



Summary

Culture in National Policies

Moderator: **Mr. Stefano Manservigi**, Director-General for Development and Relations with African, Caribbean and Pacific Countries, European Commission

- **What culture policy for a developing country?**
Mr. Alrich Nicolas, Ministre des Affaires Etrangères, Haïti
- **Cultural policy in Belgium**
Ms. Fadila Laanan, Minister of Culture and Audiovisual of the French Community of Belgium
- **The role of cultural policy in post-apartheid South Africa**
Prof. Keorapetse Kgotsile, Poet Laureate, Ministerial Advisor for the Ministry of Arts and Culture, South Africa
- **Booming Moroccan Cinema: a result of a successful policy?**
Ms. Zouiten Saloua, Head of the Production Department, Moroccan Cinema Centre
- **The role of cultural activities in post-conflict situations**
Mr. Stojan Pelko, State Secretary, Ministry of Culture, Slovenia
- **The place of culture in a European development policy towards ACP countries**
Ms. Rebecca Walton, Director of Arts, British Council, United Kingdom

The objective of this panel was to demonstrate the different roles that culture can play in national policy, to emphasize the importance of including culture in national policies and to discuss best practices in order to draw more general lessons. As moderator, **Stefano Manservigi** briefly introduced the topic and the speakers.

What culture policy for a developing country?

The Haitian Minister of Foreign Affairs Mr. Alrich Nicolas, who was also speaking on behalf of his colleague Mr. Olsen, the Minister of Culture pointed out two weaknesses about culture in a political and contemporary perspective. First, from the government's point of view, there is often a tendency to maintain a conservative, inertial position and a lack of interest in taking action towards improving the cultural sector. Secondly, the political environment is too often lacking in coordination of cultural initiatives.

Thus, he suggested that governments should be more proactive and make a connection between *"things to be done, resources they can rely on and circumstances they live in"*. Concerning Haiti's experience, he mentioned that because of human and economic limitations, the authorities decided that the political approach towards the cultural sector had to be efficient, promoting synergy between ministries; development of cultural activities; better performance of the cultural institutions through public information; and a variety of specific programmes (cultural heritage, arts, creative industries, training and education, cultural events, etc.).

These good practices were possible thanks to three types of partnerships: between the private and the public sector, between ministries, and among international organisations, such as the EU. He stated that the EU would help them to strengthen ministerial programming as well as professional training programmes. He indicated that *"the experience of Haiti is not a point of reference, but it shows that developing countries can create policies"*.

Cultural policy in Belgium

Fadila Laanan pointed out the economic dimension related to culture as a factor of development. Indeed, economists have recognised that culture can be an attractive sector for investors and can generate jobs. She mentioned the Belgian annual plan for cultural policies, which included a huge variety of initiatives to give society better access to culture; for example, by organizing free museum visits the first Saturday of each month, and defending users' rights. She also indicated the importance of intra-ministerial synergy and, as an example, she referred to the collaboration of the Ministries of Culture and of Economics to increase the funds for the audiovisual industry. Priority has also been given to the media sector and to employment in the creative industries, creating new libraries, providing training and research, etc.

The role of cultural policy in post-apartheid South Africa

Keorapetse Kgotsile talked about the significant role of cultural policy in South Africa after the end of apartheid. For instance, the emergence and ultimate adoption of the *White Paper on Arts, Culture and Heritage* in 1996 marked an important milestone for arts, culture and heritage in the country. It set some major objectives: defence of human rights, access to arts and cultural events, affirmative action with regard to race, class, gender, construction of a cultural national identity, recognition of aesthetic diversity and pluralism, etc.

While during apartheid freedom of speech was denied, this right became a central point in the White Paper. The Ministry of Culture has developed a series of activities to promote access to information, such as historical archives, and to protect the 11 official languages. He acknowledged that the Ministry played *"a vital role not only in chronicling South African collective memory but also in redefining the soul of the nation"*.

