



G20

SOUTH AFRICA 2025



Ministers of Culture **KwaDukuza** **Declaration**

KwaDukuza, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, 29 October 2025

G20 Culture Ministers' Meeting

KwaDukuza Declaration

Preamble

1. We, the G20 Culture Ministers, convened in KwaDukuza, KwaZulu-Natal, on 29 October 2025, under the G20 Presidency of South Africa; ¹
2. Reaffirming our commitment to advancing the role of culture within the G20, recognising its power to foster solidarity, open and inclusive dialogue and cooperation, and to contribute to a more inclusive and sustainable world, in line with the theme of South Africa's Presidency, which is deeply interconnected with the multilateral cultural agenda;
3. Welcoming the inclusion of culture on the G20 agenda with the first Culture Ministers meeting inaugurated under the Saudi Arabian Presidency in 2020 and its positioning as the Culture Working Group during the Italian Presidency in 2021, and acknowledging the valuable contributions of subsequent Presidencies of Indonesia, India, and Brazil in consolidating the G20 Culture Working Group and advancing culture as part of the multilateral agenda throughout their respective declarations and outcome documents;
4. Reaffirming culture's vital role in sustaining peace and dialogue by promoting multilateralism that acknowledges cultural diversity and the plurality of sustainable development approaches; encompassing perspectives from developed and developing countries; within the context of human rights and by enhancing localisation efforts by encouraging context-relevant, human-centred development frameworks for individuals and communities;
5. Recalling the importance of cultural rights as enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, as applicable, which reaffirms everyone's right freely to participate in cultural life as part of universal human rights, and recalling the aims outlined in the United

¹ Argentina reserves its national position on the following paragraphs in this declaration: 6/7/11/12/15/17/19/22/25/26/27/28/29/30/31/32/33/37b/38b/39b/40/41/42/43/44/45/46

Nations General Assembly Resolution 78/161 on Culture and Sustainable Development, adopted on 19 December 2023, which acknowledges the importance of cultural access, participation, freedom and diversity of cultural expressions, taking into account national values and laws, as well as promote inter-cultural dialogue as drivers for more innovative sustainable, cohesive, resilient, safe and inclusive societies;

6. Recalling the outcomes of the G20 New Delhi Leaders' Declaration (2023), the Salvador da Bahia Declaration of the G20 Ministers of Culture, as well as of the UNESCO World Conference on Cultural Policies and Sustainable Development – MONDIACULT 2022 and 2025, which collectively call for the advancement of the inclusion of discussions on culture as a standalone goal in a possible post-2030 development agenda;
7. Emphasising the role of culture as an enabler and driver for sustainable development, and its contribution directly and indirectly to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), with intrinsic value beyond its social, environmental and economic benefits, and as a common good of humanity, while reaffirming the transformative impact of the cultural and creative economy across all levels of society, as a key contributor to sustainable development and the resilience and regeneration of economies and communities, in developed and developing countries;
8. Welcoming the active engagement of the African Union after its entry into the G20 family as a permanent member, which significantly contributes to addressing the current global challenges, while sharing the understanding that Africa is the cradle of humanity and, thus, is not only home to invaluable cultural resources and heritage, but also offers important examples of the power of human creativity and sustainability.

Guiding Principles

Priority 1: Safeguarding and Restitution of Cultural Heritage

9. Recognising that cultural heritage in all its forms plays a key role in preserving societies' and communities' identities, memory and history by acting as a tangible and intangible record of their past, values, traditions expressions and beliefs, allowing communities to connect with their roots, understand their evolution, and pass this knowledge on to future generations, thus fostering a strong sense of belonging and cultural connection;

