Seventy-eighth session
Item 73 (b) of the provisional agenda*

Promotion and protection of human rights: human rights questions, including alternative approaches for improving the effective enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms

Human rights and cultural diversity

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report is submitted pursuant to paragraph 24 of General Assembly resolution 76/162, in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to prepare a report on the implementation of the resolution, including efforts undertaken at the national, regional and international levels regarding the recognition and importance of cultural diversity, and taking into account the views of Member States, relevant United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations, to be submitted to the Assembly at its seventy-eighth session.

Following the General Assembly’s request, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights invited States, United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations to submit written information on efforts undertaken in that regard, and the present report provides a summary of the submissions received. The submissions from Member States are focused on measures taken to promote cultural diversity and to protect and ensure access to cultural heritage.

*A/78/150.
I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to paragraph 24 of General Assembly resolution 76/162, in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to prepare a report on the implementation of the resolution, including efforts undertaken at the national, regional and international levels regarding the recognition and importance of cultural diversity, and taking into account the views of Member States, relevant United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations. The General Assembly also requested the Secretary-General to submit the report to it at its seventy-eighth session.

2. Following a call for submissions issued on 13 March 2023 and published online, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) received a total of 37 contributions, including 10 originating from Member States, 1 from a national human rights institution, 1 from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and several submissions by non-governmental organizations and individuals, summaries of which are provided in sections II, III, IV and V below. A summary of relevant information originating from the United Nations human rights system is also reflected in the present report.

3. OHCHR wishes to thank those States, entities and individuals that have submitted information. The submissions were not fact-checked by OHCHR.

II. Summary of information received from Governments and relevant information originating from the United Nations human rights system

A. Albania

4. Albania is a signatory to the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions of 2005, having acceded to it in 2006. The Ministry of Culture is responsible for implementing the Convention and has taken its principles into account when drafting policies and measures. These include supporting creative industries, promoting cultural inclusion in economic development, supporting the digitalization of cultural expressions, promoting new artistic expressions, intensifying cultural exchange and involving civil society, especially young people, in cultural policy and legal framework debates. The pandemic has highlighted the need to adapt cultural platforms and programmes and to cater to the needs of self-employed artists, cultural professionals, creative industries and non-profit cultural operators. Funds are also being directed towards digital cultural projects, and Albania will continue to participate in relevant international projects and networks.

5. As of 2006, the Ministry of Culture has implemented several activities to comply with the requirements of the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions. These activities include the Education through Culture programme, through which young people are encouraged to participate in cultural life and equal opportunities are provided in cultural and artistic activities. In addition, the Ministry of Culture has ratified Law No. 29/2022 on the accession of Albania to the Council of Europe Enlarged Partial Agreement on Cultural Routes and has participated in the European Network Remembrance and Solidarity as an observer country, with plans to become a voting member. Albania has also signed 16 international agreements with other countries to promote cultural relations and to provide more opportunities to Albanian artists and cultural operators.
6. The activities carried out within the framework of the implementation of the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions include the celebration of the World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development on 21 May, which involves the organization of awareness-raising and promotional activities for the protection of cultural heritage of national minorities, including the Roma community, by the Ministry of Culture in cooperation with various cultural institutions. The multifunctional centre known as the “Park of Art” is aimed at revitalizing the urban atmosphere of the Kinostudio area in Tirana by developing a cultural centre in one of the most valuable buildings of the city, which also has the status of a “cultural monument”. The recurring artistic competition entitled “Narrative of legends through graphic novels” is aimed at increasing the diversity of social groups involved and at promoting new artistic genres. Within the framework of cooperation with UNESCO for the registration and inventory of intangible cultural heritage in Albania, the Ministry of Culture and the National Institute of Cultural Heritage implemented the project entitled “The community-based inventory of the intangible cultural heritage in Albania” in the pilot districts of Shkodra, Gjirokastra and Korça during the period from 2020 to 2022. Through this project, about 95 elements of intangible cultural heritage have been inventoried and catalogued, including those of minorities, such as traditional costumes and dances in the Greek minority areas of Dropulli, traditional costumes and dances of the Macedonian minority in Prespa, iron works artisanship, the creation of birch products and the inheritance of the Roma community.

