

MANY MUSICS

AN IMC ACTION PROGRAMME PROMOTING MUSICAL DIVERSITY

**This document provides the conceptual framework
for the Many Musics Action Programme (MMAP).**

1. WHAT IS *THE MANY MUSICS ACTION PROGRAMME*?

The *Many Musics Action Programme* (MMAP) is an initiative of the IMC aimed at sustaining and enhancing musical diversity in the changing world of the 21st century. The initiative is conceived as a process and a programme of action to advocate the empowerment and freedom of peoples, communities and individuals to create, express, use, practice, evolve, share and protect their own music as well as appreciate and celebrate the rich musical heritage of the world.

The IMC shall build the programme on the work of its constituency. The programme shall develop synergistic approaches and strategies that will provide opportunities for, and address the needs in, sustaining and enhancing musical diversity. The IMC is committed to supporting efforts to increase the awareness for musical diversity, as well as to offer expertise and advice.

2. WHAT IS *MUSICAL DIVERSITY* AND WHAT IS ITS VALUE?

It is a universal human right to make and have ones own music. Each community responds in its own way to this right, and creates a music which expresses its own identity.

The result is a world filled with musical diversity.

Musical diversity has value:

- To each community that expresses its identity in music
- To others for whom it provides a world-wide resource for human interaction across cultural borders, inter-cultural understanding, respect between peoples and peace.

The IMC strongly believes that understanding and appreciating the existence of different musics contributes to *respect* for other people. Every music has its owners, fellow human beings for whom a particular music is a vital part of their life and identity. Furthermore an appreciation of diversity in music opens an important gateway to *human interaction* across cultural borders.

It has often been said that music is a *universal language*. The IMC argues that this perspective could prevent diversity, and instead firmly asserts that music is a *universal phenomenon*, a vehicle for expression and communication used by all peoples in the world in the past as well as in the present. But, by the same token that communities of people have developed different verbal languages through which to communicate what is relevant and important to them, they have also developed musical languages that suit their particular needs for expression and communication.

In brief, diversity, and the appreciation of diversity – in music as elsewhere – are prerequisites for the continuing healthy growth of the human species.

3. HOW IS MUSICAL DIVERSITY VIEWED WITHIN THE BROADER CONTEXT OF CULTURAL DIVERSITY?

Like cultural diversity, musical diversity is closely linked to notions of identity, pluralism, human rights and freedom, creativity, the common heritage of humanity and sustainable development. Musical diversity can be understood as the freedom for people to celebrate, engage, fully participate in and actively contribute to the development of the musical experiences of their choice, and for communities to gain exposure to and insight from diverse musics of the world.

While we know that *cultural freedom* is a fundamental prerequisite for *human dignity*, it is not self-evident in every society. Cultural freedom must be *obtained*, and can be obtained only through education, access to information, opportunities to create and participate, communal support and sometimes protection – in other words by empowering people to make and assert their own cultural identity through their specific traditional and creative expressions.

No one will dispute that creativity is a fundamental prerequisite for the development of the human culture in a broad sense. Albeit slowly, there seems to be a growing appreciation of the fact that *human creativity* is nurtured and hence dependent upon challenges from that which is *different* and *unexplored*. It is diversity which is the source of these challenges. We who live today, responsible as we are for the culture we pass on to the next generations, must nurture and sustain human creativity in the context of cultural diversity.

There is a growing awareness of the importance of diversity. For quite some time now the human race has understood, and taken consequence of the fact, that the continuing strength of any species is dependent upon its genetic/biological diversity. However, at the same time strong forces – political and commercial – counteract the growth of cultural diversity, and thus contribute to imposing uniformity. IMC is well aware of the *dangers* of cultural uniformity: uniformity across cultures threatens local identity, just as absolute uniformity within a culture threatens individual identity.

4. WHY AN IMC ACTION PROGRAMME?

The IMC wants, through its *Many Musics Action Programme*, to join forces with other major initiatives to support communities in their endeavour to set the stage for cultural diversity. The IMC will obviously focus on music as part of culture.

The IMC cannot create musical diversity anywhere, but it can contribute to the *empowerment* of those who are the main players in exercising and creating diversity in music in any society: *artists, musical organisations and institutions, governments* and other decision-making bodies, and indeed *societies and communities at large* – all those who possess and are responsible for their own musical cultures.

The following are key conditions in a society where musical freedom is practised and can flourish:

- Unlimited opportunities for people to create, perform, and interact with others in music and through music.
- Open-mindedness by musical artists and their empowerment to share it.
- Valuation and support by every community for its own musical heritage and practice.
- Support and infrastructure as provided by society to promote diverse musical creation, performance, education, documentation, preservation, etc.
- Responsibility on the part of societies for sustaining, protecting and enhancing local musics.
- Respect and appreciation for artistic works in ways that include proper remuneration.
- Educational programmes which foster awareness of the multitude of musics in the world, develop respect for and appreciation of the fact that different cultures have different musics, and offer direct knowledge on several musical cultures.
- Free interchange of musics with other nations and societies and a liberal cultural market free of imposed quotas and unfair subsidies.

All of the above imply both freedom and responsibility.

Musical freedom is dependent on action on several levels. Many aspects need to be dealt with and solved on a *national* level - a sharing of responsibility between several levels of government and social structures within a nation-state. Other aspects must be handled between nation-states and their cultural and/or musical agencies through *international* actions, agreements and co-operation.

