

UNCTAD's new creative economy webpage: sharing knowledge and networking



In 2009, UNCTAD continued to play a pro-active role in promoting international actions and facilitating better understanding of the development dimension of the creative economy. Throughout the year the Creative Economy Programme supported government initiatives for enhancing public policies aiming at strengthening their creative capacities for development gains. UNCTAD analyzed recent market trends in light of the impact of the financial crisis and the possible contribution of the creative industries to economic recovery. Today more than ever, it seems imperative to put in place a "creative nexus" linking investments, technology, creative entrepreneurship and trade to foster the creative economy. We have been liaising with governments, artists, creators, academia and civil society for policy and advocacy. UNCTAD provided demand-driven policy advice and technical assistance to governments. The Creative Economy Programme continues to work in synergy with the United Nations agencies and other relevant institutions to facilitate policy coherence and complementarities on issues related to the creative economy. During the whole year, UNCTAD was invited to co-organize and address a number of international events and national seminars. Sharing knowledge, information, and best practices is our aim. It is encouraging to see how our messages about the potential of the creative economy for socio-economic growth have been increasingly accepted by policymakers, the creative community and public opinion. Thanks to your interest, our Creative Economy e-news has at present an outreach of nearly 2,100 readers. We are now pleased to inform you about the updating of our webpage www.unctad.org/creative-programme. The site provides information concerning documents, statistics, projects and conferences serving also as a platform to facilitate networking and partnerships among institutions and the creative community. Our intention is to set the basis for research exchanges and collaborative projects among academia on creative economy issues. Gradually we will improve and expand this platform as an open collaborative web space. Your involvement and feed-back will help make this a useful tool for all.

Fifth World Summit on Internet and Multimedia – WSIM

23-25 September 2009, Shenyang, China

UNCTAD was invited as a partner by the International Federation of Multimedia Associations (FIAM) based in Montreal, Canada, to assist in the preparation of this event that for the first time was held in China. The summit was supported by the Ministry of Culture of China and hosted by the government of the Liaoning Province and the Shenyang Municipality, a region which is fast becoming a main centre for the Chinese digital and new media industry. UNCTAD facilitated the participation of other UN agencies and experts from developing countries including Africa, (Senegal and Zimbabwe) Latin America (Guatemala) and Asia (Malaysia) with the aim of promoting business opportunities, partnerships and networking. Participants explored possible initiatives around the digital media industry. As connectivity has changed our lifestyle, UNCTAD noted that nowadays we consume digital services, software, music, video-films and video-games on a daily basis. Lower ITC access costs are leading to more democratization of use and new business models to commercialize digitalized content.

The WSIM attracted high-level speakers and local and international participants. At the Summit, the President of FIAM invited the experts from the international organizations to become members of its Advisory Council. A visit to the Shenyang Development Zone was organized, where a big digital industry centre is under construction to house new media studios for creative design, animation, electronic game, wireless multimedia, films and TV production. A positive outcome of the WSIM was the commitment from the Chinese government to provide space in the centre for partnerships, research and capacity-building activities involving creative new media enterprises from Africa, Asia, North/Latin America and Europe.



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UNCTAD cooperation with the Academia

10 September 2009 – Utrecht, the Netherlands



UNCTAD was honoured with an invitation to give a key-note speech at the graduation ceremony of the Master Degree of Arts Management of the Utrecht University in the Netherlands. This full-time post-graduate programme links theoretical knowledge with practical experience targeted to young professionals desiring to work in creative industries management. The Creative Economy Report –

2008 was a main reference for the master course. UNCTAD reminded the graduated generation that in times of crisis, individuals need new approaches to shape the future, put forward new proposals, imagine new realities and develop management capacities to bring forward their projects, be it in a company or in their personal lives. UNCTAD stressed that creativity, knowledge and innovation are priorities in the European agenda bringing good prospects for jobs. Moreover, the crisis will not stop globalization and that the future of mature industrialized countries is in creativity and innovation. A subtle combination of education, creativity, risk and economics should be mastered, since knowledge and intellectual capital are increasingly important engines of the world economy. Around the creative economy, new concepts emerged such as the “creative class” and “creative entrepreneurs” to characterize a talented and smart youth able to transform ideas into creative products, services or processes for the contemporary society.