B. Armenia

7. Armenia enjoys a constitutional and legal framework that is based on respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the protection and promotion of cultural diversity. The country has implemented various annual programmes to support cultural diversity, such as providing financial support for printed media of national minorities, hosting festivals of national minorities, financing textbooks on the language, history and culture of national minorities, and providing public education in the Assyrian, Kurdish and Yezidi languages on the basis of needs assessments conducted in communities with significant numbers of persons belonging to national minorities. Furthermore, the Government supports innovative projects for self-employed artists, creates opportunities for their engagement in professional networks and international forums and organizes concerts and projects aimed at inclusive education and culture.

8. Armenia is actively engaging in international and regional cooperation to promote cultural exchange and joint initiatives. It participates in such global forums as UNESCO and the Creative Europe programme, as well as joint programmes with the European Union, including the KATAPULT Creative Accelerator Programme, aimed at promoting the development of creative sectors. Armenia also cooperates in the film industry, having jointly produced movies with counterparts from various countries to promote cultural diversity.

9. On 11 September 2015, the General Assembly unanimously adopted resolution 69/323 presented by Armenia, in which the Assembly declared 9 December to be the International Day of Commemoration and Dignity of the Victims of the Crime of Genocide and of the Prevention of This Crime. Armenia also tables resolutions on genocide prevention on a biennial basis in the Human Rights Council. In the most recent of these, Human Rights Council resolution 49/9, adopted by consensus during the Council’s forty-ninth session, the Council reaffirms that all peoples contribute to the diversity and richness of civilizations and cultures, which constitute the common heritage of humankind, and acknowledges the necessity to protect the cultural
heritage of persons belonging to minorities from intentional destruction aimed at erasing evidence of their presence as a key factor for preservation of their identity.

10. Armenia regularly organizes the Global Forum Against the Crime of Genocide, the deliberations of which in 2022 were focused on the issue of modern technologies. Protecting and promoting cultural diversity has also been an important priority for the Armenian presidency of the International Organization of la Francophonie. The outcome document of the seventeenth Summit of la Francophonie, which was held in Armenia in October 2018, represented a collective pledge of living together in solidarity, with shared humanistic values and respect for diversity.

11. Anti-Armenian propaganda has resulted in hate speech and incitement to violence against Armenian cultural and religious heritage and sites. This situation is aggravated by the absence of international organizations and hindered access for UNESCO.

C. Azerbaijan

12. Azerbaijan is taking measures to promote national cultural diversity and ethnic and religious tolerance, including the implementation of State policies to preserve its cultural, linguistic and ethnic diversity. These policies are aimed at enriching the multiculturalism that has developed over centuries in Azerbaijan. To accomplish these goals, the Baku International Multiculturalism Centre was established by a presidential decree on 15 May 2014.

13. The primary objectives of the Centre include ensuring the preservation of tolerance and cultural, religious and linguistic diversity. The Centre also aims to position Azerbaijan as a global hub for multiculturalism and to explore and promote current multicultural models. The Centre conducts research on the cultural, social and political aspects of the Azerbaijani reality. It analyses the foundations of tolerance for cultural and religious diversity, studies the cultural heritage of different regions, supports their harmonious development in modern times and preserves historical, cultural and religious monuments.

14. The focus of the Centre extends to issues related to ethnic minorities and religious communities. The Centre publishes books in the languages of ethnic minorities residing in Azerbaijan and presents them publicly. Cultural events dedicated to ethnic minorities and religious communities are organized.

D. Chile

15. The main purpose of the anti-discrimination law adopted in Chile is to establish judicial protection whenever an act of arbitrary discrimination occurs, as provided for by the law. The Ministry General Secretariat of Government plans and carries out various actions aimed at eliminating all forms of discrimination against the groups referred to in Law No. 20.609, such as historically excluded groups, Indigenous Peoples, migrants and other groups among the 18 categories contemplated by the law. In addition, the Observatory for Citizen Participation and Non-Discrimination has a mandate to conduct participatory campaigns for the implementation of the second human rights plan and to provide training. Training sessions, facilitated through various audiovisual tools, include a comprehensive module on awareness that explains fundamental concepts necessary to understand the mechanisms of discrimination in everyday life and work. The training sessions include a gender perspective and practical examples focused on discrimination against the 18 categories of individuals covered by the law, including lesbian, gay, bisexual,
transgender and queer+ persons and such historically excluded groups as Indigenous Peoples and migrants. Moreover, annual participatory campaigns against discrimination are conducted as part of the human rights plan.