The role of cultural activities in post-conflict situations

Stojan Pelko reminded participants that less than 15 years ago Slovenia was in the heart of a war, and that delicate, post-conflict reconstruction implied *"healing the wounds of soils, but also of souls"*. He demonstrated that culture can become a vector of reconciliation, promoting interesting initiatives, such as, for instance, summer exchange programmes for children.

During these events, children can have an opportunity to reconstruct their trust in one another and to express their thoughts and worries.

The video-clip he showed was an example of a movie coproduced between countries that were once enemies. Culture thus proved to have a true power to enable the populations to become owners of their own destiny. He also described programmes, such as the collaboration between Rwanda and Slovenia, where people from post-conflict countries in the Northern and Southern hemispheres are working together and exchanging experiences and best practices to learn about their cultural differences and to promote sustainable peace.

Booming Moroccan Cinema: a result of a successful policy?

Zouiten Saloua presented best practices used in Moroccan cinematography, which celebrated 50 years of existence in 2008. In fact, this industry plays a major role in Moroccan society. First of all, she pointed out that this sector has grown in a constant and regular way during the years: in 2004, nine films were produced and in 2008 this number reached 14 productions; in 2014, the objective is to have 30. A special fund was created in order to support the film industry and to promote coproduction with North and South partners.

Secondly, Moroccan films are very much appreciated within national boundaries, but the *Centre Cinématographique Marocain* wants to increase furthermore the number of cinema theatres in the country, increasing from 78 screens to 240 by 2014. She also reminded the audience about the international visibility of Moroccan movies, indicating that they have received several awards at international film festivals.

Lastly, she mentioned the great diversity of contemporary topics and the aesthetics approach existing in their movies, which confirm the quality of Moroccan movies. She also indicated that many foreign studios have produced their movies in Morocco, which is an important factor for the country's development, since it created employment and generated internal income.

The place of culture in a European development policy towards ACP countries

Rebecca Walton referred to a fundamental principle, which the British Council widely supports: when intervening in a nation's cultural policy, one should not judge. Instead, this approach should connect with cultures, guaranteeing respect and trust for one another. The support for culture within aid interventions is very important because of the social goods it creates, such as identification and development of talent, increased cohesion and promotion of intellectual freedom. One of the British Council's achievements was, among others, mapping the creative industries and skills concentrations in some ACP countries. They also created a Creative Lives Programme in several African countries, which supported and trained young people who were already exhibiting creative talent. These significant examples show evidence of the power of culture and creativity in ACP economies.

Debate

The audiences applauded such interesting and stimulating experiences and extended the debate:

- The South African *White Paper* and the effort to recognize all 11 official languages have been saluted by a representative of the Republic of *Cabo Verde* as important and inspiring contributions for national cultural policies in all ACP countries;

- Mr. Oumarou Hadary, Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure of Niger, brought forward the *Semaine nationale de l'expression de la parenté à plaisanterie*, that is held in Niger since 2007, for its crucial role in the promotion of peace and harmony among different groups, through artistic expressions;
- Mr. Mod Seka, Director at the Gambian Ministry of Finance, pointed out the necessity for the Commission to move forward in its cultural agenda, on the basis of the significant recommendations that are coming out from this Colloquium.
- Representatives from Barbados and other countries emphasized having a broader approach towards culture, which cannot be reduced to mere major and spectacular events, but has also much to do with the way people think and behave. Thus the promotion of arts is not enough, and national policies should always remember the cross-cutting dimension of culture, and its intrinsic connection with other sectors of social life; in the end its key objective should be the promotion of well-being for all people.

Stefano Manservigi closed the debate reminding the importance of the existence of national or local cultural policy also as necessary framework to which possible actions of the international cooperation could contribute, but without which, no real sustainable impact of those actions could be ensured.

Thank you to the note-takers: Maria Livia Brauzzi, Mariana Nissen Da Costa Paiva