UNCTAD was also invited to address a round table organized by the Chairman of the Faculty of Arts and Economics gathering around twenty Dutch academics with the aim of discussing the findings of the Creative Economy Report, and exchange views about ongoing research being currently undertaken in the Netherlands on creative economy issues. An interesting research about the impact in the country of the UN Creative Economy Report revealed that to a certain extent the Dutch researches has been unnoticed by the international community; therefore new arrangements will be put in place to improve this situation. The round-table was followed by debates around a working lunch hosted by the Rector Magnificus of the Utrecht University, the vice-dean and several professors, scholars and practitioners. Undoubtedly, there is scope for cooperation between UNCTAD and the Utrecht University for conducting joint research projects in the area of the creative economy. At present, the Art and Economics research group of the Utrecht



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Amsterdam - A creative multi-faceted city

18 September 2009



By invitation of the Director of the Amstelkring Museum, UNCTAD gave a lecture at this special museum which is almost 350 years old. Located at the heart of the city of Amsterdam the museum stands as a well-known symbol of Dutch cultural heritage. It

was a memorable occasion for sharing thoughts on how the creative economy can contribute to revitalizing the cultural, social and economic life of this historic centre by promoting a more inclusive city, able to better absorb the cultural diversity of the people involved in the daily life of the Red-light District area. It also engendered a reflection on how to deal with some of the serious social problems facing all cities, including delinquency, prostitution and drugs. The concept of “creative cities” can help us find pragmatic solutions to address problematic issues through innovative ways of interacting with the civil society and local communities.

Efforts should be made to reconcile urban social policies with a national strategy for the creative economy, providing a conducive environment to attract investors and creative entrepreneurs willing to promote creative business and a vibrant image of the town. Cities like Amsterdam are willing to bring creative people closer together as a new force to highlight its dynamism. This vanguard initiative provided for an open debate involving government officials, artists, creators and the civil society and was a catalyser to committing all stakeholders to work in synergy with the municipal authorities in a search for remedies for complex issues. Amsterdam is a fascinating city that attracts artists and creators. The example of a new fashion cluster housing top fashion designers is a good illustration that can be followed by art galleries, studios for modern dance, new media, etc. The setting-up of a Creative Economy Advisory Group could be helpful in articulating actions taking into account the cultural differences of those involved in the day-to-day life of the city center



International Seminar: The cultural sector today
10-11 September 2009 - Cartagena de Indias, Colombia

The Minister of Culture of Colombia hosted this international event to debate the challenges, opportunities and possible responses that culture and the creative economy can bring to the current economic recession. The forum discussed how the international financial crisis affected the cultural sector and how it can contribute to economic recovery. Debates focused on the positioning of the cultural sector and the creative economy in long-term strategies for sustainable development. UNCTAD was invited to share views and recalled that the economic crisis undermined jobs, economic growth and social well-being, but nevertheless the demand for some creative products such as music, video-games, DVD films, TV programmes has not been affected; on the contrary, during the first quarter of 2009, there was an upturn in cinema and art exhibitions admissions in some major markets. Although it is premature to draw conclusions about the long-term impact of the financial crisis, there are some indications that the creative economy may help to improve economic prospects. Among the special invitees were the Ministers of Culture from Costa Rica and Guatemala, and high-level officials from Argentina, Canada, France and Spain.



Participants recognized that the cultural sector not only generates income and jobs but is also a basic factor for social cohesion and

peaceful coexistence. This makes culture a fundamental dimension of the global economy and sets out the need for creating alternative development models and policies to foster public and private investment in the cultural sector. Three roundtables gathered local and international experts and academics to discuss the following topics: (i) What are the private funding alternatives and financing models for culture? ; (ii) What are the keys for success in cultural entrepreneurship and cultural management? and (iii) How local and global markets for cultural goods and services be opened to ensure cultural diversity? The seminar provided a forum for reflections on the current situation and the challenges ahead facilitating a debate on how to articulate a strategic vision for the cultural sector and its implications on the overall economy.

International Encounter on the Creative Economy
18-20 November 2009, Buenos Aires, Argentina



With the aim of inserting the creative economy concept into the public agenda, this event provided for policy-oriented debates involving international and local experts with a view to discussing different approaches to publicizing the role of the creative industries for socio-economic development. The event

was jointly organized by the Observatory of Creative Industries of the Ministry of Economic Development of the city of Buenos Aires and the Faculty of Economic Sciences of the University of Buenos Aires. The purpose was to discuss the impact of the creative industries for the economy, employment and the processes of innovation. The 2008 Creative Industries Yearbook of Buenos Aires was presented indicating that the creative economy accounts for 9.1% of the GDP and 9.5% of employment in the city. UNCTAD shared views on the conceptual, methodological, and policy framework presented in the Creative Economy Report – 2008 and was pleased to observe that the report has been a reference for the work of the Observatory; both institutions wish to enhance their cooperation. UNCTAD visited the Metropolitan Design Center of Buenos Aires, a public institution that supports design-related creative industries. UNCTAD also paid a courtesy visit to the Secretariat of Culture of the Presidency and had a meeting with the National Director of Cultural Policy and International Cooperation and her team.



