

LCGN Memorandum of Understanding

1. Background and Key Rationales

- a. The **South African Local Cultural Governance Network or LCGN** (hereafter Network) exists with the primary aim of responding to the call by the **#culture2030goal campaign** for networks to align themselves to the vision and objectives of #culture2030goal. The campaign was established by a conglomerate of several international bodies who are collectively advocating for an working towards futurierng culture in the UN's Sustainable Development Global Goals (hereafter SDGs).
- b. The campaign identifies its goal as "the achievement of a **full synergy of culture with all other dimensions of sustainable** development, for the well-being of **'People'** and the **'Planet'**, for all human beings and societies to live materially and spiritually **'Prosperous'**, **'Peaceful'** and fulfilling lives. This can only be facilitated with the exercise of **cultural rights for all**, including the right to take part in cultural life, and for a thorough engagement with culture in its different aspects, forms and elements – traditional and novel, material and immaterial, commercial and non-commercial – which involves a diverse range of **'Partnerships'**, among all kinds of actors, at all levels."
- c. #culture2030goals recognises that **culture is** "the whole complex of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features that characterise a community, society or social group. It includes not only arts and literature, but also modes of life, the fundamental rights of the human being, value systems, traditions and beliefs. Culture encompasses the living or contemporary characteristics and values of a community as well as those that have survived from the past". Culture is recognised both as an enabler and driver of development as well as an end it itself.
- d. The culture2030goals campaign notes the **following key issues of consideration**
 - a. **Cultural knowledge and resources** can be **important enablers of local development** and as a result it is important to understand traditional knowledge systems (intangible heritage).
 - b. **Cultural practices convey forms of expression, creativity and identity building and as such form the core of human dignity**. Thus these enable people-centred, sustainable development and need to be better understood at a local level.
 - c. The SDGs will only have meaning in regions where they are **culturally localised** and understood. Thus, a translation of SDGs with local cultural knowledge, resources and practices are needed.
 - d. **Local cultural communities are central to the local alignment of the SDG and their achievement**. Therefore, greater ongoing participation and shared goal setting with local cultural communities are needed.

- e. In order to improve reporting on SDGs from local government, more especially in respect to culture **a greater co-ordination and discourse building is needed between state departments engaged in local government** issues (incl, in addition to municipalities, those in other governmental spheres such as national and provincial, and their agencies).
- f. **Research and advocacy agencies locally and internationally should be key ongoing partners** in the broader task of research (short and long term), knowledge dissemination and education.

2. Culture and the SDGs and South Africa

- . **The role of culture in furthering the SDGs is not well developed in South Africa.** This is especially the case at a local level where it would have greatest immediate value.
- a. **Conceptions of cultures role in a world in crisis where unsustainable practises have led to challenges for people, planet and peace has resonances for South Africa.** As one of the most unequal societies on the planet. South Africa is also facing impending challenges of sustainable development on a variety of fronts. Urban areas (cities and towns) which are now where the bulk of its population live are also facing significant developmental and governance challenges. Only a third of South African municipalities are functioning in a compliant manner and there are challenges with ensuring citizens are active in governance. Socio-economic concerns, housing, services, safety and security, gender-based violence, public transport, xenophobia are some of the many concerns facing citizens daily and bedevil the work of local government. Climate change is an emerging crisis, with drought and increasingly violent storms threatening major urban areas (amongst others). Covid19 has further challenged the country and its cities are still reeling from its still ongoing impacts (noted in early 2021).
- b. This is not to discount the **diverse societies and ecosystems (natural and human) which exist in SA, and is cultural dynamism with its significant strengths and attributes.** However, these possibilities and opportunities have not been tapped at an urban governance level just as cultures role in addressing the challenges have not been noted.
- c. **Culture in South African cities is not a central constitutional mandate, and it is a nascent field of urban policy and practise, yet urban settlements are first and foremost culturally made.** Too often understandings of culture at a local level have been limited to arts promotion, events and youth development and there are no guidelines nor state champions at a national level furthering cultures mobilised in the making of sustainable, inclusive, generative and just cities in South Africa. Dialogue around these issues inside and outside the state are also still nascent. Advocacy from

the arts and creative industry sectors have centered on funding and have drowned out broader concerns and interest groups here (as they do elsewhere in the world). Culture and the right to culture impacts all citizens.

