

## CHANDI 2025 MINISTERIAL SUMMIT

Bali Beach Convention Centre by The Meru Sanur, Bali  
3 September 2025 | 13.00 – 17.00 (GMT+8)

### CONCEPT NOTE

#### *“Culture Beyond 2030: Safeguarding Heritage, Building Peace, and Advancing CCIs in a Digital Future”*

Culture is increasingly recognized as a strategic lever for sustainable development, social cohesion, and community resilience. In an age of growing complexity, marked by climate instability, rapid digital disruption, widening inequality, and shifting geopolitical dynamics, culture provides the values, identities, and shared narratives that bind societies together.

Since MONDIACULT 2022, States have called for culture to be recognized as a stand-alone goal in the development agenda beyond 2030. CHANDI 2025, under the theme *Culture for the Future*, supports this trajectory by focusing debate on concrete measures that countries can advance at home and through cooperation. The issues considered in this Summit are therefore central to shaping the post-2030 cultural agenda.

Even as this momentum builds, the policy environment for culture is being reshaped by intertwined pressures. Heritage and living traditions face escalating environmental and infrastructural risks; conflicts and emergencies endanger cultural assets and social memory; technological change expands access while raising questions of ethics, rights, and cultural diversity; illicit trafficking of cultural property erodes trust and justice; and the creative industries that bring cultural expression to life often operate with unequal opportunity and fragile economics.

Recent evidence highlights urgent challenges and opportunities this Summit must address. Foremost is climate change, which has shifted from a diffuse concern to an immediate risk-management priority for culture. UNESCO estimates that one in six cultural heritage sites worldwide is already under climate threat. As of mid-2025, nearly three-quarters of World Heritage sites (73%) face high exposure to at least one water-related hazard, and 21% of them face overlapping risks from drought, water stress, and riverine or coastal flooding.<sup>1</sup> The policy implication is that culture must be embedded in national climate strategies through comprehensive risk mapping for sites and collections, resilient retrofits for museums and

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<sup>1</sup> UNESCO World Heritage Centre. (2025, July 1). *Nearly three-quarters of World Heritage sites are at high risk from water-related hazards*. <https://whc.unesco.org/en/news/2788>

archives, early-warning and emergency protocols, to adaptation finance that also reaches the custodians of living heritage. This is also in-line with the global 2030 Agenda, especially SDGs 11, 13 and 15, and from recognizing traditional knowledge and local practices as assets for biodiversity conservation and community resilience.

Another pressing issue is protection in times of conflict and emergency. The 1954 Hague Convention and its 1999 Second Protocol set binding obligations to respect and safeguard cultural property, with strengthened preventive measures, preparedness, and enhanced protection. In practice, this means aligning national readiness with the global standards and ensuring interoperability with humanitarian and disaster-risk systems so that culture is not an afterthought in crisis response and recovery. The 1970 UNESCO Convention and the 1995 UNIDROIT Convention provide the framework for prevention, due diligence, seizure and return, and court-enabled recovery of stolen or illegally exported objects. Delivering on these standards calls for updated legislation and registries, capable customs and prosecutors, cross-border cooperation, and interoperable databases to advance heritage justice.

Equally urgent is the transformation shaping culture in the digital realm. Digital technologies can widen access, strengthen preservation and diversify participation, but only if countries close persistent gaps in infrastructure, skills, standards, and rights. The pandemic exposed both urgency and uneven readiness, with museums worldwide closing for long periods as attendance fell by roughly 70% and revenues declined by up to 60%, prompting a rapid pivot to online access. However, the global digital divide persists, with roughly 68% of the world online and about one-third offline, mainly in rural and lower-income areas, limiting who can benefit from digitized heritage. To anchor this transition, the UNESCO Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence (2021) provides the baseline for responsible AI in culture, safeguarding human rights, cultural diversity, transparency, and accountability.

Finally, the economic dimension reinforces why action cannot wait. The cultural and creative industries (CCI) have an estimated global worth of US\$4.3 trillion or 6.1% of the world economy, generate roughly US\$2.25 trillion in annual revenues and nearly 30 million jobs, employing more people aged 15 to 29 than any other sector.<sup>2</sup> This footprint makes core policy levers such as skills, access to finance, fair contracts and IP, export readiness and market access, and fair remuneration in digital environments central to inclusive growth, especially for women, young creators, and community-based practitioners who face higher barriers to entry. Aligning cultural policy with industrial, education, digital, and MSME agendas will help ensure CCIs drive decent work and social mobility as part of inclusive economic growth.

Taken together, these dynamics point to an urgent but actionable agenda, consistent with international norms and intended to inform the Bali Cultural Initiative Declaration 2025 for adoption at the conclusion of the Summit. The Ministerial Summit at CHANDI 2025, entitled *Culture Beyond 2030: Safeguarding Heritage, Building Peace, and Advancing CCIs in a Digital Future*, will therefore consider the following issues:

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<sup>2</sup> United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. (2024). *Creative Economy Outlook 2024: Technical and statistical report*.

**1. Culture in sustainable development and climate action**

Country statements may set out how culture is integrated into national development and climate strategies, such as, but not limited to regulations or national action plans that embed culture in SDGs delivery; coverage of risk assessments for sites and collections; adaptation standards and resilient retrofits for cultural institutions; funding windows that reach community custodians and living heritage; and recognition of traditional knowledge in biodiversity stewardship and just transitions.

**2. Culture diplomacy for peace, trust, and cooperation**

Delegations are invited to outline cultural diplomacy actions and initiatives that could be implemented to prevent conflict, reduce polarization, and deepen mutual understanding, such as, but not limited to intercultural dialogue platforms; exchanges and residencies; and partnerships with relevant stakeholders such as local governments, private sector, cultural networks, academic communities, and international organizations.

**3. Digital transformation and responsible AI in culture**

Country statements can describe national directions for digital heritage, such as, but not limited to best practices in digital transformation of cultural heritage, interoperable metadata and provenance frameworks; consent and transparency for AI-assisted content; shared services that support smaller institutions and community archives; and public-access models that keep value with creators and communities. Where relevant, reference alignment with the UNESCO Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence (2021) and any regional platforms being developed.

**4. Youth participation and the cultural and creative industries (CCI) potentials**

Delegations are encouraged to share experiences, best practices, and evidence, setting out how CCIs are being developed as engines of decent work and inclusion for young people, such as, but not limited to: national CCI and youth engagement in cultural policies, social protection measures for artists, cultural practitioners and creators; youth skills pipelines; access to finance and guarantees for MSMEs; creator-friendly IP and contract practices; fair remuneration in digital environments and transparency; export readiness and market access; support for place-based creative districts and community-led cultural enterprises.

**5. Heritage conservation, repatriation, and action against illicit trafficking**

Country statements may include experiences, best practices, and current national policies, outlining how heritage will be safeguarded for future generations, such as, but not limited to: future-proofing in the face of climate and crisis; community-centred stewardship; experiences and challenges in repatriation of cultural objects; transparent provenance and pathways for lawful returns and restitution; partnerships between museums, archives and source communities; youth custodianship and skills programmes; as well as financing approaches that link protection with local livelihoods.

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