10. Recognising the significance that countries of origin attribute to the return or restitution of cultural property that is of fundamental spiritual, historical and cultural value so that they may constitute collections representative of their cultural heritage; ensuring meaningful participation of relevant parties and strongly encouraging open and inclusive dialogue on the return and restitution of cultural property, while acknowledging the increased recognition of its value for strengthening social cohesion, intergenerational transmission, dialogue, understanding of cultural heritage and memory, solidarity, peace, and generating cultural and economic benefits;
11. Recognising the urgency of safeguarding cultural heritage from the impacts of illicit trafficking, climate change, desertification and biodiversity loss, economic and social challenges, and conflict situations;
12. Recognising that participation in cultural life is a universal human right, while also recognising that inequality in access persists for some, depriving Indigenous Peoples, as well as local and traditional communities, and people in vulnerable situations of their cultural heritage. This calls for a broad historical perspective built on mutual understanding and cooperation in addressing cultural heritage and heritage-related matters, to foster renewed and equitable relationships between countries in this area;
13. Reiterating our deepest concern for the continued theft, looting and illicit trafficking of cultural property including through online markets and digital platforms and often with links to illicit financial flows, and welcoming efforts to recognise and address these matters, particularly through bilateral dialogue and multilateral mechanisms;
14. Recalling the importance of multilateral frameworks, particularly the 1970 United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), Convention and other mechanisms provided by the International Institute for the Unification of Private Law (UNIDROIT), as applicable and specialised operational capabilities by the International Criminal Police Organisation (INTERPOL), among others, as well as strengthening bilateral cooperation between relevant national authorities to investigate, prosecute, sentence and deter cases of crime related to illicit trafficking of cultural property at the international level, in accordance with relevant international agreements;

15. Reaffirming the significance of Indigenous Peoples, as well as local and traditional communities and the importance of cultural organisations such as museums, archives, libraries, in safeguarding heritage and ensuring fair access to knowledge for all, and encouraging active participation of relevant parties while recognising the importance of free, prior and informed consent, while also valuing cooperation on digitisation of cultural assets;
16. Recognising that all threats to cultural heritage and cultural resources may result in the loss of irreplaceable cultural assets and disruption of socio-cultural practices and strongly deploring all acts of religious hatred against persons, as well as those of a symbolic nature without prejudice to domestic legal frameworks, including against religious symbols and holy books, and bearing freedom of expression in mind, as applicable within national legislation;
17. Recognising the impact of the over-commercialisation of the living cultural heritage on the sustainability and livelihoods of practitioners and bearer communities, welcoming a broader international dialogue on the safeguarding of the rights of Indigenous Peoples, as well as the rights of local and traditional communities according to national laws and legislation; and affirming that discussions on the protection of traditional knowledge and living heritage should remain in line with intellectual property laws, as agreed in international fora, as applicable and should take account of ongoing developments in relevant international fora.

Priority 2: Integrating Cultural Policies with Socio-Economic Strategies to Ensure Holistic and Inclusive Development

18. Recognising the role of culture as an enabler and driver for sustainable, inclusive and human-centred development, serving as a social asset and an economic force that upholds human dignity, reducing poverty while leveraging equity and social cohesion within and among countries, driving sustainable growth and also acknowledging the importance of robust integrated cultural policies, both as an independent policy domain and also a contributor to other policy areas;
19. Recognising the growing economic weight of the cultural and creative sectors and industries as a source of decent work, income, diversification, and its important contribution to innovation and creativity for all, while sustaining Indigenous Peoples, as well as local and traditional communities, and fostering inclusive locally-owned and sustainable development in developing and developed countries; and contributing to cross-border economic exchanges, economic growth and leveraging

sustainable development in areas such as employment, tourism, finance, trade and investment , and digital technologies;

