

# MANILA PLATFORM FOR ACTION

## GENERAL PREAMBLE

**WE**, participants of the “**Manila SDGs ResiliArt Festival, Forum, and Workshops for Health, Well-Being, Peace, and Climate Justice**” under UNESCO patronage in support of the **Decade of Action** in the countdown in achieving **2030 Sustainable Development Goals** (UN-SDGs Agenda).

**RECALL** the objectives of the forum:

- 1) Manila SDGs Festival, Forum, and Workshop owes its origin to the long-standing efforts of Earthsavers DREAMS Ensemble, UNESCO Artist for Peace, under the direction of Cecilia Guidote-Alvarez, but established by the late Senator and Environment Secretary Heherson Álvarez, to launch in 2018 **the Global Peace and Climate Justice Movement linked to the SDGs, “Not by Force but by Art”** under the patronage of UNESCO and with support of the Senate and the Head of State hosted by the City of Manila. This was itself preceded by the 2017 Philippine Roadmap for the Paris Accord, held on 29-31 May 2017;
- 2) The Cultural Diplomatic event organized by the Philippine Center of the International Theatre Institute (ITI)/the Earthsavers Movement from 20<sup>th</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup> of May 2018 for the International Arts Education Week, elaborated a list of proposals, which were subsequently endorsed at the SSCC Cartagena Forum in November 2018 that served as foundation for the Cartagena Declaration on Art as a Tool for Peace toward Afro-Caribbean Integration and then at the Arts Planet Forum in COP at Katowice, Poland, in December 2018;
- 3) The Manila SDG event also showcases the effort of organizers to join the ResiliArt Movement initiated by UNESCO Director General, Mme. Audrey Azoulay; and,
- 4) The Manila event is also a contribution to the vision of a post-covid world, positioning culture as a “Vaccine against Pandemic.”

**ACKNOWLEDGE** the importance of modeling culture-based SDG techno-arts synergized best practices of the Republic of the Philippines jointly with select representation from the regions of Asia Pacific, Middle East-Africa (MEA), Caribbean-Latin America and Europe-America centering on the themes of Health and Well-Being, Peace and Social Justice, Emergency Climate Action with Biodiversity Protection, Sustainable Tourism and Inclusive Education towards economic recovery;

**EMPHASIZE** that given the volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous times we are living in, no sector or discipline can afford to work in isolation. Collaboration is needed, not only among nations but involving all sectors through public-private interfaith, interdisciplinary cross-cultural partnerships.

**RECOGNIZE** that the SDGs twinned with the Paris Accord constitute the vertebral column of the UN system must be effectively communicated in cultural symbols people understand popularizing scientific data to local governance, schools and communities to realize the UN SDGs 2030 Agenda as the United Nations observes **the International Year of Basic Sciences for Sustainable Development** and the **Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development and the Nelson Mandela Decade for Peace**.

**ACCORDINGLY**, we the delegates (cultural animateur, educators, scientists, parliamentarians, government officials and civil society) contributed their reflection, commentaries and suggestions for recommended action to address regional concerns and exemplify joint global action.

## ASIA-PACIFIC REGION

- 1) The Manila SDGs Event demonstrated the dynamic application of an inter-disciplinary synergized approach that can seed the concept of an SDGs ResiliArt Olympics for Peace/Emergency Climate Action disciplined response to pandemic to help fulfill the SDGs 2030 Agenda on a rotating basis among regions with host countries organizing an SDGs Cultural Forum/ Workshops/ Festival as profiled by the holistic approach in Manila.

Likewise, the Philippines as initially discussed with Department of Education (DepEd), can undertake a National SDGs-based Arts Festival in the same manner as activities promoting sports through its *Palarong Pambansa* (National Sports School Competitions) held annually.

- 2) The *Sining Gising* Television Program highlighting talents through broadcast outreach from schools by showcasing the best students reflecting social commitment in arts, theatre, expanding consciousness and pride of habitat, heritage, history, language, creative industries and values, lifelong learning of tolerance and respect for bio-cultural diversity, honesty and health protocols for well-being all of which would be a creative complement to curricular studies while encouraging youth participation in a reforestation of one billion bamboo tree program organized by the Religious Community of the Society of the Divine Word (SVD).

