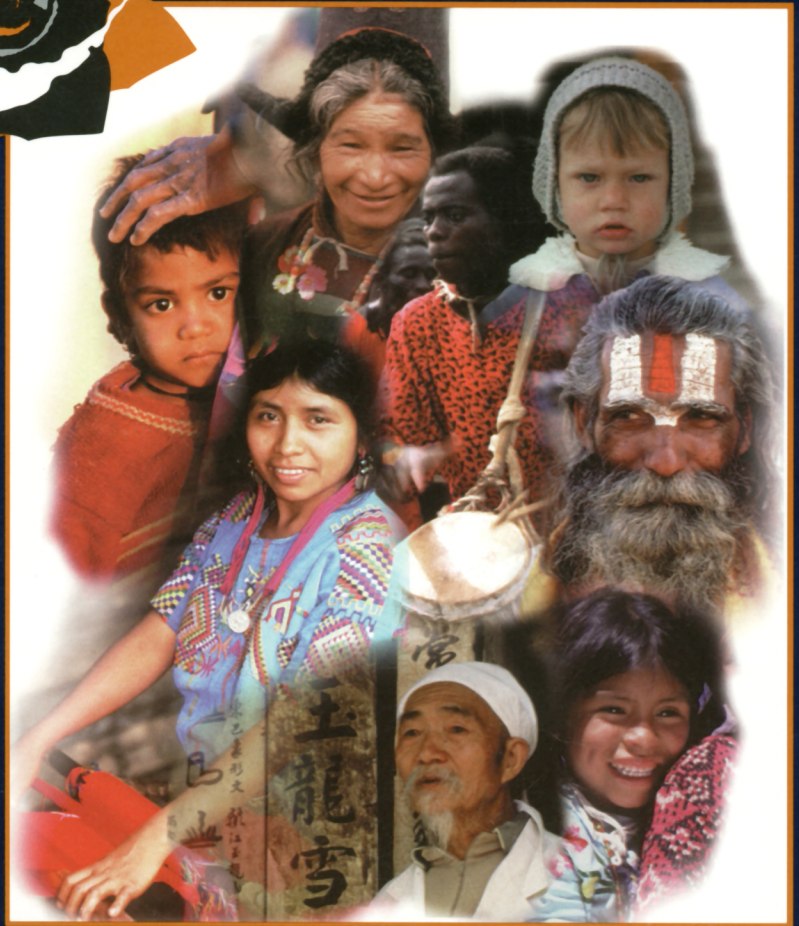




The
World
Bank

Culture in Sustainable Development

Investing in Cultural and Natural Endowments



Conference sponsored by the World Bank and the
United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

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Contents

Letter from Hillary Rodham Clinton	vii
Preface	ix
Acknowledgments	xi
PART ONE THE PLENARY	1
The Culture and Development Paradigm	3
Welcome <i>Maritta Koch-Weser</i>	3
Culture and Sustainable Development: Investing in the Promise of Societies <i>James D. Wolfensohn</i>	5
Opening Keynote Address: Sustaining Culture and Creative Expression in Development <i>Elie Wiesel</i>	8
Commentaries and Contemplations	12
Introduction <i>Hernan Crespo Toral, presiding</i>	12
The Natures of Culture: The Natural and Human Environment <i>Vann Molyvann</i>	13
The Social Dimensions of Culture and Contemporary Expressions <i>Ali Mazrui</i>	16
Cultural Heritage: Economic Challenges and Opportunities <i>Enrique Iglesias</i>	21
The Intrinsic Value of Heritage <i>Israel Klabin</i>	24
Cultural Heritage in the Global Information Millennium <i>Ikuo Hirayama</i>	27

Economics and Culture 31

Introduction *Bonnie R. Cohen, presiding* 31

Economic Benefits and Public Finance: The Role of Governments *Sheila Copps* 33

The Role of Private Financing in Sustainable Cultural Development
Francesco Frangialli 37

The Contributions of Women in Culture and Sustainable Development 44

Introduction *Gloria Davis, presiding* 44

A Vision of Gender in Culture *Mahnaz Afkhami* 47

Culture, Gender, and Heritage in Development *Lourdes Arizpe* 51

Shadow Hands: Culture and Survival in Nature *Dianne Dillon-Ridgley* 61

Cultural Heritage and National Sustainable Development 66

Introduction, Sheltering People in the Culture of Cities *Wally N'Dow, presiding* 66

The British Experience *Lord Jacob Rothschild* 69

Reconstructing the Past to Build the Future: Rescue and Preservation
of Cultural Heritage *Aliza Cohen-Mushlin* 72

Investing in Cultural Industries *Milagros Del Corral* 78

Cultural Heritage and Sustainable Development: Requirements for the 21st Century 81

