

Futures Dialogues

Protecting and Promoting Cultural and Linguistic Diversity in the Digital Environment

Date and time: Wednesday 17 December 2025, 14:00 to 15:30 (Paris time)
Languages: English and French
Format: Zoom meeting – [Please click here to register](#)

The protection and promotion of cultural and linguistic diversity in the digital environment is essential to building inclusive knowledge societies. At a time when digital technologies, including artificial intelligence, tend to standardize content and amplify dominant productions – often at the expense of minority cultures, local languages and Indigenous expressions – it is urgent to engage in dialogue to ensure the discoverability, representation and sustainability of all forms of cultural expression, in line with UNESCO's principles of diversity, equity and openness.

The United Nations [Global Digital Compact](#) (2024) affirms that “cooperation will promote digital accessibility for all and support linguistic and cultural diversity in the digital space”.

For over twenty years, UNESCO has advanced multilingualism in the digital environment through the [2003 Recommendation](#) concerning the Promotion and Use of Multilingualism and Universal Access to Cyberspace, which calls for technological solutions to strengthen linguistic diversity online. A [Global Roadmap](#) for Linguistic Diversity in the Digital Era has been developed to support Member States in this endeavour.

As lead agency for the implementation of the [Indigenous Languages Decade \(2022-2032\)](#), UNESCO promotes the use of a wide range of languages in cyberspace. Furthermore, the [UNESCO World Atlas of Languages](#), an interactive online tool documenting the world's languages within their sociocultural and sociopolitical contexts, provides a global overview of linguistic vitality and endangerment.

The [2005 Convention](#) on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions complements this normative framework, recalling in its Preamble that linguistic diversity is a fundamental component of cultural diversity.

Digital challenges, particularly those related to the linguistic diversity of cultural content online, prompted the Parties to the 2005 Convention to establish in 2023 a [Reflection Group](#) on the Diversity of Cultural Expressions in the Digital Environment. The Group presented several [recommendations](#) which underlined that major languages, such as English, remain overwhelmingly predominant on digital platforms. It also stressed the need for Member States to adopt context-specific strategies to ensure the discoverability of cultural content in a diversity of languages. Finally, while AI systems and the development of large language models

(LLMs) now support cultural professionals in translation, subtitling and dubbing, the Group highlighted the risks these technologies pose, such as the dilution of cultural meaning and the loss of authenticity in creative works.

Moreover, the MONDIACULT 2025 [Outcome Document](#), embodying the commitment of ministers of culture, reaffirms the importance and necessity of “Advancing AI to foster human creativity and support the creation, discoverability, availability, accessibility, cultural preservation, and exchange of diverse and multilingual cultural content (...)”.

The report ‘[Artificial Intelligence and Creativity](#)’ of the United Nations Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural rights, examined during the 80th session of the United Nations General Assembly in October 2025, clearly notes the negative impacts of AI on the linguistic domain.

[Futures Dialogues](#), organized by the Future of Learning and Innovation Division, aim to identify, analyze and debate emerging challenges and trends relevant to UNESCO’s mandate, in this case, the challenge of protecting and promoting cultural and linguistic diversity in the digital environment. The webinar is organized in collaboration with UNESCO’s Culture Sector.

Participants include members of UNESCO Chairs and UNITWIN Networks, government officials, researchers and civil society organizations. Together, they will reflect on key issues and trends, and their implications for the future of education, knowledge, culture and humanity.

Provisional Programme

Protecting and promoting cultural and linguistic diversity in the digital environment Wednesday, 17 December 2025, Online 14 :00 – 15:30 (Paris time)	
14:00-14:10	Welcoming remarks Sobhi Tawil , Director, Futures of Learning and Innovation Division, Education Sector, UNESCO Context Toussaint Tiendrebeogo , Chief, Diversity of Cultural Expressions Entity, Culture Sector, UNESCO
14:10--14:50	Panel discussion Moderator: Destiny Tchéhouali , UNESCO Chair in Communication and Technologies for Development, Université du Québec à Montréal, Canada <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Véronique Guèvremont, UNESCO Chair on the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, Laval University, Canada • Patrick Mouguiama-Daouda, Coordinator, “Bantuphonie” UNITWIN Network, Omar Bongo University, Gabon • Cornelius Holtorf, UNESCO Chair on Heritage Futures, Linnaeus University, Sweden (tbc) • Vayia Karaiskou, UNESCO Chair on Visual Anticipation and Futures Literacy towards Visual Literacy, Open University of Cyprus, Cyprus (tbc)
14:50-15:20	Discussion Moderator: Destiny Tchéhouali , UNESCO Chair in Communication and Technologies for Development, Université du Québec à Montréal, Canada
15:20-15:25	Closing reflections Toussaint Tiendrebeogo , Chief, Diversity of Cultural Expressions Entity, Culture Sector, UNESCO
15:25-15:30	Final remarks and next steps Keith Holmes , Research Coordinator / UNITWIN, Division for the Futures of Education and Innovation, UNESCO

** [Register here](#) **