World Trade Point Federation Annual Assembly
23-25 November 2009, Buenos Aires, Argentina

Invited by the President of the World Trade Point Federation and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Argentina, UNCTAD addressed the annual assembly of the Trade Point community attended by 25 countries and the local business community. UNCTAD initiated the



Trade Point Programme in 1992 and has been gratified to see its evolution. The large number of partnerships is a sign of the relevance of this pragmatic approach to promote the exports of developing countries to global markets. UNCTAD shared some reflections on how the concept of the “creative economy” is gaining ground by dealing with the interface between economics, culture and technology. The creative economy seems a feasible option to diversify the economy of developing countries and to assist them in leapfrogging into high-growth sectors of the world economy. Efforts should be made to stimulate SME creative business and the use of e-business to outreach new markets including opportunities for South-South trade. The Trade Point network seems to be an effective tool to promote international trade of creative products. UNCTAD seized the opportunity to visit the National Academia of Tango to discuss the tango value-chain can better contribute to economic development. Tango was declared of cultural interest by the parliament of Argentina.



International Cultural Industries Forum
27 November—1st December 2009, Guangzhou, China



In recent years, UNCTAD developed cooperation with the Cultural Studies Centre (CSC) of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. In 2008, UNCTAD became member of the World China Network Association and launched the Chinese version of the Creative Economy Report—2008 at the ICI forum. This year, UNCTAD delivered a keynote speech on the topic of global creative economy in times of crisis. During the event the CSC launched its “blue book of culture” an annual report on the development of the China’s cultural creative industries. Even if China is a leading exporter of creative goods, it still has a trade deficit in creative content and policies are being implemented to enhance creative capacities throughout the country. The Government of the Guangdong Province supported the event and the Nanfang Media Group was its main sponsor. The ICI forum comprised three important events. (i) a high-level session on theory and practice of cultural industries; (ii) a seminar on creative industries town model, held at Ronggui, Shunde District where the Desheng Creative Park is being constructed; and (iii) a forum on protection and development of world heritage held at Kaiping Diaolou, Zili village. UNCTAD took an active part in all events and exchanged views with local authorities on the positive prospects for the creative economy in China. A fruitful debate was held on how to reconcile heritage protection with a strategy to develop the creative industries for socio-economic growth. In UNCTAD’s views it is possible to balance policies that respects the environment, promotes culture and generates well-being and prosperity for the local community bringing together eco-tourism and cultural heritage objectives. The Kaiping Diaolou villages became the 35th Chinese site on UNESCO’s World Cultural Heritage List in 2007.

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Gabriel in Design - Creative Economy Seminars
10 - 13 November 2009, São Paulo, Brazil



This event was a private-sector initiative organized in the context of the worldwide celebrations of 2009- The International Year of Natural Fibers, as designated by the United Nations with a view to raising awareness and promote a responsible production

and consumption of natural fibers given its contribution for sustainable development. The Gabriel in Design initiative was organized in parallel with a project for the cultural and environmental renovation of the Alameda Gabriel area in the capital of São Paulo. The area groups more than 70 interior design shops and architecture studios, and is considered as one of the most prestigious locations for decoration and interior design in Latin America. A series of debates, exhibitions and special events brought together the public and private sector, academics and the public. Several UN agencies such as FAO, UNCTAD, UN-Habitat and UNIC supported the event, as well as the Scientific Nucleo for research and development on technologies for architecture and urbanism of the University of São Paulo. UNCTAD addressed the opening ceremony pointing out that design expressed in functional creations is one of the most important creative sectors for a large number of developing countries and is responsible for millions of jobs and revenue. Brazil exports around 850 million dollars of interior design products annually and has the potential to export even more. UNCTAD reminded the business community that it is possible to be creative while using environmentally-friendly materials and natural fibers. At this occasion, UNCTAD had meetings with authorities of the Municipality of São Paulo about the potential of the creative economy for Brazil and addressed a seminar organized by Foundation of Administrative Development – FUNDAP regarding databases and statistics for the creative economy.



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Up coming events :
Events

<i>Events</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>City, Country</i>	<i>Website / contact</i>
UNCTAD Eco-Chic Fashion Initiative	20-21 January	Geneva, Switzerland	www.unctad.org
Cultural Commons Workshop	29 –30 January	Turin, Italy	www.centrostudi.org
Workshop Pan-Europe initiative on creative industries	4– 5 February	Amsterdam, Netherlands	www.ec.europe-innova.org



Season's Greetings
Best wishes for a Creative Year 2010

UNCTAD/DITC/TAB/MISC/2009/4

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