Introduction *Franco Passacantando, presiding* 81

Supporting the Contemporary Expression of Culture *James H. Billington* 82

Conserving Cultural Heritage *James Allen Smith* 87

Promoting Cultural Partnerships *Francisco C. Weffort* 92

Closing Keynote Session 95

Introduction *César Gaviria, presiding* 95

Partnerships in the International Community for the Stewardship
of Cultural Heritage and the Living Arts *Federico Mayor* 97

Summary of Conference *Ismail Serageldin* 101

Concluding Remarks *James D. Wolfensohn* 105

PART TWO SEMINARS, REGIONAL ROUNDTABLES, STUDY TOUR, AND EXHIBITION 107**Seminars 109**

- Creative Urban Transformations: Culture in Economic Development 109
- Valuing the Invaluable: Approaches and Applications 111
- Conserving Culture and Nature: The Common Ground 114
- Culture and the Social Development Agenda 117
- Learning and Innovation Loans for Culture and Development 120

Regional Roundtables 123

- Sustaining Development through Culture in Africa 123
- Heritage and Sustainable Development in Latin America and the Caribbean 130

Infrastructure Study Tour 135

- Cultural Resource Preservation and Economic Development 135
- Preservation as Economic Generator in the United States *Donovan D. Rypkema* 136

Exhibition 144

- Culture and Development at the Millennium: The Challenge and the Response 144

PART THREE RESOURCES 147

- UNESCO World Heritage List 149
- Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of
Armed Conflict, The Hague Convention, Adopted 1954 160
- Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export
and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property, Adopted in Paris, 1970 162
- Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage,
The World Heritage Convention, Adopted in Paris, 1972 165
- U. S. Historic Preservation Tax Incentives Program 168
- Federal Tax Incentives Program for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings:
A Successful Federal/State Partnership 169
- Culture and Sustainable Development: Projects in Partnership 172
- Conference Program 179
- Bios of Conference Speakers 183
- Contact Information for Conference Speakers 192

Summary of Conference

Ismail Serageldin

President Wolfensohn, Secretary General Gaviria, Director-General Mayor, friends.

We come to the last and most difficult part of this very rich conference, and that is the summation. We have had the privilege of hearing from so many outstanding people, which is indeed a tribute to the esteem in which James Wolfensohn, President of the World Bank, is held.

We have had, as one would expect, many distinguished persons from the fields of culture, many of whom spoke in the various panels. But we also had the distinguished private sector representatives and recognized patrons of the arts, like Lord Rothschild; and Enrique Iglesias, President of the Inter-American Development Bank, who are committed to the vision of culture in sustainable development. I am grateful that they came and spoke to us in this event.

And to all who came to listen and participate, you enriched this conference by your presence. But, I would like to recognize one person in the audience, Abdulatif Al-Hamad, the head of the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development. He has traveled from Kuwait to partake in this conference, to meet with us, and to bring his support. He has been quietly sitting in the back of the room, a model of modesty and commitment. I ask you to join me in thanking him for his presence and his enormous support.

The conference mirrored the concerns that are helping to shape the agenda and philosophy of the World Bank—whether it is in the findings and analytical constructs that link social inclusion and identity, or the economics of culture; whether it is in trying to define programs that honor the past, celebrate the present, and design the future; or whether it is learning how to work in partnership at all levels of efforts. All these actions, epitomized in word and deed by Maritta Koch-Weser and Franco Passacantando, are a beginning for the World Bank.

For now, we see culture as an intrinsic part of development, linking socially and environmentally sustainable development, and that requires an ethic of development, as we were reminded so eloquently by Israel Klabin of Brazil.

Culture is not just a material culture, or a living culture. It is both. This dichotomy misses the reality that lives within each of us, and that enables us to produce and experience culture. Identity cannot be separated from memory, and memory and vision are inseparable. We cannot have vision without memory. Vision, ultimately, has to be translated into action. For as author Alain Touraine said, it is by action that we define who we are. Thus identity and action become one. It is not by the past exemplars to which I may relate, but it is by the range of the actions that I take, and the manner in which I behave

that I create who I am. It is by action that social constructs exist, that the bonds and transactions between people acquire meaning. That things that count, such as social capital, the glue that holds society together, gets created. It is by action that I give meaning to the manner in which I link in my sense of a common humanity those others who are not necessarily part of the immediate kinship group.

It is in this context, therefore, that preserving the past—or at least parts of it—is a form of cultural continuity. Continuity also implies renewal, and change, but change with the new rooted in a certain authenticity. Thus action is at the base of culture and society. It is as if all of us were constructing a series of mirrors and windows, mirrors in which we see ourselves and windows through which we see the world. It is that combination of mirrors and windows that defines the boundaries in our mind of where the “us” ends and the “them” begins.

