct to "manage" internal communication, while Global South delegates pushed for inclusivity and representativeness before models of governance were imposed and decided upon.
- Global North delegates preferred a CSO forum that concentrated particularly on the Convention while ACPN representatives advocated for a CSO forum that – in the light of international polarisation around issues of race, nationality and culture – addressed the issue of cultural diversity generally, with the 2005 Convention but one component of this i.e. to interrogate the relevance of the 2005 Convention to our contemporary, polarised world



- Greater clarity is also needed for membership of the CSO forum (i.e. are they for-profit/non-profit associations, service organisations, individuals, unions, etc? given that the organising realities are quite different in global north countries where there is more political space than in many global south countries

Quadriennial reports

Useful link: working document presented at the IGC11 [in English](#)

This year, only 6 of the 19 reports expected in 2017 have been submitted to the Secretariat, including the one from Morocco (the first after the ratification of the Convention in June 2013).

As per the Convention itself, States Parties are encouraged to include CSOs in the drafting of their quadriennial reports and to have them participate actively and effectively in completing a common form. This is not the case for all States Parties. CSOs are still not allowed to formally present parallel, independent, publicly accessible reports considered by States Parties.

→ There is a growing need for civil society to have an independent mechanism for the evaluation and monitoring of the implementation of the 2005 Convention. Our view is that civil society associations should be able to submit parallel and accessible forms to States Parties and the public, who could more equitably balance the role of the SC and directly formulate their criticisms, expectations and recommendations, as is the case in the Universal Periodic Review process on human rights (see [here](#)).

The IFCD

Useful link: report of the external evaluation of the IFCD presented at the IGC11 [in English](#)

Independent experts conducted an evaluation of the IFCD for the period 2012-2017. Many recommendations came out and were presented to the States Parties who requested that they be evaluated by the Secretariat.

We questioned the role of National Commissions in the pre-selection of projects as in some countries where the political context is unfavourable for CSOs, these Commissions can be a filter that excludes projects of certain associations considered subversive by their governments. This is the case in Egypt, for example, where legislation is increasingly draconian and the control of associations in general, and that of the cultural sector in particular, is becoming more severe.

→ Our view is that NGOs should be able to submit their projects directly to the Secretariat and / or to set up a direct follow-up mechanism that would enable it to "see" the exact number and type of projects proposed by CSOs.

Next steps

CSOs in the Arab Region, Africa, Latin America and Asia are very poorly represented in the work of the governing bodies of the Convention. Their participation in the drafting of the CSO reports was also weak, as was their presence at the various meetings of the CSO Forum and with the Bureau of the 11th session of IGC.

The periodic reports of the States Parties of these regions do not reflect the dynamism of the associations and their involvement in the implementation of the Convention.

ACPN's four delegates participated in the CSO Forum meetings held over the period of the IGC meeting in Paris. It was finally agreed that:

1. A 14-person Steering Committee (two reps per UNESCO region and two reps from international NGOs) be established to building a more inclusive CSO forum by the next IGC meeting in December 2018
2. The two African representatives would be Mike van Graan (ACPN) and Daves Guzha (Arterial Network)
3. That the Arab region be represented by Dounia Benslimane (Racines) while the Interim Committee recruits representatives from this region
4. Bill Skolnik, a Canadian is the interim Chairperson of the committee
5. ACPN has advocated for the Global South to be represented both within the interim secretariat and as a deputy Chair to ensure that Global South interests are affirmed at all times