16. Chile has taken measures to promote Indigenous art and heritage, and the Ministry of Culture, Arts and Heritage plays a crucial role in recognizing and promoting the cultural diversity of Indigenous Peoples. The Ministry’s Subnational Directorate of Indigenous Peoples is dedicated to recognizing, respecting and promoting the cultures of Chilean Indigenous and Afrodescendant people, including their ancestral practices, beliefs, history and worldview. The Directorate gives special consideration to the development of Indigenous culture, arts and cultural heritage. Since 2016, the Directorate has been implementing the Indigenous and Afrodescendent Cultural Revitalization Programme, which is aimed at addressing the loss of Indigenous knowledge, skills and cultural and artistic expressions that require urgent cultural revitalization. In addition, the Ministry of Social Development and Family, through its Unit for the Coordination of Indigenous Affairs, plays an integral role in coordinating public policies on Indigenous matters. The Unit carries out various actions to complement and support the programmes and policies implemented by various government sectors. These actions include offering courses involving recognized Indigenous speakers in their respective territories, holding territorial meetings that promote the use of Indigenous languages and organizing international events to learn from successful experiences.

E. Ecuador

17. Ecuador recognizes the importance of cultural diversity for sustainable development and the promotion of human rights and highlights the need to respect and protect cultural diversity in all its forms. The Ministry of Culture and Heritage established a financing line for social memory and cultural heritage in May 2019. The National Institute of Cultural Heritage was designated as the administrator of the line, the objective of which is to reactivate, maintain and generate the value chain innovation of cultural heritage practices in traditional handicrafts and agrifood heritage. The financing line provides grants to communities, community organizations, entrepreneurs, craftsmen, cultural managers, community leaders and bearers of intangible cultural heritage knowledge.

18. In addition, Ecuador has a code of ethics in place for archaeological practices, promulgated in January 2023 to guide inclusive professional practice. The code of ethics is aimed at promoting a respectful, equitable and inclusive practice of archaeology, in which women, as well as men and persons with other gender identities, are valued for their contributions to the field. The code also emphasizes the importance of considering the cultural, social and economic context of the communities where archaeological work is conducted, as well as the need to respect their traditions, knowledge and values.

F. Iraq

19. In the Constitution of Iraq, it is stated that all Iraqis are equal under the law and cannot be discriminated against on the basis of their gender, ethnicity, nationality, origin, colour, religion, sect, opinion or economic or social status. In addition, the election law grants certain minority groups a quota of seats in the parliament, without affecting their representation if they participate in the electoral lists. This includes five seats for Christians in five provinces, one seat for Yazidis in Ninewa province,
one seat for Shabaks in Ninewa province, one seat for Mandaean Sabians in Baghdad province and one seat for Faili Kurds in Wasit province.

20. The Independent Media and Communications Commission in Iraq works to promote a free and independent media. The media in Iraq is free and operates on the basis of the principles of objectivity, transparency and adherence to legal procedures. The regulations governing media broadcasting are aimed at maintaining accuracy and balance in news coverage and providing minority communities with channels that broadcast in their own languages.

21. The Iraqi education system is aimed at achieving equality and equal opportunities for all citizens. The curriculum is designed to create an open-minded and educated generation that accepts others and believes in peaceful coexistence. The Constitution of Iraq guarantees the right of minority children to receive education in their mother tongue in both public and private educational institutions, and there are public departments in the Ministry of Education that cater to the teaching of various minority languages, such as Kurdish, Turkmen and Syriac.

22. The Government of Iraq is also working to protect and preserve the country’s cultural heritage and historical sites. This includes collaboration with civil society organizations and minority rights associations to incorporate relevant concepts into school textbooks and ongoing efforts to monitor and protect these sites. Most of the departments of the Ministry of Culture rely on modern technology to document and archive information, protect local, national and global cultural heritage and provide information on numerous websites. Iraq has pressed for the inclusion of several sites in the World Heritage List, so that they may benefit from international measures to protect and promote them. Such sites include the southern marshlands known as the Ahwar, which UNESCO named a world heritage site in 2016. Iraq is still working towards the inclusion of other landmarks in the World Heritage List.