This national broadcast program being discussed through partnerships with DepEd with IBC 13 should include international liaison with other regions in the world to use arts to ingrain the concept of the global citizen as an alternative learning module, considering that the Philippines was a major initiator through the NCCA and the Philippine ITI Center of the UNESCO Resolution of Dia del Galeón with Spain and Mexico.

This connectivity of continents through the commemoration in October 8<sup>th</sup> of the historic route through a proposal of the Earthsavers UNESCO Artist for Peace should be revisited and reprised in relevant ways to sustain trade and cultural exchange with an appropriate understanding of the values of protecting the oceans as a carbon sink from pollution and deferring to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea that was adopted in 1982 (UNCLOS) to mitigate conflict and assure freedom of access to sea lanes as a cultural diplomatic initiative.

- 3) The integration and appreciation of indigenous heritage should be promoted, realizing the absence of materials about indigenous communities in the Philippines, now diminished to 110 groups that must be preserved. It is best to match through the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) 110 State Universities and Colleges, each of which would adopt a group and serve as a cultural bank of their heritage, its epic, rituals, history, their traditional knowledge that can be developed as a resource material to collectively engender an encyclopedia of Indigenous Peoples in the Philippines, encouraging communication and education students and teachers to utilize as curriculum materials and well-spring of inspiration from ancestral roots to new artistic routes of expression giving meaning to *Indigenous Lives Matter*.
- 4) Arts and crafts of indigenous peoples have been a focal interest of foreigners as witnessed in the tribal bazaar available at Fort Santiago, the Metropolitan Theater, and the Manila Hotel Events. Therefore, encouraging their creative industry would help them recover after the pandemic by providing a system of complementing the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), One-Town-One-Product (OTOP), with a platform of Indigenous Peoples Creative Arts Products (IPCAP) given a regular market venue where their traditional creative enterprise is accessible, mitigating the middle man role that reduces their income.

- 5) The demonstration by the Earthsavers in transformation of PWDs as “*Handicapable*” artists is proposed as a regular program of enhancing training for special education teachers with Techno Arts skills as a catalyst to provide creative learning and highlight the capabilities of PWDs and promote the placement and hiring of PWDs for equitable employment in local government offices to address needs of this vulnerable sector. Talents of PWDs should be highlighted in a global event with the same attention given to Paralympics of PWDs.
- 6) Conflicted areas not just in Asia but in all continents including the most recent incursion of Russia in Ukraine, re-echo and support the call of UN Secretary General António Guterres for a *Global Ceasefire* and Emergency Climate Action to respond to humanitarian needs of refugees and to fulfill with higher ambition agreements for decarbonization inscribed in the Paris Accord, not to exceed 1.5°C to guarantee the survival of small island and archipelagic states and prevent the tipping point of no return.
- 7) The effective role of broadcast theater arts in promoting religious and ethnic harmony as well as the involvement of inter-faith programs in the Philippines for healing trauma and inclusive cultural caregiving for marginalized groups as witnessed in the SDGs workshops, it is recommended that the Philippine Government and civil society continue a ten-country ASEAN approach engaging community of artists to conduct healing workshops especially for victims of war, climate catastrophes with mental discombobulation due to pandemic lockdowns.

It is recognized that intensive cultural work still has to be done to deepen the understanding and rapprochement among Christians, Muslims, Buddhists and indigenous peoples.

As a case study in the Philippines, a lot of biases, remnants of colonization and dictatorship experience have engendered discrimination, violence, and impunity that must be transitioned into respect and understanding so that the clash of civilization can be transformed into a harmony of civilization through multi-culturalism also promoted by UNESCO.

