

# CULTURAL DIVERSITY IN ACTION

**"I do not want my house to be walled in on all sides and my windows to be stuffed. I want the cultures of all lands to be blown about my house as freely as possible. But I refuse to be blown off my feet by any."**

*Mahatma Gandhi*

UNESCO enshrined the protection and promotion of the diversity of cultural expressions in international law on October 20, 2005 when it adopted the Convention that France had long wanted.

## The Pioneering Role of Francophony

By adopting the Cotonou Declaration in 2001, which was the inspiration for the UNESCO Declaration on cultural diversity, the member States of the International Francophone Organization (OIF) played a pioneering role and made a key contribution to the start of the negotiation of a convention at UNESCO.

"The mobilization of Francophone heads of States has been exemplary, and we must congratulate ourselves on this victory and on the determined commitment of our States and governments. (...) The battle for ratification is now crucial. As for the OIF, we must start work immediately on two aspects (...) the first concerns support for strengthening the cultural policies and industries of the South; the second concerns the implementation of renewed and increased international cultural cooperation."

Abdou Diouf  
Secretary-General of the International Francophone Organization  
Paris, January 16, 2006

## Francoffonies!

From March to October 2006, the Francophone Festival in France, initiated by President Chirac, is celebrating the diversity of the 63 States, member governments and associates of the International Francophone Organization, together with all those who want to be part of this Francophone experience.

The purpose of the festival is to highlight the realities of Francophony, its richness and the vitality of the people who make it up by bringing together artists, entrepreneurs, writers, scientists and intellectuals from all walks of life. And in so doing to illustrate also the struggle for the equal dignity of cultures.

The festival is also an opportunity to popularize Francophony as an experimental terrain for another possible relationship between politics, culture, education, trade, economy and communication.

[www.francoffonies.fr](http://www.francoffonies.fr)

## For further information :

[www.diplomatie.gouv.fr](http://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr)  
[www.culture.gouv.fr](http://www.culture.gouv.fr)  
[www.commerce-exterieur.gouv.fr](http://www.commerce-exterieur.gouv.fr)  
[www.oif.org](http://www.oif.org)  
[www.unesco.org](http://www.unesco.org)

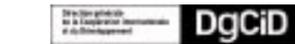
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## Promoting Literature

Every year in November, a group of writers from a single country or same linguistic area is invited to take part in a series of meetings across France, in partnership with bookshops, libraries, universities and cultural associations. These events have been organized by the **National Center for the Book** for the Ministry for Culture and Communication since 1987 and are known as **"les Belles Etrangères"**; they bring to the public **contemporary works by foreign authors**. New Zealand is to be the featured country in 2006.

[www.centrenationaldulivre.fr](http://www.centrenationaldulivre.fr)

## Music Industry

The **French music export office** and its network of correspondents all over the world help to promote French artists and their work on the markets of many countries. The office, jointly financed by music industry professionals and by the public authorities, also relies on **Francophonie diffusion** which distributes French music to a network of partner radios across the world.

[www.french-music.org](http://www.french-music.org)

## Theater

The Ministry for Culture and Communication offers help to groups that symbolize cultural diversity: the "Tarmac de la Villette", a theater which is devoted exclusively to artists and works from countries of the South; the "Festival international des francophonies" in Limousin, the "Maison des cultures du monde", dedicated to presenting foreign cultural events.

The Ministry also contributes with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the International Committee for French-speaking Theater (CITF), which supports new work for the theater among companies in different countries, specifically in a North-South perspective.

[www.letarmac.fr](http://www.letarmac.fr)  
[www.lesfrancophonies.com](http://www.lesfrancophonies.com)  
[www.mcm.asso.fr](http://www.mcm.asso.fr)  
[www.citf-info.net](http://www.citf-info.net)

## Internet for All

A program to bridge the digital divide, "Appui au Désenclavement Numérique" (ADEN), is actively participating in the protection and promotion of cultural diversity. This trilingual project, implemented in **13 African countries**, French-, English- and Portuguese-speaking, aims to increase democratic access to the new information and communications technologies by establishing public Internet access points for use in unconnected areas, training in the use of these technologies and support for the production of Internet services and applications for development.

ADEN centers are equipped with a software pack to facilitate operating and management. Using **open-source software** and available in French, English and Portuguese, the **ADEN pack** is easily translatable into all languages, especially the vernacular languages of countries of the South that are generally forgotten in the conception of technological products.

In the first quarter of 2006, France also set up a support fund for Internet uses and applications for development to finance new content about the South available on the Internet, thereby enriching cultural diversity on the web.

[www.africaden.net](http://www.africaden.net)

*Suu Lee Van, Vietnamese painter, workshop for French-speaking artists, Saïda, South Libanon 2002.*

*The library in Alexandria*

## Audiovisual Memory and Creative Industries

This is a program run by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to preserve the audiovisual heritage and promote the cultural diversity of countries of the South; it is specifically designed to enhance these cultures by restoring their audiovisual heritage and improving conditions for new work. It is made up of three parts :

- The **Plan Images Archives** supports projects to preserve cinematographic, audiovisual, radio and photographic materials at risk in countries of the South.