23. Iraq collaborates with UNESCO and other relevant organizations to protect and restore monuments and heritage sites destroyed by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) during its control of certain areas in Iraq. Relevant authorities in Iraq continue to organize national and international seminars and programmes to raise awareness about these events. The Government also plans to sign memorandums of understanding and scientific agreements with international institutions specializing in archaeology to protect the cultural heritage of Iraq. This is especially important in the city of Mosul, where most of the city’s archaeological monuments have been destroyed.

G. Italy

24. Italy is making efforts to promote and protect the rights of Roma and Sinti communities, linguistic minorities and migrants. A new national Roma and Sinti equality, inclusion and participation strategy has been developed for the period 2022–2030. Italy has also made efforts to protect linguistic minorities in accordance with article 6 of the Constitution of Italy. Act No. 482/1999 upholds the constitutional principle of the linguistic unity of the Italian language while extensively protecting historical linguistic minorities. Italy recognizes 12 minorities and guarantees the right to know minority languages. Article 4 of Act No. 482/99 mandates the teaching of minority languages in kindergartens in municipalities where minority groups live. The Ministry of Education annually publishes financing plans to promote the languages and cultural traditions of linguistic minorities, with different activities, content and methodologies for each age group. In addition, Act No. 107/2015 also provides for the teaching of minority languages.
H. Mexico

25. Mexico has adopted various measures to promote and defend human rights and cultural diversity. The Vasconcelos Library offers services to vulnerable groups and conducts Mexican sign language workshops and other activities to support those historically excluded, including persons with disabilities. It plans its cultural offerings on the basis of the cultural, educational, informational and recreational needs of the population. In 2022, the library organized activities to highlight the worldview of Indigenous communities and their inclusion in the legal pluralism of Mexico. The General Directorate of Libraries has incorporated 11 institutional libraries in various federal centres, including prisons, to provide library services to vulnerable groups. The Canal 22 television station, run by the Ministry of Culture, promotes cultural diversity and respect for human rights through various programmes, documentaries and interviews. The sound archive of the National Sound Library includes a wide range of cultural expressions from various social sectors, places and times, and its services are available to all.

26. The National Institute of Anthropology and History, through its national and community museums and archaeological sites, promotes cultural diversity and its dissemination through institutional electronic media and the Institute’s multimedia library. The Mexican Institute of Cinematography proposes film curations that reflect the diversity of the country and offers free access to its film catalogue for exhibition spaces in Mexico. The National Institute of Fine Arts and Literature organizes reading cycles in native languages, promotes the inclusion of persons with disabilities and supports the creation of literature in Indigenous languages.

27. The Directorate General for Libraries prioritizes the installation and incorporation of libraries in municipalities that lack public library services, in particular those serving vulnerable groups, such as prisoners, migrants and marginalized communities. The National Institute of Fine Arts and Literature focuses on diversity, equity and inclusion in its art programmes, recognizing the variety of social realities and interests and the plurality of its audiences.

28. With regard to measures taken in Mexico to ensure the use of media and information technologies to create the necessary conditions for freedom of opinion and expression for people from diverse cultures and civilizations, the Directorate General for Libraries has ensured that public libraries in the national network receive Internet connectivity through the federal Government’s Internet for All programme, although it is the obligation of municipal governments to provide this service, in accordance with the General Law on Libraries. Canal 22 transmits its broadcasts on social media networks and on its YouTube channels. The National Institute of Indigenous Languages has produced documentary videos on linguistic and cultural heritage as a fundamental means of the transmission and dissemination of the thoughts and knowledge of Indigenous communities.

I. Qatar

29. Since becoming a party to the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions in 2009, Qatar has dedicated efforts to promoting cultural diversity through active participation in regional and global cultural events. For instance, the Ministry of Culture has been organizing annual “years of culture” programmes in collaboration with other countries for over a decade. Furthermore, when Qatar hosted the 2022 FIFA World Cup, it used the event as a platform for enhancing efforts towards multiculturalism and inclusion. Qatar hosted the fourth Global Forum of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations in 2011 and
subsequently organized focal point meetings for the same event in Doha in 2014. The Ministry of Culture facilitates permits for national media outlets, broadcasting programmes and translated publications in multiple languages, including Hindi, English, Spanish and French. Doha serves as a hub for various foreign cultural centres, such as the British Council and Turkish, Italian, Chinese and Sudanese cultural centres.