- 8) As 2021 marks the **450<sup>th</sup> Foundation Anniversary of Manila**, the **Quincentennial Commemoration of the Circumnavigation of the World** in the Philippines the **50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the First Third World Festival of the International Theater Institute (ITI)** has been now focused on the SDGs, the participants recommend that the Philippine Government take a lead role in reviving a strong continuing biennial festival celebration of Dia del Galeón starting in October 2023 rotating among countries that were impacted by the galleon routes particularly Spain, Mexico, Peru, Colombia, Ecuador and Brazil.
- 9) The twinning between cities from different continents strengthens understanding among peoples of different cultures, races, and religious beliefs through performance scenic and literary arts encouraged by the International Theater Institute commencing with the twinning arrangements being put in place between the Cities of Manila and Cartagena de Indias, facilitated by Earthsavers DREAMS Ensemble-UNESCO Artist for Peace and SSCC to promote sustainable tourism among the youth and between Cartagena and Accra, facilitated by the Colombian Embassy in Ghana and SSCC for African region.

We advocate further support to make arts and culture an inclusive and integral part of life experiences through concrete policies by governments worldwide that support artists and cultural actors and we commend the role of ITI-UNESCO in advocating for the protection and promotion of cultural expressions, regardless of age, gender, creed or ethnicity.

- 10) South-South cooperation needs to be strengthened at the academic level among countries of Asia with Latin America/Caribbean, Africa, and Asia;

The nucleus of tri-continental academic cooperation, as a result of the Manila SDG Event, amongst South America (through Universidad del Pacifico, Guayaquil, Ecuador), Africa (through African University College of Communication in Accra, Ghana) and Asia (through Philippine Normal University, in the Visayas-La Salle University and Aklan State University Northwest Mindanao State College of Science and Technology). It is anticipated that European universities like the Roma Tre University in Italy will join as partners with a view to forging academic exchanges and cooperation.

- 11) CENTRAL ASIA -The Khiva Process, an initiative of the Government of Uzbekistan, which decision-makers in its international cultural forum “Central Asia at the Crossroads of Civilizations” held in September 2021, in collaboration with UNESCO’s Social and Human Sciences Sector can help strengthen cooperation and multilateralism in Central Asia and beyond, providing knowledge on cultural heritage and assets management.

## **CARIBBEAN-LATIN AMERICA**

- 1) The building of the Transatlantic Slavery Museum in Barbados can play a role in helping small island developing states (SIDS), like those in the Caribbean and the Pacific, to pool their sovereignty and resources, despite limitations of size and hard power to focus on the manifold existential threats that they face, stemming from global warming caused climate catastrophes.

The Central American integration and policies on strengthening SDGs undertaken by Misión Presidencial, Fundación Esquipulas and the Central American Integration System (SICA), with special emphasis on the needs of the indigenous population is appreciated.

- 2) ASPA (Summit of South American-Arab Countries) mechanism is important for its cultural component to strengthen peace and environmental education.

The understanding between the Ibero-American and the Arab world can be improved through the medium of common languages available as online courses through a consortium to teach Spanish in the Arab world and the Arabic language in Latin America, through existing Language Centers and Universities. The aim is to coordinate and publicize the courses to facilitate the exchange of students through scholarship, the publication of textbooks for teaching those languages, and the translation of literature masterpieces as tools for learning languages (with DVDS and grammar and vocabulary explanations)

- 3) The efforts being made in Ecuador through the Universidad del Pacifico in Guayaquil, and the creation of “Our Pacific Ocean Program,” (Nuestro Oceano Pacifico) to improve the knowledge on the importance of oceans in general, and maritime areas in Ecuador and in Galapagos Islands in particular.

We see this new reserve as the product of a process of dialogue with the artisanal and industrial fishing sectors that have underscored the importance of expanding the marine reserve and the proposed financial mechanism that will allow building an institutional framework to achieve the perpetuation of the marine reserve and add it to most of 130,000 square kilometers, declared by UNESCO (1986 & 1998) linking it to the Tubbataha Reef, a UNESCO Heritage Site in the Philippines.

The efforts of Ecuador, Colombia, Costa Rica, and Panama are highlighted for the signing of the Agreement of the Marine Corridor of the Eastern Tropical Pacific (06/08/2011) and its Complementary Agreement (11/02/2021), as their commitment to the development of effective activities in the region for the care of the Pacific Ocean, in the Eastern Tropical Marine Corridor.

