



UN Pact for the Future Submission: On the significance of culture and cultural expertise

A Pact for the Future – and any future agenda for the world – must explicitly recognise the significance of human culture which has been described by the UNESCO *World Conference on Cultural Policies and Sustainable Development* MONDIACULT 2022, as a global public good.

The Pact of the Future’s Chapeau should explicitly recognise the cultural condition of humanity.

Climate change, world peace, artificial intelligence and other major challenges facing present and future generations are affected by, and affect, the way human beings, as members of specific communities, live their lives and make sense of the world, of themselves, and of each other. This is the important realm of human culture—going far beyond the attention sometimes given to cultural rights, indigenous cultures, the cultural and creative sector, and culture-driven development.

Humanity’s future and the interests of future generations, to be covered in Chapter IV, cannot be addressed without understanding and appreciating human culture. The future will not look the same for everybody across the globe, but all people’s legitimate desires and rights must be fairly considered and respected as the world, and with it, human cultural realities, are changing.

To date, the cultural condition of humanity has seldom been harnessed, or comprehensively addressed, in global policy documents. This should change with the Pact for the Future, defining the world’s agenda for the future.

Culture guides people’s goals, the values and ideas that govern their behaviour, and how they communicate and to whom. Culture and cultural heritage inform human trust, felt loyalties and senses of belonging, whether that is to specific places, to specific communities, to higher beings, or to their own species.

The realm of culture is of particular significance regarding Chapter II on international peace and security. Global well-being, inclusivity, safety, peace and security are built through culture, notably by informing the extent of trust within societies and of global solidarity between societies. Humanity needs a culture of

panhuman trust and solidarity. This must include strengthened multilateralism through which all humans and all parts of the world act interconnectedly, recognizing a common agenda for all human beings, present and future.


Understanding culture is a key capacity for increasing human well-being in the future. Culture must be guiding all actions inspired by the Past for the Future. We welcome a *UN Special Envoy for Future Generations* and an *Inter-governmental Forum for Future Generations* which must have a strong mandate to work with culture and adequate cultural expertise in their teams of experts.

The realm of culture has more to offer than what has previously been acknowledged in relevant global practice and policy. In particular, this is true for policy referring to future generations, for whose benefit cultural heritage, as has often been stated, is preserved too.

Through our UNESCO Chair on Heritage Futures (<https://lnu.se/en/unescochair>), we are developing the role of cultural heritage in managing the relations between present and future societies. For culture and cultural heritage to pull their weight in global development and to contribute to meet the needs of future generations, they need to be informed by foresight, anticipation, and long-term thinking. This approach is informed by the UNESCO 1997 *Declaration on the Responsibilities of the Present Generations Towards Future Generations* and by the United Nations System's 2023 *Common Principles on Future Generations* high-level document advocating "long-term and inter-generational thinking at all levels."

Culture, including cultural heritage, is located at the intersection of past legacies and tomorrow's possibilities. It changes – and needs to change – as the world changes: different futures imply new ways of being human and new narratives about the human past. Culture is therefore a key competence to be included explicitly when humanity unites to address the challenges for the world in a global Pact for the Future and in a Post-2030 Agenda.

Yours,



Cornelius Holtorf
Chairholder, UNESCO Chair on Heritage Futures
Professor of Archaeology
Linnaeus University
SE-391 82 Kalmar, Sweden
cornelius.holtorf@lnu.se • lnu.se/en/unescochair



UNESCO Chair on Heritage Futures, Linnaeus University, Kalmar, Sweden
<https://lnu.se/en/unescochair>

Cornelius Holtorf, Chairholder, cornelius.holtorf@lnu.se

16 December 2023

Chapeau

The Chapeau should explicitly recognise the cultural condition of humanity. Culture guides the values and ideas that govern people's behaviour. It changes, and needs to change, as the world changes. Culture is a key competence to be included explicitly when humanity unites to address the challenges of the world for the future.

Chapter I. Sustainable development and financing for development

Climate change, world peace, artificial intelligence and other major challenges facing present and future generations are affected by, and affect, the way human beings, as members of specific communities, live their lives and make sense of the world, of themselves, and of each other. For that reason, culture needs to be firmly integrated in any development agenda for the future. The realm of culture has more to offer than what has previously been acknowledged. Culture changes, and needs to change, as the world changes and needs to change.

Chapter II. International peace and security

Global peace and security are built through culture, notably by informing the extent of trust within societies and of global solidarity between societies. To make progress towards international peace and society, humanity needs a culture of panhuman trust and solidarity. This must include strengthened multilateralism, through which all humans (present and future) and all parts of the world act interconnectedly sharing a common agenda.

Chapter IV. Youth and future generations

The interests of future generations cannot be addressed without understanding and appreciating human culture. We welcome a future UN Special Envoy for Future Generations and/or a dedicated Intergovernmental Forum for Future Generations. They must have a strong mandate to work with culture and considerable cultural expertise in their teams of experts, as a changing world and different human futures imply new ways of being human and new narratives about the human past.