30. Qatar also ensures accessible education for expatriates through dedicated educational institutions, where expatriates can fully practice their cultural rights with regard to beliefs, religious rituals and cultural celebrations. Qatar has invested in its national education system and institutions, including private schools, to prioritize cultural human rights. The school curriculum encompasses racial equality, social participation, women’s rights, social protection, tolerance, coexistence, nationalism, Arab solidarity, conflict resolution and peace studies.

J. Russian Federation

31. The Russian Federation has taken steps towards the development of a legal system aimed at promoting respect for cultural diversity and reflecting the multiculturalism of society. Federal Law No. 402-FZ establishes a State policy to preserve and strengthen traditional Russian spiritual and moral values, as approved by Presidential Decree No. 809 of 9 November 2022. In addition, recent changes have been made to cultural policies.

32. On 5 September 2022, the President approved the country’s humanitarian policy abroad. In addition, on 31 March 2023, the country’s foreign policy was approved, which includes the strengthening of traditional Russian spiritual and moral values and the preservation of the cultural and historical heritage of the Russian people as one of the national interests.

K. Summary of relevant information originating from the United Nations human rights system

33. During the period covered in the present report, the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights issued several recommendations on cultural diversity. The Committee focused, for example, on strengthening the protection of cultural rights and respect for cultural diversity by fostering an environment that values diversity and plurality and combats all forms of discrimination. The Committee recommended that States parties take adequate measures to protect cultural diversity and the cultural practices and heritage of religious minorities, and to promote awareness of the heritage of Indigenous Peoples, and create conditions that enable them to safeguard, develop, express and share their history, culture, traditions, traditional knowledge and customs. In one case, the Committee expressed concern that the measures adopted by a State party had not done enough to promote respect for the cultural diversity of Indigenous and Afrodescendant peoples or to disseminate information about their cultures, and it issued a recommendation in that regard.

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1 See E/C.12/BOL/CO/3; E/C.12/KHM/CO/2; E/C.12/CHN/CO/3; E/C.12/COD/CO/6; E/C.12/NIC/CO/5; and E/C.12/PRT/CO/5.
2 See E/C.12/PRT/CO/5.
3 See E/C.12/CHN/CO/3.
4 See E/C.12/COD/CO/6.
5 See E/C.12/NIC/CO/5.
34. Concerns about insufficient progress made in the media to promote cultural diversity and mutual understanding and to promote education about the culture and history of ethnic and national minorities were raised by the Special Rapporteur on the promotion of truth, justice, reparation and guarantees of non-recurrence,6 whereas the Special Rapporteur on the rights of Indigenous Peoples noted, with regard to the concept of cultural diversity in relation to Indigenous Peoples, that, while the concept could be useful for analysing historical factors, it was not a suitable tool for understanding contemporary Indigenous affairs because it did not entail asking the Indigenous Peoples concerned about their culture, society and world view, in keeping with the right to self-determination.7

35. The universal periodic review process resulted in the issuance of several recommendations on cultural diversity. It was recommended, for example, to conduct more multicultural understanding education for youth, public officials and educators to prevent social discrimination and prejudice against multicultural families and respect cultural diversity;8 to continue promoting tolerance and understanding on cultural diversity and eliminate prejudice and discrimination based on, for example, religion or belief;9 to promote tolerance and respect for cultural diversity and to combat discrimination, racism and xenophobia;10 and to ensure that the actions taken by a Government in the prevention of intolerance, racism or hate crimes were based on human rights principles, including rights related to cultural diversity.11 In addition, a recommendation encouraged the country under review to launch a public debate on issues concerning ethnic and cultural diversity aimed at promoting tolerance towards different cultures, religions and sexual orientations.12

III. Summary of information received from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

36. Cultural rights are at the heart of the mandate of UNESCO. This includes its activities covering: (a) the mobility of artists; (b) artistic freedom; (c) intellectual property rights, including in the digital environment; (d) the right to learn in and speak one’s native language; and (e) the right to cultural heritage.

