



## The Hague International Model United Nations

**Forum:** General Assembly 2 [Economic and Financial]

**Issue:** Addressing the impacts of globalisation on local cultures and traditional economics

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### Introduction

In recent generations, globalisation has become one of the most rapidly-evolving forces that shape widespread societies. Specifically referring to ideas such as exchange of goods and practices, this interconnection involves definite influence upon local cultures and traditional economic systems.<sup>2</sup> In fact, the ever-changing, inconsistent effects of globalisation is what makes the issue a more complex, international problem. The impact of such globalisation is evident: up to 40% of the world's local languages are at the verge of being lost, largely due to accelerated globalisation and urban migration.<sup>7</sup> While historically, local cultures and traditional economies were moderately developed over years and years, today's globalisation is strongly focused on technological advancements, generally for trade facilitation across borders.<sup>3</sup> In other words, while the historical trend was rather based on progressive development to specific regions and social contexts, modern mechanisms are designed more to protect and preserve global, cultural diversity. Especially viewing from an economic perspective, traditional practices, including agriculture and community markets, now tend to face challenges especially regarding the highly-developed, rapid market trends. As a result, not only do community members solely lose their economic sources, but also gradually lose track of their cultural knowledge deeply rooted within them.<sup>9</sup>

### Definition of Key Terms

#### Globalisation

The process of developing and encouraging global interconnectedness between countries through practices such as trade, technology, and cultural integrations.

#### Cultural Homogenisation

The phenomenon when cultural differences between distinct regions or groups of people significantly decrease, thus leading to a more uniform society—often as a result of dominant influence from external cultures.

## Cultural Hybridisation

The act of merging two or more cultures to form a new, mixed culture that blends different cultural elements from a variety of traditions.

## Cultural Erosion

The gradual weakening of a certain culture's identity, including its characteristics and traditional practices—mostly due to external factors.

## Cultural Appropriation

The adoption of elements from a marginalised culture by members of the dominant culture, often in a disrespectful, exploitative manner of the original culture.

## Informal Economy

A type of economy involving economic activities that are not officially regulated or monitored by the government or that are not safeguarded through legal protections.

## Market Liberalisation

The process of reducing dominant governmental intervention and control over an economic system.

## Multinational Corporations (MNCs)

Large global industries that are operated in various nations, usually whose dominant economic role and mass production often outweigh smaller, local businesses.

## Indigenous Knowledge Systems

Traditions of knowledge developed by indigenous communities over generations through interaction with the environment and society.

## Soft Power

The influence a certain country could exert internationally, through its unique culture and values.

## Glocalisation

The process of adapting into global forces, usually in order to meet specific needs and changing market trends in the local market.

## Background Information

Derived from and embedded deeply through trade liberalisation and technological advancements,

globalisation has become accelerated, especially through modern economic practices such as investment treaties and cheaper transports, to thus achieve maximum efficiency while allowing mass media to rapidly spread cultural goods and services throughout global markets.<sup>3</sup> Along with the modern development of digital platforms, it has become much easier for cultural exchange to take place between nations, enabling local production cycles and, generally, local cultural practices and traditions to be instantly spread globally. While there are indeed positive changes in the trend, into becoming more global and culturally diverse, some results show potential dangers among the traditions maintained by certain regions. For instance, in the United States, cultural industries generate nearly 2.3 trillion dollars and accounted for a maximum of 3.1% of global Gross Domestic Product (GDP), as well as 6.2% of international employment rate.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, there are a large number of workers, statistically 2 billion (consisting of 60% employment), who significantly depend on international markets and indigenous knowledge.<sup>6</sup>

Most of the recent developments involve higher reliance on creative economic data, growing cultural trades in specific regions around the world, and politically shifting different cultures with sustainable development frameworks.<sup>8</sup> However, there is a definite lack of governmental management: international economic markets and the continuous digitalisation evolve way faster than protection mechanisms, thus leading to neglected financial challenges for communities especially vulnerable to the digital evolution.

