

Special message



Culture is the flower of human beings, the fruit of our minds, the product of our traditions and the expression of our yearnings. Its diversity, its wonders are part of the rich tapestry of civilisation. Culture is also a powerhouse - an employer of millions, an engine of economic progress and a force for social cohesion.

The World Day for Cultural Diversity recognises its great power. So does the proclamation of 2021 as the International Year for Creative Economies for Sustainable Development.

But these observances fall at a different time for culture. The COVID-19 has upended the world and it has shaken the cultural sector. Across the world museums have been shuttered, music silenced, theatres gone dark, tourist sites abandoned and other cultural pursuits set aside as societies cope with death and disruption.

As the vaccines generate hope, the world must ensure that pandemic recovery packages encompass the needs of cultural institutions, the arts and all of those that are part of the creative world. At a time of spread of hatred and intolerance, we must not only defend diversity but invest in it. Societies today are multi-ethnic, multi-religious and multi-cultural. This is a richness, not a stress. But we must ensure that every community feels that their identity, their culture is being respected.

Let us all support culture and its power to advance dialogue and development for the benefit of all.

HE António Guterres

Secretary-General, United Nations

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for Dialogue and Development May 21st 2021*