And culture is of the mind. Indeed, it is only through this nonmaterial culture of the mind that we appreciate the material culture. We mentally impart to the Pyramids a significance that is more than a pile of stones. We see through the collective achievements of Shakespeare and Goethe, and artists and poets from all over the world.

It has been appropriately described—that other nonmaterial culture that needs to be preserved and conserved—in the words of African author, Chinua Achebe, “These are the monuments of the mind.”

Ultimately, human beings are peculiar creatures, as we were reminded by Ben Ladner, President of American University, yesterday evening. We are peculiar creatures because we need the freedom to think and be ourselves. But we cannot be ourselves if we do not interact with others. This duality of wanting to be ourselves and wanting to be free and the need to interact with others will create the new reality.

Consider the major themes that have emerged from this conference—to recognize culture as the loom of life, enriched by many diverse threads that can be woven or torn, that can be monotonous or lively. It must have diversity, tolerance, inclusion, and above all, the capacity to empower and mobilize the talents of society to create and support actions for culture. To achieve all that, we must have a vision for the future. A vision

requires memory of the past and openness to the new. To know the past, to look into ourselves, to look deeply and emerge strengthened, to accept others and create the social bonds of solidarity that make a society more than a collection of individuals.

Let us see how these themes have played out in this conference, from vision to constructing memory, to social inclusion and social capital to translating vision into action. Let me weave the threads in this collective tapestry and summarize beginning with the vision of Jim Wolfensohn and the insight of Elie Wiesel.

In his speech to the Annual Meetings, President Wolfensohn stated that the major challenge to development is the challenge of inclusion. He noted that inclusion requires identity, that culture is an integral part of development, and his challenge to us is to create new realities. It is his vision that has animated these discussions.

We are deeply honored to have had Elie Wiesel address us. In a speech that began perhaps in curiosity, he held up a scholarly mirror to our past and made us look deeper into our own souls, to anguish, and yet to celebrate our common humanity. For the difficult and painful wrenching, that calls to the better angels of our nature, can culminate in wisdom. It is a wisdom needed in these dangerous times when any group can scream injury, litigate against the dead, sue history, and demand compensation. We need the wisdom of Elie Wiesel, for otherwise the new order will repeat the old order, making policies of exclusion and an aesthetic of revenge.

The distinctive brand of Elie Wiesel’s discourse, its posture in the heart and in the ear, its constant drama of tone and thought evokes deep realities about the organizing structures of our cultures, the building blocks of our identities, those blocks that no single individual makes. But they are always there, living in the deepest recesses of our souls. The most creative imaginations are really only their summoners.

We moved to the idea of constructing memory, where Minister Vann Molyvann of Cambodia spoke of the difficulties of a shattered reality, and the need for renewal and transformation in a land deeply wounded by war.

Mr. Ikuo Hirayama of Japan shared with us his thoughts about the construction of memory

from his own memories of shattered times and on an international cultural outreach for the emergency of civil strife.

Francisco Weffort, Minister of Culture in Brazil, outlined the different kinds of stress, from globalization and the value of national cultures. He recognized the losses which may exist within a national culture, that diversity does have meaning, and is to be encouraged.

And Jim Billington, the U.S. Librarian of Congress, provided fair warning for many of us who tote around computers to remember valued stories and appreciate books. He worried that technological problems of the computer age will not be solving the problems of storage and perishability. On the other hand, it can help by wonderful programs via the Internet and outreach all around the world.

Aliza Cohen-Mushlin of the Center for Jewish Art in Jerusalem reminded us about the quintessential art of minorities. Jewish art reaches out to minority expression in so many different parts of the world. The Index of Jewish Art is the visual personification of that societal memory; the themes that resonate across space and time. Seeing the image of Chagall appearing in the midst of the Medieval constructs of the Redemption was a reminder as to the perpetuation of these themes and the richness that it brings.

And Milagros Del Corral from UNESCO informed us all about the new cultural industries and the importance of the intellectual constructs and of creativity.

With all of that, if there is diversity, there must be social inclusion. Social inclusion requires social capital. We were reminded by historian James Allen Smith that social capital must also include cultural capital. And Professor Ali Mazrui asserted that it requires not just the power to remember, but to have a short memory of hate, and to proclaim our common humanity against that background.

But how can we talk about inclusion, when in fact everywhere, in every society, women are largely excluded from all spheres where decisionmaking affects their lives? The many manifestations of this was well illuminated by the impressive panel that addressed gender issues. Gloria Davis of the World Bank reminded us to avoid the stereotypes of the competitive male and the cooperative female. We were

warned about putting women on a pedestal for, as Dianne Dillon-Ridgley, President of the Women's Environment and Development Organization, so aptly said, "a pedestal is a very small and confining space".