37. In September 2022, the UNESCO World Conference on Cultural Policies and Sustainable Development was organized, which resulted in a declaration adopted by 150 States recognizing culture as a global public good and calling for the creation of a stand-alone goal on culture in the post-2030 development framework. The declaration includes a strong focus on cultural rights, in particular in view of increasing threats to culture stemming from conflicts, climate change and disasters. Through the declaration, States made a commitment to foster an enabling environment conducive to the respect and exercise of all human rights, in particular cultural rights, in all areas of culture, including in the digital environment; to build a more just and equitable world; and to reduce inequalities, including for women, young people, children, Indigenous Peoples, people of African descent, persons with disabilities and vulnerable groups.

38. Within the framework of the 1954 Hague Convention and its two protocols, adopted in 1954 and 1999 respectively, the Committee for the Protection of Cultural

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6 See A/HRC/51/34/Add.1.
7 A/HRC/51/28/Add.1, para. 70.
8 See A/HRC/53/11.
9 See A/HRC/49/8.
12 See A/HRC/48/7.
Property in the Event of Armed Conflict adopted its decision 17.COM 6 of 2022, in which it decided to establish a regular dialogue with the Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural rights within the framework of common areas emanating from the respective mandates of the Committee and the Special Rapporteur with the objective to advance the observance of cultural rights in the event of armed conflict.\textsuperscript{13}


IV. \textbf{Summary of information received from national human rights institutions: the Ombudsman’s Office, national human rights institution, Argentina}

40. Argentina has a vast territory with diverse populations in terms of both density and ethnic diversity. The national radio network, Radio Nacional Argentina, is aimed at communicating with an intercultural focus, giving voice and visibility to the reality of Indigenous Peoples through programmes broadcast on the 49 stations throughout the country that make up the network. Indigenous Peoples also feature on public television news broadcasts, in which the topics addressed include human rights, cosmology and spirituality, languages, gender, life stories, cultural activities (music, literature and traditional festivals), commemorations, food sovereignty (ancestral cuisine, knowledge and flavours, revaluation of regional products and community producers), ancestral medicine, bilingual intercultural education, the environment and biodiversity.

41. The Ombudsman’s Office of Argentina is concerned about the lack of a national agency coordinating and directing an action plan under the International Decade of Indigenous Languages within the objectives proposed by UNESCO. It seems that different entities, such as the Ministry of Culture, the National Commission for Cooperation with UNESCO, Radio and Television Argentina, the National Communications Entity, the National Institute of Indigenous Affairs and various academic units launch activities or join existing ones, in many cases without community participation, despite the slogan “nothing for us without us”.

42. The intercultural bilingual education modality is one of eight modalities within the education system established following the enactment of National Education Law No. 26.206/06. Its fundamental characteristic is that the diversity of sociocultural and linguistic situations and realities are taken into account in intercultural bilingual education. Relevant research indicates that this characteristic accounts for the progress, setbacks and gaps in intercultural bilingual education in Argentina, highlighting the heterogeneity of situations in the various provinces and the various obstacles hindering the incorporation of intercultural teachers.

V. \textbf{Summary of information received from non-governmental entities and individuals}

A. \textbf{The International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions}

43. The core values of the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions are centred on respect for the principles of freedom of access to

\textsuperscript{13} See C54/22/17.COM/Decisions.
information and freedom of expression. The Federation works to promote cultural diversity through tangible and intangible expressions and cultural heritage by advocating more supportive environments in which libraries can benefit their communities. The Federation’s activities include advancing professional practice, uniting the global library field under the above-mentioned principles and encouraging decision makers at all levels to support the full realization of library services. In the IFLA Multicultural Library Manifesto, it is proclaimed that the role of libraries is to be learning, cultural and information centres, serving diverse interests and communities and promoting cultural and linguistic diversity in the respect of cultural identity and values.