Examples:

- The Memory of African Cinema: 2,000 films to save. The best of the collections of the Cinéma-thèque Afrique in Paris and the Cinéma-thèque africaine in Ouagadougou will be preserved and digitalized;

- The Audiovisual Memory of Cambodia: The Center for Audiovisual Resources of Cambodia will make available to the public 750 hours of images on the country's history;

- The Radio Heritage of Afghanistan (35,000 hours): old radio tapes that have been dispersed and damaged will be digitalized and re-issued.

- A **legal support system** to develop cultural capacity supports the establishment of juridical standards and institutions to defend the rights of creative artists and combat piracy.

- The **Sudplanète** website will be a source of complete and interactive information on the cultures of over 60 countries of the South, a venue for reflection and a practical guide for creative arts from the South.

Partnerships: the National Audiovisual Institute, the National Center for Cinematography, companies collectively handling royalties.

[www.ina.fr](http://www.ina.fr)  
[www.cnc.fr](http://www.cnc.fr)  
[www.sudplanete.net](http://www.sudplanete.net)

## Hosting and Training Foreign Artists

Hosting professionals and artists from other countries is a major aspect in the work of the Ministry for Culture and Communication.

By way of example, in 2005 the "Courants du monde" program brought together 135 professionals from some 60 countries; another program, "Profession culture", hosted some 40 foreign professionals in major public institutions for an average period of three months; the "Odyssée program", run by the Hosting and Training Foreign Artists, offered a scholarship and accommodation in a prime setting in France to 45 foreign artists.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the City of Paris offer established artists the chance to undertake a project in the framework of the international Center "Les Récollètes", in Paris.

*ADEN Center in Berberati, the Central African Republic*

*Reels Center for Audiovisual Resources of Cambodia*



*Brazzaville, a radio announcer for AEF*



It is up to each and everyone of us to keep this law alive.  
Cultural diversity is already in action **S...**



## A convention to promote diversity

The Convention guarantees:

- **The Sovereign Right of States to Decide their Cultural Policies**

States have the right to maintain, adopt and implement policies and measures they deem appropriate for the protection and promotion of the diversity of cultural expressions on their territory.

- **The Value-Specificity of Cultural Goods and Services**

The Convention confirms the vital role of artists and others involved in the creative process; it recognizes that cultural goods and services convey values and meanings, and therefore define the very identity of people and societies. Because of this, they cannot be subject solely to the laws of the marketplace.

- **International Cultural Solidarity**

"Culture will gradually come to assert itself as the fourth pillar of sustainable development," President Chirac proclaimed in 2002 at the Johannesburg Summit. Responding to this affirmation, the Convention endorses for the first time the cultural dimension of development and provides for increased international cooperation. It will serve as a springboard for:

- supporting the professionalization of culture-related occupations in the developing countries;
- helping in the emergence of viable cultural industries on their territory;
- strengthening dialogue on cultural identities by facilitating the mobility of artists and their work.

**The Convention will enter into force once it has been ratified by 30 States. A broad movement to ratify it in all regions of the world will effectively guarantee its reach.**

[www.unesco.org](http://www.unesco.org)

## Afrique en Créations

**Afrique en Créations** is a program to support the training of artists and cultural operators in Africa, run by the French Artistic Action Association (AFAA, Association Française d'Action Artistique), a joint operator of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry for Culture and Communication for international cultural exchanges. AFAA, through this program, takes part in the organization of major pan-African events such as the Encounters of African Photography, the Choreographic Dance Encounters of Africa and Indian Ocean, the Contemporary Art Biennial in Dakar, the International Festival of Nomad Music in Nouakchott, and the "Dialogue de Corps" Festival in Ouagadougou.

AFAA is also preparing a program in the Caribbean on similar lines, **Caraiïbes en Créations**, to support the development and international promotion of contemporary arts in the region.

[www.afa.asso.fr](http://www.afa.asso.fr)

## Foreign Cultural Seasons in France

Foreign cultural "seasons," or sometimes "years," in France, organized by AFAA, are an important component of measures to promote cultural diversity taken by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry for Culture and Communication. The timetable for such events is established several years in advance.

On the agenda for 2006: the 120th anniversary of diplomatic relations between France and South Korea, "Corée au Coeur", the Thai Festival in France, "Tout à fait Thai", and the start of the Year of Armenia in France.



Photograph: Antoine TEMPE  
Graphic Design: Claudie ROBET

## Professionals in the arts act in unison to promote cultural diversity

The French Coalition for Cultural Diversity groups 51 cultural associations (cinema, television, performing arts, publishing, music, graphic and plastic arts, multimedia) and public television with ARTE and France Télévisions. It defends the capacity of States to define and implement their cultural policies.

The primary mission of the French Coalition is to increase awareness and mobilize foreign cultural professional organizations and authorities about the stakes involved in cultural diversity. It acts within the framework of the International Liaison Committee of coalitions for cultural diversity (ILC), which groups 34 coalitions around the world.

The French Coalition vigorously supported the adoption of an international convention on cultural diversity and will be continuing its action to promote the ratification and entry into force of the Convention. It will also continue to oppose any commitment towards liberalizing the exchange of cultural goods and services.