20. Recalling the economic vulnerability of cultural sector organisations and professionals, which calls for systemic policy engagement, stronger multistakeholder partnerships, evidence-based policymaking, and exploring innovative financing models; while highlighting the importance of promoting and ensuring decent working conditions of artists, authors, creators and other cultural and creative professionals, in accordance with national law, with reference to relevant international labour standards, respect for intellectual property rights, the exercise of artistic freedom, the mobility of creative and cultural professionals, fair remuneration and adequate access to comprehensive and sustainable social protection systems, in line with the UNESCO 1980 Recommendation concerning the Status of the Artist, as appropriate to national context and legal framework;
21. Underlining the critical role of cultural policies to enhance the enjoyment of human rights, protect cultural diversity, bolster social cohesion and mutual respect as well as reduce poverty, in response to persistent multifaceted inequalities within and among countries, building on the transformative power of culture to tackle discrimination, racism and prejudice, and to ensure equal access to and participation in cultural life for all;
22. Expressing our concern, in line with the 2022-2032 International Decade of Indigenous Languages, over the rapid disappearance of languages worldwide, particularly Indigenous, local and regional ones, which disrupts or threatens the existence of or leads to the loss of invaluable oral traditions, and living heritage expressions, and reiterating that actively identifying, meticulously documenting, effectively preserving and vigorously revitalising endangered languages, while recognising the importance of free, prior and informed consent, is fundamental for transmitting living heritage and safeguarding traditional knowledge systems for future generations, and upholding the richness of cultural diversity;
23. Recognising the importance of strengthening research, disaggregated data collection and reporting, evaluation, knowledge-sharing, intellectual exchange and international cooperation to support evidence-based cultural policies that effectively advance social and economic inclusivity and supports the sustainability of the cultural and creative sectors and industries while also better assessing their size and contribution to sustainable development and, in particular, economic growth and decent work.

Priority 3: Harnessing Digital Technologies for the Protection and Promotion of Culture and Sustainable Economies

24. Recognising the transformative impact of digital technologies on economic growth, innovation and inclusive development through culture, enhancing documentation, safeguarding, interpretation, presentation, preservation, protection, resilience, research, creation, promotion, dissemination and long-term transmission of culture and heritage, while driving the growth of cultural and creative sectors and industries, expanding audiences engagement and access, promoting cultural diversity, freedom of expression, inclusion, and fostering global cultural markets;
25. Recognising the opportunities and challenges of the digital environment – including the widespread impacts of Artificial Intelligence (AI), for cultural and creative sectors and industries, requiring ongoing collaboration among governments and stakeholders to build fair, diverse and sustainable digital cultural economies and ecosystems respectful of universal human rights, with mechanisms ensuring the control by artists, authors and creators over their copyrighted works in accordance with relevant national, regional and international regulations on the matter, including on intellectual property, and based on inclusivity, representation, equity, accessibility, cultural and linguistic diversity, transparency, trust, information integrity, and freedom of expression with safeguards against existing harms and potential risks such as disinformation, misinformation, hate speech, misappropriation, distortion, exploitative data extraction, privacy loss and threat to cultural and linguistic diversity;
26. Recalling the principles of inclusion, social participation and accessibility, for the full exercise of cultural rights and reaffirming the importance of fair remuneration for cultural professionals and creators, the protection of intellectual property rights, acknowledging the concerns raised by cultural professionals and creators about the unauthorised use of their name, voice, image, and likeness against unauthorised use, the consent-based safeguarding and sharing of cultural heritage, and inclusive access to and development of cultural markets at all levels notably through robust Digital Rights Management;
27. Recognising the importance of transparency in the use of copyrighted works for the training and development of AI; of compliance with copyright law as applicable in regional or national context; of a fair remuneration or payment for authors and other copyright holders, as well as the need to promote transparency on AI-generated

output in order to foster a fair, safe, secure and trustworthy ecosystem, while further acknowledging the need to preserve and promote human-centred creativity and cultural diversity;

28. Stressing the need to overcome digital divides, within and between countries by prioritising investment in digital infrastructure and digital cultural innovation and creativity especially in developing economies, promoting international cooperation, developing sustainable, secure, trustworthy and inclusive AI to foster trustworthy information and safer information spaces, knowledge sharing, on mutually agreed terms, and inclusive digital access, digital and media literacy, capacity building and skills development, training and empowering creators, particularly women and girls, youth, Indigenous Peoples, as well as local and traditional communities, and people in vulnerable situations to foster innovation and creativity, and enable future generations to contribute meaningfully to the global cultural landscape.