44. In line with its belief that libraries within schools and communities play a significant role in education for sustainable development, including the appreciation of cultural diversity, the Federation is finalizing an update to the IFLA/UNESCO School Library Manifesto. It has also promoted greater discourse on the link between culture and education in collaboration with libraries and cultural institutions at the UNESCO World Conference on Cultural Policies and Sustainable Development. The Federation is a member of the steering group of the Culture 2030 Goal campaign, which is aimed at bringing about wider recognition of cultural rights in the development agenda. The proposed culture-specific development goal would ensure cultural sustainability for the well-being of all and would centre cultural diversity as a driver of development.

45. The Federation’s volunteer units work to put the principles of the Manifesto into practice and advance universal human rights through library services. The Library Services to Multicultural Populations Section promotes best practices in delivering library services and collections to cultural and linguistic minorities. The Indigenous Matters Section promotes international cooperation in providing library, culture, knowledge and information services to Indigenous communities. The LGBTQ Users Special Interest Group highlights the role of libraries in building identity and capacity by creating access to collections, safe spaces and services. Supporting cultural diversity in public spaces during times of crisis is also important, in particular for displaced populations and refugees.

46. It is important to ensure that political and legal systems reflect the multicultural diversity within societies and to improve democratic institutions, so as to avoid marginalization and discrimination. In the IFLA Multicultural Library Manifesto and the IFLA-UNESCO Public Library Manifesto 2022, Governments are urged to establish and fund libraries and library systems that offer free library and information services to culturally diverse communities.

47. The Federation is committed to advocating an inclusive, rights-based information society. It collaborates with partners, such as UNESCO, the World Summit on the Information Society and the Internet Governance Forum, to promote intellectual freedom, access to culture and education, digital inclusion and freedom from discrimination. It works towards preserving material from a wide variety of cultural and linguistic backgrounds and making it accessible and discoverable online in order to promote cultural diversity.

B. Japanese Manga Artists Group (Japan)

48. A group calling itself the Japanese Manga Artists Group notes that the Internet allows individuals to experience diverse cultures, customs and values of other countries. When it comes to creative culture, however, such as manga, anime, video games, novels and movies, there may be expressions that are acceptable in one country but not in another. It is important to respect the culture or cultures of each
country, and restrictions on speech and expression should not be justified under the pretext of protecting human rights or preventing crimes. Manga artists are concerned about how the proposed comprehensive international convention on countering the use of information and communications technologies for criminal purposes could be used to impose regulations on artistic expression on the basis of morality, values and other considerations, thereby posing a threat to the protection of cultural diversity.

C. Summary of submissions from Japanese civil society organizations and individuals

49. Japanese civil society organizations and individuals have presented 22 submissions, in which they argue that freedom of expression and the protection of human rights is essential, in particular in the context of creative works, such as novels, paintings, cartoons, animations, games and three-dimensional works of art. They suggest that the proposed comprehensive international convention on countering the use of information and communications technologies for criminal purposes should not restrict Japanese manga and anime, which are integral parts of Japanese culture that contribute significantly to cultural diversity and freedom of expression.

D. The South Asia Justice Campaign (India)

50. The South Asia Justice Campaign alleges that Indian authorities have been undertaking concerted efforts to homogenize Indian society. The examples provided include attempts to rewrite history in textbooks, the renaming of towns and cities, interference with religious and cultural rights, and discriminatory laws and policies. These measures are contrary to the obligation to respect and promote cultural diversity in the country. The Constitution of India sets out guarantees to protect this diversity and ensure non-discrimination. Erasing aspects of Indian history is a denial not only of the cultural heritage of Indian Muslims, but also of Indians in general.

VI. Conclusion

51. Cultural rights and cultural diversity are essential for a dignified life and are critical for the development of inclusive and tolerant democratic societies. Protecting and promoting cultural diversity and cultural rights is crucial in building free, peaceful, harmonious and equitable societies.

52. The submissions received by OHCHR show that some Member States have established comprehensive constitutional and legal frameworks that acknowledge the human rights of all individuals without prejudice. Several submissions included an emphasis on efforts to safeguard the rights of ethnic and religious minorities, as well as Indigenous Peoples, who should be allowed to maintain their original cultures, languages and ways of life. The authors of the submissions also emphasized the importance of language for cultural diversity and the need to make cultural diversity visible and accessible in public life through libraries, festivals, literature competitions, movies and other means. In addition, several of the submitting authors noted the importance of cultural heritage and cultural diversity not only for their own nation but for all of humanity.