

World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development

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The United Nations' *World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development* is recognised and celebrated around the world on May 21. The designation came in 2001 when the UN adopted the Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity and, in 2002, the UN General Assembly declared May 21 as the day for dialogue and development, in direct recognition of the need for appreciation of the value of not only cultural differences, but also the tremendous role it plays in minimising poverty and achieving overall development in a sustainable manner.



According to the UN, three-quarters of the world's major conflicts have a cultural dimension and the need to bridge the gap between cultures is not only necessary, but is urgent for peace, stability, and global development. Cultural diversity and development therefore go hand in hand because of culture's unique opportunity for economic growth. Once positioned equitably and optimally, culture will quickly become valued as a significant means of fostering intellectual and creative avenues, as well as emotional and spiritual aspects – along with a keen moral code – of a people and their community.

However, with the occurrence of the COVID-19 pandemic, protecting cultural diversity and its expressions have become of greater importance. According to the UN, the pandemic has “revealed and magnified” the creative industries' pre-existing volatility. Cultural facilities

have been closed and cultural events suspended indefinitely or outright cancelled, rendering many artists and artisans unable to earn a living. Added to this, is the heightened risk of looting of cultural sites and poaching at natural sites.

While the pandemic has effectually affected the ability to access cultural provisions, as well as the protection of expressions of cultural diversity and, moreover, has deepened the socio-economic inequalities in more vulnerable communities and societies, now, more than ever, is the need for greater dialogue and practical, sustainable steps for development.

Website Sources:

<https://www.un.org/en/observances/cultural-diversityday>

<https://en.unesco.org/commemorations/culturaldiversityday>

<https://sdg.iisd.org/events/world-day-for-cultural-diversity-for-dialogue-and-development2021/>