- d. Cultures less instrumental understanding is well catered for financially at a national level and the concerns of the arts and heritages sectors should ideally be furthered at this level, even as it is considered by many to be challenged in governance. This should not mean local government which faces serious challenges for furthering transformation and equity should not explore and further culture in ways that are appropriate for local communities first and foremost. **Culture at a local level ultimately impacts on all citizen and their cultural rights.**
- e. **The key role of the Network would thus center on helping to further a local understanding between state and non-state players, while ensuring advocacy.** This understanding would center on ensuring the localisation of the SDGs through culture, and thus culture ability to further sustainable, inclusive and just cities and towns.
- f. **Recognizing the complexities of representation and that the struggle in SA is less about policy more about implementation, the Network is proposed as a gathering of individual practitioners and thinkers from a range of fields and areas, who would jointly develop a local response to the #culture2030goals** and through engagement find acupuncture points for change in their institutions.
- g. The Network recognises the importance of **engaging individuals from a range of sectors and fields whose work impacts on culture at a local level**, while also advocating and building support within institutions.

3. Expression of Commitment

- . The signatories to this MOU (hereinafter referred to as "the members") commit to supporting the #culture2030goals campaign. **The members commit to ensure that culture becomes recognised as a key field of urban policy and practise to further sustainable development, inclusivity, generativity and justice in South African cities.**
- a. **The members support and accept the key issues in 1 and 2 above, and agree to a process of understanding in respect to how culture and its links to the SDGs can be localised in the South African city and town context. In particular it aligns to the work of the #culture2030 goals and seeks to further these goals in ways relevant for South Africa.**
- b. **This MOU is a voluntary commitment to join the Network, and by signing it members agree to its main aims and tenants.** The work of the Network is carried out by the members with facilitation from a steering group and a secretariat as included in the companion Terms of Reference (TOR). The final products, services and outputs of the Network will be available to all members on equal terms, as provided in the TOR.

By filling the online sign up, the member agrees to and is bound by the MOU and the TOR for the next two years until a formal constitution is jointly developed (no later than .

- c. The **key principles guiding the work of the Network** and the conduct of members is embedded in the constitution of South Africa which emphasizes **non-racialism, non-sexism and democracy based on the values of freedom, equality, dignity, and transparency and accountability.**

4. Areas of Action, Coordination and Cooperation

- . The members agree that for actions related to this MOU, coordination and cooperation to be beneficial and strengthen its efforts, they will work together through a voluntary, mutual support network to be known as the LCG Network
- a. Illustrative areas for potential cooperation and coordination among the members through the network include (amongst others) the following:
 - a. Develop a shared understanding how the mobilisation of culture can support and be supported by the SDGs, while building a local South African response to #culture2030goal
 - b. Furthering the goals of the agenda by proposing relevant policy frameworks, discourses, tools, policy and/or strategy shifts.
 - c. Advocacy to enable specific cities to understand the implications of their action/non action in respect to SDGs and Culture where relevant - such as in instances where local government is seeming to abrogate its responsibilities in terms of the SDGs.
 - d. Support for policy/practise to enable cities/towns to make property/buildings available for established cultural non-profits to ensure social infrastructure, socio-economic enhancement of cities and towns.
 - e. Exploring notions of decolonisation as it pertains to local cultural policy and practises
 - f. Exploring the role of monuments, memorials and public art critically in the South African urban context.
 - g. Furthering nature-culture approaches that highlight the linkages between the ecological and social values and functions of land and other natural resources, and the connections between production and consumption, in ways that promote low carbon, healthy lifestyles in harmony with nature.
 - h. Furthering how culture can be understood in respect to non-traditional areas of urban policy such as primary health care, safety and security, food security amongst others
 - i. Sharing good practices and cases in the use of culture for sustainable development in South Africa, Africa and the Global South to further the agenda

- i. Providing opportunities for members to learn from one another, raising awareness of what has and hasn't worked in different parts of the country, continent and globe where conditions may be similar or contexts relevant.
- ii. Connecting local actors working with culture at the local, regional and national levels to research capacity in academia nationally, continentally and internationally to further the role.
- j. Sharing innovative models for financing and support, including public-private partnerships, resilience funds, and competitive approaches.
- k. Facilitating participation by actors with commitment to the culture and sustainable development agenda in forums regionally and internationally
- b. In order to forward the work of the Network rapidly in its first year, three initial working groups will be established - these include a) a working group to understand and build a local response to #culture2030goals and b) a working group to engage with the issue of cultural spaces as social infrastructure, c) an advocacy working group to address urgent issues facing cities (excluding arts funding).