Mahnaz Afkhami, President of the Sisterhood is Global Institute, confronted us with the realities, and reminded us that equality is not enough. Lourdes Arizpe, anthropologist and ethnologist from Mexico, emphasized the constitutive role of culture and spoke of *conviviability*—"convivencia"—and the role of identity. She reminded us of how the "Marias", the native-costumed street sellers in Mexico City, have affirmed their identity and brought about amazing strength. They are the facts, and we have to lean hard against the facts until they hurt, for only then will we indeed be able to think globally and act locally or, as preferred by Ms. Dillon-Ridgley, "glocally".

As affirmed by Dianne Dillon-Ridgley's recitation, poems can be more powerful than facts, more forceful than reason, a tour to life, timeless, yet for our time. A poem—in the words of Caribbean poet, Derek Walcott—"essentializes life". The poem does not obey linear time; it is, by its belligerence or its surrender, the enemy of time. And when true, as it was obviously in "A Women's Creed", a poem is time's conqueror, not time's servant.

Translating vision into action is our theme, and Wally N'Dow of the United Nations Development Programme spoke about partnerships, not just among institutions, but partnerships that reach out to and beyond governments for inclusion and the empowerment of the poor. The partnership, reaffirmed by Federico Mayor and Jim Wolfensohn, has been echoed in both words and deed by UNESCO through Hernan Crespo Toral and Mounir Bouchenaki, both throughout their interventions and participation at the conference, and in the exhibition, *Culture and Development at the Millennium*.

Partnerships at the conference has a strong showing in the representation from UNESCO, the Getty Conservation Institute, the Council of Europe, the Smithsonian Institution, ICROM, the Aga Khan Trust for Culture, ICOMOS, IDB, the World Monuments Fund, OAS, ICOM, and so many more. Very importantly we want to thank the host country, the United States of America,

for its strong support in this endeavor, as expressed in a moving letter by First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton.

But partnerships alone are not enough. We must mobilize the funds. We are, after all, a *world bank*. We were reminded by Sheila Copps, Minister of Canadian Culture, and Bonnie Cohen, the U.S. Under-Secretary for Management at the U.S. Department of State, of the catalytic role of government spending. Sheila Copps said that only two percent of federal spending was going to culture. May I remind you that the difference between human beings and the apes is less than two percent of DNA! Can we learn something about the value of limited spending if it is truly strategically deployed? Is that level of spending the difference between everything that we value and what is not? That two percent should not be minimized. We have a lot to do, and as she said, it is about freedom of choice and about social cohesion.

The private sector has a major role to play above and beyond what governments do. Francesco Frangialli head of the World Tourism Organization spoke of tourism as an ally of culture. There are enormous benefits provided that this be done properly, that it does not demean or belittle culture, but in fact helps preserve it.

Lord Rothschild, a leader of the arts and heritage in Great Britain and the world over, told us not just to reflect on the thoughts of the British economist Maynard Keynes on the risk of too much "bread ...turned into stone", but to bring imagination to financial design, to fund the creative compromises between sustainability of the valuable heritage, and opening the access for humans to reach it. It is quite a challenge. Lord Rothschild's imagination is unmatched—indeed, not only for what he introduced to Britain's National Lottery, but also for his vision for an international lottery through the Internet. This brings

a significant challenge to us all for raising global resources for culture.

In the more conventional and immediate sense, without waiting for that to happen, Enrique Iglesias shared with us what the Inter-American Development Bank is already doing as a bank and with a soaring vision for culture in Latin America. The World Bank has been proud to work with the Inter-American Development Bank on a number of these projects.

And so we are gathered here, not to conclude this conference, but to launch a new initiative, a new collaborative venture; to reach across the planet to preserve for future generations the best of the past's legacy, to give access to the past, to bridge the old and the new. To transcend such sterile dichotomies as old and new, traditional and modern, and to create a new discourse for development. Not just among us here, but throughout this world in the throes of profound change. And that new discourse, critical, open and tolerant of the contrarian view, will be the basis for the creation of a mode of cultural expression. A new language that permeates the arts, letters and the public realm, that incorporates the new but anchors it in the old:

A new language, where in the words of writer T. S. Eliot ...

Every phrase and sentence is right
When every word is at home
Taking its place to support the others
The word neither diffident nor ostentatious.

An easy commerce of the old and the new
The common word exact without vulgarity
The formal word precise but not pedantic
The complete consort dancing together.

Every phrase and every sentence is an end
and a beginning.



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