Priority 4: The Intersection of Culture and Climate Change: Shaping Global Responses

29. Reiterating our concern for the growing impact of climate change on culture, including the protection of cultural heritage, the transmission of Indigenous Peoples', as well as local and traditional communities', languages and knowledge systems, while recognising the specific needs and special circumstances of developing countries, also reaffirming our steadfast commitments in pursuit of the objective of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) to tackle climate change by strengthening the full and effective implementation of the Paris Agreement;
30. Acknowledging that culture, in all its dimensions, can meaningfully contribute to climate change mitigation adaptation, and halting and reversing biodiversity loss, by, among others, safeguarding cultural and natural, tangible and intangible heritage and foster resilience, mitigation and adaptation actions in the cultural and creative sectors and industries through improved evidence building, monitoring and resilience strategies; drawing on relevant cultural practices and knowledge systems, including those of Indigenous Peoples, as well as local and traditional communities, with recognising the importance of free, prior and informed consent to inform climate action and practices; as well as the critical role of education in supporting cultural aspects of national adaptation, mitigation and resilience strategies through the provision of skills necessary for a sustainable future and promoting more sustainable creative networks and ecosystems of sustainable consumption and

production, through appropriate policies, incentives and circularity approaches within the cultural sector and creative industries, in line with national priorities and plans;

31. Noting that culture related international and multi-stakeholder cooperation and capacity building strengthens climate action by engaging with diverse actors and networks, and fostering cross-sectoral collaboration, taking into account different national contexts;
32. Acknowledging the progress in considering culture in global climate discussions and policy, following the adoption of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) Framework for Global Climate Resilience at the 28th UN Climate Change Conference (COP 28), particularly regarding the target on the protection of cultural heritage from the impacts of climate-related risks under the UAE framework for climate resilience and the work of the UAE-Belém work programme on indicators, and being aware of the launch of the Group of Friends of Culture-Based Climate Action (GFCBCA), who through their advocacy and knowledge building efforts highlight the potential of culture and cultural heritage for supporting climate action.

Call for the following actions

33. We call upon all nations, international organisations, and stakeholders to reaffirm, protect and promote cultural rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, with the goal of advancing culture as a cornerstone of sustainable, peaceful and inclusive development. This includes recognising the importance of protecting cultural diversity, promoting civic engagement and ensuring equal opportunities for everyone to access, participate in, and to benefit from culture, while confronting racism, discrimination and prejudice.
34. We encourage the universal ratification and effective implementation of international agreements and conventions, as applicable, to safeguard cultural heritage, notably the 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict, and its two protocols; the UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property (1970), the UNESCO Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (1972), the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003), the UNESCO Convention on the Protection of Underwater Cultural Heritage (2001), the UNESCO Convention on Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural

Expressions (2005) and the UNIDROIT Convention on Stolen or Illegally Exported Cultural Objects (1995).

35. We call for support of an open, inclusive and responsive dialogue on the return and restitution of cultural property particularly through bilateral dialogue and multilateral mechanisms provided by UNESCO including its Intergovernmental Committee for Promoting the Return of Cultural Property to its Countries of Origin or its Restitution in case of Illicit Appropriation (ICPRCP), as appropriate. In this spirit, we commit to:
- a. Promoting specialised knowledge building and sharing in provenance research and cultural property claims as well as the dissemination of good practice and of case studies on return and restitution including in close coordination with museums, galleries, auction houses, private collectors, and professional networks such as International Council of Museums (ICOM) among other related actors;
 - b. Enhancing online tools and digital technologies, promoting interoperability among existing inventories and databases, strengthening shared capabilities of provenance research, on mutually agreed terms;
 - c. Supporting capacity-building of organisations and cultural institutions, including in developing countries, through technical assistance and the exchange of expertise and knowledge, notably on provenance research, due diligence and effective inventory management and conservation practices of cultural property.
36. We call for stronger and more effective global coordination to fight against the illicit trafficking of cultural property in cooperation with UNESCO, INTERPOL and other organisations and institutions that have developed tools and programs in this regard. This includes:
- a. Facilitating cooperation, capacity building, technical exchanges, provenance research, heritage inventory management and education,
 - b. Establishing appropriate structures and tools at the national and regional level such as specialised law enforcement units and databases of stolen cultural objects, updated and interconnected with INTERPOL's relevant policing capabilities; and other relevant multilateral tools,
 - c. Engaging and training of dealers, cultural managers, museums, galleries and auction house professionals as well as law enforcement and judiciary authorities,