[www.coalitionfrancaise.org](http://www.coalitionfrancaise.org)

The French Coalition for Cultural Diversity gave the floor to artists and creators (from left to right: French filmmaker Bertrand Tavernier, Korean actress Moon Sori, French composer Laurent Petitgirard, Malian filmmaker Souleymane Cissé and French writer Daniel Picouly) on October 10, 2005 in Paris, ahead of the UNESCO general conference which adopted the Convention.



## Culture and Trade

- **Are trade liberalization and cultural diversity compatible?**

It is accepted that globalization of the economy and progress in information and communications technologies foster interaction among cultures by facilitating the movement of cultural goods and services.

However, the changes at work do not necessarily play out in favor of balanced cultural relations. The threat of uniformization justifies the recourse to public policies to guarantee the diversity of cultural expressions.

For that reason, States that do not wish to lose their freedom to pursue cultural policies must make sure they do not liberalize trade in cultural goods and services at the World Trade Organization or through bilateral agreements. That does not mean closing their markets: films of

all nationalities can be seen in Europe even though the Union and its member States have not liberalized the audiovisual sector at the WTO.

With the Convention, cultural diversity acquires the full status which it deserves and which justifies the adoption or retention of certain measures incompatible with completely open markets.

- **What is the relationship of the Convention to international trade law?**

"Mutual supportiveness, complementarity and non-subordination" will be the guide in relations between the Convention and other international legal instruments (article 20).

That means:

- The Convention and other treaties will be on equal footing;
- the rights and obligations under other treaties (commitments to liberalization in

the cultural sphere at the WTO, if any) are not modified by the Convention;

- parties take the Convention into account in interpreting and applying other treaties or if they subscribe to other international commitments.

Regardless of the trade options it has agreed to in the past, a State will be able to accede to the Convention. It will however have to ensure in future the coherence of its commitments.

- **Will the Convention be an impediment to the movement of cultural goods and services?**

More goods and services will be in circulation thanks to cultural policies that are legitimized by the Convention.

The Convention sets out the principle of openness of each culture to other cultures. Access to diverse cultural expressions in the world, particularly in the developing countries, is encouraged.

## The Europa Cinémas Network

Hundreds of cinema operators and distributors in countries all over Europe established a network of theaters in 1992 organized as a force to launch European films of all nationalities.

The operators receive technical and financial support to diversify their European programming and take

actions to raise awareness and develop information, directed especially at younger audiences.

This long-term action has produced indisputable results: in 2004 non-national European films achieved 34% of market share in the network whereas they account for only 8% of the total number of cinemas in Europe.

**This diversity in Europe benefits films from all other continents since 15% of screenings are offered to films from Asia, Latin America and Africa.**

[www.europa-cinemas.org](http://www.europa-cinemas.org)

**At this time, the Europa Cinémas network comprises 1,562 screens in 664 cinemas located in 365 cities in 59 countries**

The Grand Teatret cinema of Copenhagen, one of the theaters of the Europa Cinémas Network.



"La terre abandonnée" by Vimukthi Jayasundara, a film made with the support of Fonds Sud Cinéma

## Fonds Sud Cinéma

Since it was established in 1984 Fonds Sud Cinéma has assisted over 350 projects by producers from Africa, Latin America, Asia, the Middle East and certain countries in Eastern Europe, which have often been screened and awarded prizes at international festivals ("Central do Brasil", "West Beyrouth", "Luna Papa", "Platform, La Cienaga", "Tropical Malady," etc.)

The Fund is financed equally by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry for Culture and Communication CNC (National Center for Cinematography).

[www.cnc.fr](http://www.cnc.fr)

[www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/cinema](http://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/cinema) heading/cinematographic cooperation/production support funding

"Zulu Love Letter" by Ramadan Souleiman, a film made with the support of Fonds Sud Cinéma



"O grande Bazar" by Licinio Azevedo- FIPA d'argent 2006



## Examples of French Investment in Cultural Diversity

- 200 cultural centers and alliances have signed conventions with the State in the developing countries
- 27 research centers in human and social sciences across the world
- Afrique en créations: 5.9 million euros over three years
- Fonds Sud Cinéma: 2.4 million euros a year
- Fonds Images Afrique: 6 million euros over three years
- ADEN : 6 million euros over three years
- Program to preserve audiovisual heritage and promote cultural diversity: 4 million euros over three years
- Visiting artists programs sponsored by the Ministry for Culture and Communication: 1.5 million euros a year
- A visual arts program and promotion of the arts from the South, run by the OIF: 5.6 million euros over two years

## Fonds Images Afrique

Founded in 2004 as part of the Plan Images Afrique, the fund supports film and television productions (of all kinds) in sub-Saharan African countries.

These measures are helping to strengthen existing production structures in Africa, promote the emergence of new structures and create jobs accessible to students trained in regional African film schools.

1. "Les gens de la rizière" by Rithy Panh, a film made with the support of Fonds Sud Cinéma

2. The Kettly Noel Dance Company-Choreographic Dance Encounters of Africa and Indian Ocean, 2003. Photograph by Antoine Tempe

