The Group of Friends for Culture-Based Climate Action

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Mandate:

Based on a commitment to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Agreement, and, further to the *Emirates Declaration on Culture-based Climate Action*, adopted by the Group of Friends of Culture-Based Climate Action at the UNFCCC (GFCBCA) on December 8, 2023, the GFCBCA has welcomed the "UAE Consensus", adopted by COP28, which commits to accelerate climate action in this critical decade on the basis of the best available science, reflecting equity and the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities in the light of different national circumstances.

The group is founded on the core principles that:

1) The path to fully achieving the long-term goals of the Paris Agreement, including those related to mitigation, adaptation, and loss and damage, and in promoting climate-resilient sustainable development, must include a focus on cultural heritage, arts, and creative industries and the socio-cultural enabling conditions for transformative climate action;
2) International and multi-stakeholder cooperation has an essential role in strengthening socio-cultural enabling conditions for responding to climate change, including South-South and North-South cooperation and multi-level action through regional and local governments;
3) An inclusive, participatory and consultative process is fundamental to the group's advocacy work, therefore engagement of a broad diversity of stakeholders, including non-state actors, from cultural institutions (museums, archives, libraries, monuments, etc.) and creative industries to artists, researchers, scientists, NGOs, academic and research institutions, teachers, civil society organizations, and traditional knowledge holders (women and Indigenous Peoples and local communities) and private sector stakeholders, is essential as they have an important role to play in supporting the Group through subject-matter expertise as well as in their capacity for engaging diverse sectors of society and inspiring both knowledge exchange and behavioral change;
4) The group's goals must and can best be attained while protecting and furthering the freedom of expression and creation enshrined in article 15 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966), as well as the diversity of cultural expressions as defined and protected under the UNESCO 2005 Convention.

Scope of work of the Group:

As an informal coalition of parties, GFCBCA aims to build consensus on culture-based climate action and to promote coordinated advocacy and structured inclusive dialogue across membership (parties and knowledge partners) and stakeholders:

1. *Harnessing culture for climate adaptation and mitigation;*
    - Scaling-up culture and heritage-based strategies at various levels for enhancing adaptive capacity, addressing loss and damage, reducing vulnerability to climate change impacts, and strengthening resilience;
    - Scaling-up mitigation initiatives and responses at the national and, as appropriate, at subnational levels, including the development and implementation of actions geared towards enhancing the role of cultural and creative industries through local, place-based, demand-driven, and people-centered programmes and strategies, while also raising awareness and empowering people, thus reducing the impact of climate change;

2. *Supporting the greening of the cultural sector*; (and a just transition across the creative industries)
   Giving increased attention, as appropriate, to the cultural dimensions of the causes of anthropogenic climate change and, in keeping with the MONDIACULT 2022 Final Declaration, reducing the carbon footprint of the cultural and creative sectors, including cultural tourism, from reducing waste to encouraging creative innovation in material and regenerative design and shifting to more sustainable production and consumption approaches;

3. *Valuing diverse knowledge systems to inform climate action*
   Promoting sustainable and resilient communities by increasing efforts to support vulnerable and marginalized people through approaches that value diverse knowledge systems and cultural expressions that safeguard natural and cultural heritage, both tangible and intangible, anchored in shared human values of solidarity, care and respect; targeting research and innovation; and focusing on the specific needs of Indigenous Peoples, local communities, women, senior, children and the youth, as well as people at risk of social exclusion;

4. *Tackling the impact of climate change on culture.*
   Supporting the implementation of the Global Goal on Adaptation (GGA - 2/CMA.5), approved at COP28, especially regarding paragraph 9g "Protecting cultural heritage from the impacts of climate-related risks by developing adaptive strategies for preserving cultural practices and heritage sites and by designing climate-resilient infrastructure, guided by traditional knowledge, Indigenous Peoples' knowledge and local knowledge systems."

Outcomes and Objectives of the Group:

With the goal of launching the first Work Program on Culture-based Climate Action at the UNFCCC, GFCBCA declares that the recognition of the cultural dimensions of climate action alongside the financial and technological aspects will enable a significant scaling-up of systemic transitions for strengthening resilience, avoiding maladaptation, expanding inclusivity, inspiring positive narratives and imaginaries, and reducing vulnerability to climate change impacts. This would entail providing recommendations to the UNFCCC Subsidiary Bodies, Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI) Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA), for a Work Program on Culture-based Climate Action. In order to achieve these outcomes, the GFCBCA will work collaboratively to pursue the following objectives:

1) Supporting global advocacy at multilateral level, within and beyond the UN, including within the COP and the UNESCO culture conventions, including the 1972 Convention, 2003 Convention, and the 2005 Convention[1]1, on the role of culture for climate action, thus also contributing more broadly to positioning culture as a standalone goal in the post-2030 global development agenda;
2) Supporting knowledge-building and -sharing as well as dialogue through the exchange of good practices; Including, identifying and recommending technical and scientific experts, sharing research and good practices, and developing an evidence-based database pertaining to the intersection of culture and climate change with a view to informing and impacting climate change policy making at all levels (international, regional, national, and subnational);
3) Scaling-up and supporting efforts to protect cultural and heritage sites that are most vulnerable to the impact of climate change to safeguard tangible and intangible cultural heritage;
4) Enabling the inclusion of culture in national and local level climate plans, policies and actions, and, as relevant, in the delivery of National Adaptation Plans (NAP) and Nationally Determined Contribution

[1] 1972 UNESCO World Heritage Convention, 2003 UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, 2005 UNESCO Convention on the Protection and the Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, respectively.

(NDC);
5) Spurring alliances and partnerships with a broad range of stakeholders.