- 4) The prioritization of Central America in the global action frameworks for youth, women, indigenous peoples and the Afro-descendant population is encouraged.

## ARAB-AFRICA

- 1) The Government of Ghana is commended and urged for its policy of “Year of Return” in 2019 and “Beyond the Return” in 2021, allowing people of African descent to return to their roots in Africa, gets integrated into African society and, should they choose to do so, invests in the country (and the continent).

The initiative of the European Cultural Parliament, in conjunction with the SSCC for the African region in Ghana, with the support of the Colombian Ambassador to 18 West African countries can develop programs and projects on culture as a tool to combat terrorism, with special emphasis on the position of women and girls.

The SSCC and ITI in Ghana production of the docu-fiction, *Ulysses from Ghana*, based on the play, *Slaves*, by Mohamed Abdallah, which supports the Black Lives Matter Movement, the fight against racism, and other forms of discrimination, was given an initial viewing in Manila with the Film Development Council twinned with a Philippines heritage-based animation written by Rey dela Cruz. Similar programs in other parts of South America, Africa, Middle East and Asia, in conjunction with the Philippine and Colombian Centers of ITI to focus on *Indigenous Peoples Lives Matter and Human Rights* can be undertaken.

- 2) The decision of the German government to invest several billion euros into projects in Namibia which would benefit descendants of the affected tribes is commended as well as its policy to repatriate Benin bronzes looted during the siege of Benin, and the declaration by the Smithsonian Institute of African Art, Metropolitan Museum of Art, and Universities of Cambridge and Aberdeen to follow suit is appreciated.
- 3) The Middle East Green Initiative of Saudi Arabia, whereby 50 billion trees are due to be planted: 10 billion in Saudi Arabia and further 40 billion in other Middle Eastern countries at the cost of USD \$ 68.6 billion, of which Saudi Arabia will be contributing USD \$ 10.3 billion. This will restore an area equivalent to 200 million hectares of degraded land, reducing 2.5% of global carbon levels, and contribute to reducing carbon emissions resulting from hydrocarbon production in the region by more than 60%.
- 4) The recent decision of the French President Emmanuel Macron to recognize France’s responsibility for events in Rwanda subsequently led to genocide and the mass killings of over 800,000 Tutsi and moderate Hutus.
- 5) The efforts of Fundación Esquipulas and Central American Integration System (SICA) to improve conditions in the lives of the Afro-descendant population in Central America are welcomed as well as programs which promote closer links between Africans and their diaspora, the result of transatlantic trade, in the Americas, and also with black populations in Asia, such as the Siddi ethnic group in India, and the Aetas in the Philippines who have lived for tens of thousands of years in Luzon.
- 6) The Global Trauma project, with special emphasis on Africa is recommended to promote psycho-education and social justice approach since mental health impacts physical, emotional, spiritual, behavioral, relational, and financial realms;
- 7) The type of practice behind the project Tfanen-Tunisie Creative endorsed by UN as SDG good practices as a success story on good SDG implementation is welcomed as well as publications such as *The Missing Pillar*, exploring the place of culture in the SDGs. Arab world also work towards meeting the aspirations of the youth by promoting creative industries for rapid and inclusive job creation for youth in arts in education can develop critical thinking, build resilience to prejudiced and intolerant narratives and awareness of global issues can serve as an important tool towards peaceful conflict resolution, to advance social cohesion in refugee host communities and alleviate perceptions of stereotypes.

## **EUROPE**

- 1) The Tree of Peace, by Hedva Ser, UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador for Cultural Diplomacy, as a symbol of peace of UNESCO which is donated by UNESCO Director General to political and religious leaders worldwide.
- 2) **The ART's PLANET**, an international citizen and artistic initiative, set up more than 10 years ago now by ENERGIES 2050 and its international partners in particular the Earthsavers' SDGs initiative should continue organizing international artistic contests and exhibitions in the least developing countries to join forces with the movement by advocating for concrete pillars on art and culture in the climate negotiation process in COP events..