- d. Fostering collaboration to leverage the potential of AI in the fight against the illicit trafficking of cultural property

These efforts should allow better capacity to deal with this inherently transnational crime as well as higher standards for verifying the origin and authenticity of cultural property, based on internationally agreed standards and tools developed by relevant international organisations.

37. We call for strengthening national policy frameworks further integrating cultural policies with socio-economic strategies building on shared knowledge, multistakeholder cooperation and enhanced international cooperation, thereby enhancing the enjoyment of economic and social rights of artists, cultural professionals and practitioners with a view:

- a. to effectively support the development and resilience of the cultural and creative sector and industry, fostering a thriving cultural economy that builds on local cultural resources, and enables mutually beneficial international cultural exchanges and international cultural relations to promote dialogue and trust between societies,
- b. to foster an enabling environment conducive to ensuring access to culture and participation in cultural life for all, enhancing investment in cultural infrastructure; protecting and fostering cultural and linguistic diversity; addressing social and economic rights of and artistic freedom for artists and cultural professionals both online and offline; and addressing the impact of the over-commercialisation, decontextualisation, misappropriation and misrepresentation of living heritage,
- c. to favour a more balanced flow in cultural goods and services between countries, fostering cultural diversity, in line with the UNESCO 2005 Convention on Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, as applicable.

38. We reaffirm our commitment to advancing policies that empower those working in the culture and creative sector and industries, aiming to strengthen frameworks that promote and sustain decent work and inclusive growth, including through participatory governance and social dialogue, notably by:

- a. Strengthening cooperation and dialogue to improve the status of artists and cultural professionals by promoting their economic, social and cultural rights and artistic freedom, including in the platform economy. This could include frameworks based on intellectual property rights,

fundamental principles and relevant international labour standards, fair remuneration, secure employment and decent working conditions; equal opportunities and treatment for all; adequate and comprehensive social protection, as appropriate to national context, and transition to the formal economy, with the support of relevant international organisations, notably UNESCO, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO); taking note of initiatives such as the Fair Culture Charter,

- b. Investing in skills and research to strengthen the professional development of artists and culture professionals, especially women, girls, youth, Indigenous Peoples, as well as local and traditional communities, and by expanding access to technical and vocational training, upskilling, reskilling and lifelong learning, building on enhanced public investment, updated training standards, and cultural institutions through relevant regional and international cultural training networks and institutions, including G20 Network of Cultural Business Management Training Institutions.

39. We commit to protecting and promoting cultural and linguistic diversity, particularly in the context of the 2022-2032 International Decade of Indigenous Languages, and considering different national contexts, as a means to safeguard cultural diversity, traditional knowledge, and traditional cultural expressions fostering intercultural understanding and respect, notably by:

- a. enhanced linguistic and knowledge diversity in formal, non-formal and informal educational settings, promoting contextual quality education, and to sustaining efforts to foster the intergenerational transmission of languages and learning, without discrimination,
- b. harnessing digital technologies and the development of AI so as to promote, safeguard and preserve linguistic and cultural diversity and the knowledge of Indigenous Peoples, as well as of local and traditional communities, thus contributing to preserving the diversity of the world's heritage.

40. We call to ensure adequate public investment in the protection and promotion of culture, while considering the specific constraints of developing countries. This includes:

- a. supporting evidence-based public policymaking through enhanced cooperation and voluntary knowledge sharing to define, monitor and assess culture's social and economic contributions and impact;

- b. developing and implementing internationally comparable indicators, leveraging frameworks like the revised UNESCO Framework for Cultural Statistics, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development's (UNCTAD's) Framework for Creative Industries and Trade, and the WIPO Creative Economy Data Model,
- c. fostering partnerships with international organisations such as UNESCO and UNCTAD, as well as relevant global and regional organisations and statistical institutions.