Membership:
Participation in GFCBCA is voluntary and open to representatives from both:

1) UN member countries (or Parties)
2) Organizations (civil society, nongovernmental and Intergovernmental) may join as Observers acting as Knowledge Partners.

As per UNFCCC practice, Parties have voting rights and Observers support the group through consultation and the provision of subject-matter expertise, facilitating dialogue, raising awareness and fostering accountability.

Membership, for both Parties and knowledge partners, is formalized by letter addressed to GFCBCA co-chairs and appointment of a focal point.

Working Modality:

1) A consensus-based approach shall be applied to all decisions of the GFCBCA, including nomination and selection of co-chairs.
2) Based on consensus, founding co-chairs Brazil and the UAE, whose terms run from December 2023 (COP28) to December 2026 (COP31), may serve an exceptional one year through December 2027.
3) The exceptional one-year extension of the founding Co-Chairs's three-year terms will be accompanied by the nomination and selection of one (1) additional co-chair for a 2-year term by December 2026, in order to ensure staggered transition of the Co-Chairship.
4) In order to support the growing complexity of the Group's governance as its membership expands, and to underline GFCBCA's commitment to regional representation, a second layer of governance will be introduced to the current structure in 2026, with the nomination and selection of three (3) Vice-Chairs with two-year terms, representing all 5 regions (Africa, Arab States, Asia and the Pacific, Europe and North America, Latin America and the Caribbean).
5) Co-Chair and Vice-Chair selection:
    a. Ministers (of culture or of another relevant ministry) from member parties are eligible for nomination as Co-chairs and Vice-Chairs;
    b. A consensus-based approach shall be applied to all decisions of the GFCBCA, including nomination and selection of Co-Chairs and Vice-Chairs, with a view to ensuring that the governance structure represents all five regions.
    c. Terms of Co-Chairs and Vice-Chairs shall not exceed two (2) years;
    d. Starting in 2026, a biennial nomination and selection for Co-Chairs and Vice-Chairs will be conducted during the second half of the year.

The Roles and Responsibilities of the Co-chairs and Vice Chairs

6) The GFCBCA will be governed by Co-chairs and Vice-chairs with the following responsibilities:

    a. Co-Chairs will provide overall strategic direction to the Group, develop multi-year agendas, consolidate the Group's activities in accordance with priorities identified by its members, coordinate the workplan and annual priorities, represent the Group in international fora, and convene meetings and guide decision-making processes
    b. Vice-Chairs will provide input to the Group's workplan and thematic discussions; act as regional focal points by engaging with regional member states and relevant regional organizations; facilitate regional coordination and information-sharing to identify regional priorities; and ensure an appropriate level of human resource commitment to effectively support the implementation of the GFCBCA's adopted work programs and related activities:
    c. At the discretion of the Co-Chairs, specific Knowledge Partners may be invited to provide a high-level

advisory function to the Group, including:
i. The Special Envoy from the Climate Heritage Network (CHN);
ii. UNESCO as Lead Knowledge Partner.
d. Co-Chairs and Vice-Chairs will jointly arrange secretariat services, including:
i. Processing membership requests and keeping up-to-date membership lists;
ii. Coordinating of teleconferences and in-person meetings;
iii. Ensuring ongoing member collaboration by calling for intersessional meetings of the Group's designated focal points from both member countries and Knowledge Partners, as needed;
iv. Serving as focal points for drafting and disseminating updates and invitations regarding Group activities to the entire membership;
v. Facilitating and updating a GFCBCA website;
vi. Ensuring coordination with climate stakeholders and proposing events and initiatives aimed at supporting and strengthening the overall mission and goals of the Group.

7) GFCBCA shall work under a multi-year agenda that is guided by its mandate and developed by the Co-Chairs in collaboration with the Vice-Chairs and in consultation with member Countries and Knowledge Partners.
   a. The GFCBCA agenda shall identify priorities and planned outcomes for the designated period. The dates, venues, deliverables and work themes of planned activities shall be discussed and shared with the Membership at the beginning of each two-year period term;
   b. The agenda may be reviewed annually and revised when deemed necessary;
   c. To ensure continuity, Co-Chairs will regularly share updates on progress in implementing the multi-year agenda, with a view to enhancing commitment and concerted action.

8) Individual members may also propose initiatives for collaboration with other members in the Group of Friends that complement and support the goals of the group.
   a. The initiatives must be aligned with the GFCBCA strategy, promoting culture's role in spurring environmental and climate awareness and inspiring behavioural change;
   b. The initiatives must be proposed to the membership at an ordinary or extraordinary meeting;
   c. Co-chairs are responsible for adding the initiative to the agenda and organizing the voting process;
   d. Consensus is required for the approval of new initiatives to be adopted by the group;
   e. Approved initiatives will receive support of the GF's and will be integrated to the communication strategy;
   f. A GFCBCA logo must be added and featured in the communications of the approved initiative.

9) Proposal and implementation of modalities (including the preparation of background documents and final reports) such as expert-driven workshops or webinars may be initiated and organized by the co-chairs for the purpose of informing the reflection of GFCBCA membership and for the formulation of action-oriented outcomes or for supporting knowledge building more broadly.
   a. Subgroups and Task Forces – If specific expertise is required in the implementation of the GFCBCA agenda, time-limited and voluntary-based technical sub-groups and task forces may be established by the co-chairs and with the consensus of members, with the goal of supporting the COP agenda and of further advancing its mandate in specific areas;
   b. The mandate, work plan, composition and co-facilitators of those sub-groups are decided by the members.

Amendments

10) Terms of Reference may be reviewed at the request of GFCBCA members on an annual basis. Should any amendments be deemed necessary, they may be duly incorporated into this document with the consensus of the members.