### **3) SERBIA AND KOSOVO**

Tensions between Serbia and Kosovo represent one of the most important causes of volatility in Western Balkans and in Europe generally;

**THEREFORE**, it is recommended that the civil society in Serbia and Kosovo continue with their efforts to promote peace, tolerance, stability, and reconciliation between Serbs and Albanians and in the Western Balkans region through cultural diplomacy and artistic collaboration.

### **4) TOWARDS A WORLDWIDE “ONE HEALTH” APPROACH**

A worldwide “One Health” approach in order to protect and build a more sustainable and healthier world should design and implement programs, policies, legislation, and research, in which multiple sectors communicate and work together to achieve better public health outcomes and tackle health inequalities.

An International Treaty on Pandemics under the World Health Organization (WHO) oversight as a main long term international legal binding framework, with the aim to tackle and overcome this global health crisis and prepare us for future ones could contribute to prevent pandemics and build global resilience. Trans-national and cross-border forms of cooperation will address challenges using effective culture-based communications.

## **RESOLUTION OF THANKS**

A resolution of thanks to the UNESCO leadership for its support for the Earthsavers Movement whose cultural program of training and presentation focused on helping stop violence against mankind and Mother Earth through various Director Generals since 1988:

- **UNESCO Director-General Federico Mayor** in providing endorsement of the Philippine hosted conference/festival of Traditional and Indigenous Cultures in 1998 in the Philippines and support for the Earthsavers participation in the Habitat Forum in Turkey.
- **UNESCO Director-General Koitchiro Matsuura** who designated the Earthsavers DREAMS Ensemble as **UNESCO Artist for Peace** in 2003.
- **UNESCO Director-General Irina Bokova** for inaugurating Earthsavers Ensemble/Academy as a DREAM Center under a joint UNESCO Felissisimo grant in 2010 in Manila.
- **UNESCO Director-General Audrey Azoulay** for the patronage in 2018 to launch the Global Movement for Peace and Climate Justice linked to the SDGs that produced the Manila Declaration fulfilling the **SDGs ResiliArt Earth-saving Festival-Forum and Workshops** that was delayed due to the pandemic, originally scheduled on May 2020 that got postponed but was executed December 1-10 2021. Again, suspended due to Omicron spread but finally completed from February to April 2022 with the assistance of the Office of the Goodwill Ambassadors/Artists for Peace headed by **Assistant Director-General, Mr. Firmin Edouard Matoko**.

Appreciation also expressed for all the partners of organizers in government and civic society as well as international NGOs including the Secretariat and the Production Staff.

**PARTNERS:**

Department of Education (DepEd)  
Department of Tourism (DOT)  
Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG)  
Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH)  
Department of Transportation (DOTr)  
National Council on Disability Affairs (NCDA)  
Department of Foreign Affairs: UNIO, UNACOM, Consular Office  
The National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA)  
Bureau of Immigration  
Film Development Council of the Philippines (FDCP)  
Presidential Communications Operations Office (PCOO)  
National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP)  
National Commission on Muslim Filipinos (NCMF)

**NON- GOVERNMENT:**

South South Cooperation Council (SSCC)  
Philippine Association of Publishers Inc. (PAPI)  
Kapisanan ng mga Brodkaster ng Pilipinas (KBP)  
Asia Pacific Performing Arts Network (APPAN)  
Arts Planet  
Climate Institute  
Population Media Center  
OCEANA

**HOST:**

The City of Manila  
Mayor Francisco "Isko" Domagoso

**HOSPITALITY:**

The Manila Hotel  
Basilio C. Yap, Chairman

**FESTIVAL VENUE:**

National Commission for Culture and the Arts / The Metropolitan Theater  
The Intramuros Administration - Fort Santiago "*Theater in the Ruins*"

**FORUM:**

Philippine Normal University (PNU)  
Dr. Bert Tuga, President

**MEDIA ASSISTANCE:**

DZRH-Radyo Balintataw  
ABS-CBN "SAKTO" Morning Show  
Intercontinental Broadcasting Corporation (IBC13)  
The Manila Times

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Committee on Culture and Education  
Committee on Environment, Natural Resources & Climate Change  
Committee on Foreign Relation  
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