41. We encourage all countries to consider appropriate AI policy approaches and governance systems, which may include measures which are human-centered, ethical, and respectful of universal human rights, ensuring safe, secure, and trustworthy AI development, considering the importance of transparency and fair remuneration or payment for the use of copyrighted works in the training and development of AI; mechanisms to ensure the control of artists, authors and creators over their copyrighted works in the digital environment, in accordance with relevant national, regional and international regulations and legal frameworks on the matter; to promote the transparency of generative-AI output and noting the potential unfair competition brought about by such outputs in the creative and cultural sectors; and to promote policies that support cultural and linguistic diversity.
42. We call for the promotion of a sustainable digital cultural ecosystem in which artists, authors and creators are appropriately compensated, fostering collaboration among partners and stakeholders at all levels to ensure the discoverability, availability and accessibility of diverse AI tools and services; and cultural content, supporting media plurality and independence on digital platforms. This includes advancing inclusive governance systems that respect universal human rights and intellectual property rights, while preserving linguistic and cultural diversity, including those of Indigenous Peoples, as well as local and traditional communities; as applicable.
43. We reiterate the need to strengthen and adapt cultural policies and legal frameworks to address the importance of digital technologies, taking note of the Global Digital Compact's goal of an inclusive, open, sustainable, fair, safe and secure digital future for all, taking into account different national realities, capacities and levels of development and respecting national policies and priorities and applicable legal frameworks. This includes building on existing instruments, as appropriate, such as, the UNESCO 2005 Convention on the Protection and

Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, its 2017 Operational Guidelines on the Implementation of the Convention in the Digital Environment, and to the 2021 UNESCO Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence, while continuing analysis on the desirability, technical and legal aspects of an additional Protocol and other legal options to support the implementation of the 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the diversity of cultural expressions in the digital environment.

44. We encourage initiatives that consider cultural aspects in national climate strategies, according to nationally defined priorities and plans. This includes enhancing interministerial dialogue and international cooperation and knowledge sharing, as appropriate within national contexts, as well as encouraging creative and cultural stakeholders to contribute to national commitments to climate action.
45. We encourage meaningful actions related to scaling-up culture and cultural heritage-based strategies supporting climate action, including: (i) enhancing cooperation on knowledge building and public engagement related to the impact of climate change in the cultural sector (ii) supporting the refinement of indicators on the target on protection of Cultural Heritage from the impacts of climate-related risks as part of the UAE-Belém Work Programme; (iii) considering non-economic losses, including cultural heritage and identity, in the context of climate change; (iv) being aware of the work of the GFCBCA; and (v) supporting further discussions on the interrelationship between culture and climate, in the Road to Belém at COP30 and future COPs.
46. We call for the full recognition and protection of culture with its intrinsic value as a transformative driver and an enabler for the achievement of the SDGs and the advancement of the inclusion of discussions on culture as a standalone goal in a possible post-2030 development agenda.

Way Forward

47. We commend and thank South Africa for its leadership in 2025, and look forward to continuing strengthening and promoting the G20 Culture Working Group's collective agenda under the Presidency of the United States of America (USA), with clear goals and deliverables to advance the group's discussion on culture's fundamental role in fostering sustainable development, based on the progress

made under this group since its establishment and the legacy built by Saudi Arabia, Italy, Indonesia, India, Brazil and South Africa.

48. We acknowledge and thank all participating international organisations – including UNESCO, as knowledge partner, ILO, INTERPOL, WIPO, International Centre for the Study of Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM), the African Development Bank (AfDB), International Council of Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), Africa World Heritage Fund (AWHF) and ICOM for their valuable contributions to the Culture Working Group during South Africa's G20 Presidency.
49. We, the G20 Culture Ministers, will submit this Declaration to the G20 Leaders' 2025 Summit. We reaffirm culture's intrinsic value and its cross-cutting relevance to public policy and its multifaceted impact in forging more inclusive societies, fostering dialogue and sustaining peace, locally and internationally.