## Major Countries and Organizations Involved

### United Nations

The UN is one of the most significant organizations that has directly approached the current cultural erosion and consequences from the rapid globalisation. For instance, it has developed relevant frameworks like Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for international cooperation for global protection.<sup>2</sup> Not only do they promote cultural resilience through regional programs on, for instance digital inclusion and economic diversification, but they also continue to monitor and take appropriate measures accordingly in the long term expansion of the issue.<sup>4</sup>

- Human rights and cultural diversity, 19 December 2001 (**A/RES/56/156**)
- Globalization and interdependence: culture and sustainable development, 17 December 2021 (**A/RES/76/214**)

### United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

UNESCO, a UN specialized agency, is one of the internationally-central organizations responsible for promoting global peace through measures such as legal frameworks, in this case, for the protection of languages, rituals, and cultural aspects of various regions worldwide. For instance, a program called International Fund for Cultural Diversity (IFCD) was established by UNESCO in 2010, providing monitoring systems and financial support toward vulnerable cultural sectors.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, it also contributes in a more global context through international campaigns such as International Mother Language Day, in order to cooperate with nations worldwide for the strengthening of public education.<sup>7</sup>

### Mexico

Mexico was one of the mostly contributory countries that played a critical role in shaping the 2003 Convention of Intangible Cultural Heritage from UNESCO.<sup>9</sup> Especially as a nation with a variety of

indigenous groups, and as a major leader in preserving indigenous cultures worldwide, it shows a strong international position in protecting and preserving indigenous traditions.

## France

France is known as a nation of strong promotion for cultural sovereignty, with its unique, structural cultural subsidies. Furthermore, as a key country pushing back against cultural homogenisation, it played a significant role in UNESCO's 2005 Convention on the protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions.<sup>1</sup>

## Japan

As one of the countries globally recognized for preserving its traditional arts and rituals, it is one of the most relevant nations directly influenced by the topic. In fact, it has also made contributions internationally: it has introduced the concept of Living Human Treasures (*Ningen Kokuhō*), where the government recognizes significant individuals from the country for successfully preserving Japan's cultural heritage.<sup>9</sup>

## Timeline of Events

Date	Description of Event
October 30th, 1947	General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), a legal treaty, was signed by 23 nations worldwide, in order to encourage global trade liberalisation.
November 16th, 1972	The World Heritage Convention was adopted by UNESCO, in order to protect existing national, cultural sites.
1980s	Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs)—a set of economic reforms by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank—began to expand internationally, with the purpose to restructure national economic systems.
January 1st, 1995	The World Trade Organization (WTO) was founded and replaced the GATT, being responsible for managing and facilitating international trade norms.
November 2nd, 2001	UNESCO adopted the Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity, recognizing the cultural diversity as a shared heritage of humanity.
October 17th, 2003	An Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) framework was established by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), insisting on the need to safeguard living traditions.
October 20th, 2005	Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions was adopted by UNESCO, strengthening cultural rights and protecting national firms against global standardisation.
2008	The United Nations (UN) first launched the Creative Economy Report,

analyzing the global economic significance of cultural and creative industries (CCIs) and detailing general economic trends.

September 25th, 2015      The UN first adopted Agenda 2030 and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), explicitly detailing different approaches required to strengthen global partnership.

## Previous Attempts to solve the Issue

Some previous efforts to address the cultural and economic pressures of globalisation have largely been focused on raising international awareness of the issue, encouraging national cooperations, and strengthening legal forces upon cultural rights.<sup>5</sup> Numerous agencies and systems under the UN have consistently shown efforts to urge governments worldwide to integrate cultural protection measures as national development strategies, while also making sure that all the circumstances are documented throughout, such as through monitoring systems. Moreover, organizations such as UNESCO focused on international campaigns promoting linguistic diversity and creativity-based economic development.<sup>7</sup> As a result, these attempts have positively contributed to a larger visibility and wider political acknowledgement of cultural vulnerability worldwide, while still leaving inevitable challenges regarding active participation from the vast majority of economic forces.

## Possible Solutions

A key to practical solution is to focus on strengthening cultural preservation while also developing economic resilience of traditional practices. For instance, a feasible solution is establishing an international funding system toward cultural heritage, where relevant resources could be collected for endangered cultural sites such as language programs and schools.<sup>7</sup> On the other hand, an economic approach could be through a low-cost legal tool that would discuss the property rights, to prevent any forms of misuse of cultural representations or traditional knowledge.<sup>5</sup> In order to do so, it is especially crucial to secure a stable economic foundation that actively supports various types of cultural practices globally.<sup>6</sup> Together therefore, such solutions touch both the cultural and economic dimensions of the issue by assisting local communities directly, so that they can continue to thrive.<sup>14</sup>

## Endnotes

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2. UNESCO, *Culture: At the Heart of Sustainable Development Goals*, UNESCO.
3. United Nations, *Globalization and Interdependence: Culture and Sustainable Development* (A/RES/76/214), 17 December 2021.
4. United Nations, *Documentation, Reports, Resolutions, Decisions, Meeting Records*, UN General Assembly archives.
5. United Nations, *Human Rights and Cultural Diversity* (A/RES/56/156), 19 December 2001.

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