

26 MAR 2009

by: J.B.

**Australian Government****Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts**

Mr Kelvin Thomson MP
Chair
Joint Standing Committee on Treaties
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Mr Thomson

I am writing to you in relation to the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (the Convention) tabled in parliament on 3 February 2009 and considered at the hearing of the Joint Standing Committee on Treaties (JSCOT) on 16 March 2009.

I submit the following responses to questions raised by Senator Birmingham and Senator Cash that were taken on notice by the Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts during the hearing. Both questions appear on page seven of the relevant Hansard transcript which is enclosed for your reference.

Question One

With reference to the International Fund for Cultural Diversity (the Fund), Senator Birmingham asked for:

A précis of the Fund – its purpose, if it will operate on a grants-based system and if it is expected that it will be available to artists from developed or developing countries.

Response

The allocation of resources of the Fund will be determined by the Intergovernmental Committee to the Convention according to the *Guidelines on the use of the resources of the International Fund for Cultural Diversity* (the Guidelines). These Guidelines are currently in draft form.

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The draft preliminary Guidelines state that:

'The purpose of the Fund is to finance projects and activities decided by the Committee on the basis of guidelines determined by the Conference of Parties, notably to support cooperation for sustainable development and poverty reduction in order to foster the emergence of a dynamic cultural sector in developing countries, in accordance with Article 14 [Cooperation for development] of the Convention (Article 13 of the Financial Regulations of the Fund).'

The Fund will operate on a grants-based system, whereby interested parties may apply for the allocation of resources from the Fund for specific projects, programs or activities that further the aims of the Convention. Partial self-financing of projects will be encouraged to the extent possible.

The draft Guidelines state that the Intergovernmental Committee will consider requests for resourcing towards specific projects and activities identified by:

- developing countries,
- State Parties to the Convention with special situations where cultural expressions are at risk of extinction or are under serious threat,
- non-government organisations from developing country Parties,
- international non-government organisations,
- micro, small and medium enterprises from developing country Parties, and
- representatives of vulnerable groups such as women and Indigenous people.

It is anticipated that the Fund will be operational by June 2009 following approval of the Guidelines by the Conference of Parties to the Convention.

Question Two

In relation to the Fund, Senator Cash asked:

'How many of the countries that have already ratified the Convention make voluntary contributions?'

Response

To date, nine of the countries that have ratified the Convention have made voluntary contributions to the Fund.

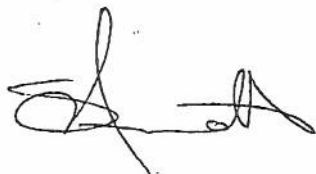
These countries are Andorra, Brazil, Canada, Canada (Quebec), Finland, France, India, Monaco and Saint Lucia. Contributions have also been received from various states and individuals. The total resources of the Fund currently stand at US\$1,124,765.89.

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Should you require any further information, please contact:

- Mr Stephen Richards
Director, Film Incentives and International Section
6275 9645
stephen.richards@environment.gov.au, or
- Ms Jane Carter
Film Incentives and International Section
6275 9631
jane.carter@environment.gov.au.

Yours sincerely



Dr Stephen Arnott
Assistant Secretary
Film and Creative Industries
JS March 2009

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