The *Many Musics Action Programme* seeks to identify old and new initiatives as well as implement or help implement specific projects in line with the above responsibility to ensure the exercise of freedom within the global musical community.

5. WHAT DOES THE INITIATIVE SEEK TO DO?

The *Many Musics Action Programme* of the IMC shall assume a leading role in sustaining and enhancing musical diversity in the world through:

- Review of, and information gathering and dissemination on, the state and practice of musical diversity in the world.
- Documentation and sharing of best practices vis a vis researches and studies related to the musical cultures of the world.
- Encouragement and assistance to IMC members and partners in designing, developing and implementing related projects, including workshops and training programmes.
- Comprehensive evaluation of musical diversity projects within and outside the purview of the Many Musics Programme.
- Advocacy for policies and resources to promote, sustain and enhance musical diversity.
- Initiation of debates and creation of fora for continued dialogue, professional networking and knowledge sharing among stakeholders on the music diversity issue.

6. WHAT ARE THE *PROBLEMS* THAT MUST BE ADDRESSED?

In a world filled with different musics, is there any need for purposive intervention?

The IMC believes and maintains that there is hardly any society in the world which sets the stage for musical freedom as indicated above. In very many societies the situation may be far from acceptable. It is also obvious that some of the international treaties set up to cater to specific interests in international trade, are counter-productive in relation to musical diversity in the cultural arena.

In general, MMAP maintains that:

Standardisation and the demand for uniformity in the practice and consumption of musics in different social environments pose grave danger to the rich diversity of musical traditions of the world.

While the nature of evolution causes some things to disappear or become extinct, others could survive and evolve. If the social environment or social mores supporting a music, change or disappear, the music may need to find a place in a new or different environment to survive. This may happen either “naturally” or by targeted intervention.

By way of illustration, some solutions can be suggested as:

- Renewing respect and esteem to an indigenous music in its home setting by providing opportunities for the music to be part of prestigious circumstances beyond ordinary village/regional activities.
- Giving honour to master artists, whether representing classical, folk, popular, or village music traditions, supporting their activities and enlisting their skills in teaching in both formal and non-formal education.
- Bringing financial viability as well as awareness and broader acceptance of a music by introducing it to a wider market and audiences— urban, regional, international.

The following are some more specific indications of the type of problems and issues that need to be addressed:

a) Global culture industries leave little room for local musics.

For instance:

- The culture industries market across media, creating powerful images that local musics cannot possibly match.
- International marketing may impose their own values on local musicians that leave them very little choice in asserting their own identity.

b) The status of musicians is under threat.

For instance:

- Loss of status in societies as traditional musics lose their support from the community
- Collapse of music trade union strength as employers can opt out of providing musical entertainment in favour of other possibilities from a large menu of profit-making entertainments.

c) Technology is replacing traditional forms of music making, and consumption is replacing participation.

For instance:

- Film scores are now created and realised on computer, displacing studio musicians.
- Ensembles in popular music are replaced by a soloist with computerised accompaniment.
- Acoustic performance is replaced by amplified performance or electronically generated music.
- Local, traditional musics are unfairly disadvantaged and supplanted by other musics in the broadcast and recording media.
- The production of traditional musical instruments according to traditional methods and indigenous technology is threatened by their artificial replication on electronic instruments, or their mass production to cater to the tourist trade.

d) Local music practice is sometimes treated with social prejudice.

For instance:

- A local rock music may be practised by school drop-outs.
- A local music may have a political message which challenges attitudes of those in power in both existing political governance as well as business and industry.
- Contemporary music and innovative musical expressions are relevant only to intellectual or academic circles.

e) State curricula for education may advantage internationally disseminated musics over local ones.

For instance:

- State curricula are not musical-diversity oriented. An old-fashion favouring of Western 'classical' music may occur in the classroom or in the teacher training institution.

- The music teacher focuses on international popular music to gain pupils' attention and ignores music in the local community.
- Local music practitioners as well as teachers with expertise in non-western musics are prejudiced in the employment of teachers in state school systems.

f) Local musics may have a tradition of learning and of practice which cannot easily be accommodated within formal education.

For instance:

- Certain songs may only be sung in a particular environment.
- The music only makes sense when accompanied by dancing which requires specialised teaching and space.
- Music operates as part of ritual which cannot be accommodated in the school.

g) Labour-intensive forms such as 19th century orchestral music are not financially viable in the 21st century unless subsidised. In many parts of the world the fashion for subsidy is diminishing.

Current market philosophies tend to value products only in terms of their commercial appeal:

- State subsidies for orchestras and opera houses seem to be less socially acceptable than in previous times.
- As less state funding is available, and alternative funding seems to be lacking, so the range of challenging musical experiences in the community is diminished.

h) International trade liberalisation treaties threaten governments' rights to give preferential support to local cultures.

- Those who advocate free trade seek the same privileges for imported products as locally made products seem to enjoy.
- Common devices for supporting local culture which could be threatened by international free trade treaties include:
 - subsidies, or limits on the access to subsidies by foreigners
 - local content quotas e.g. on radio or television
 - limitations on foreign ownership of local cultural entities, e.g. broadcasting systems, press, film distributors
 - government ownership of local entities such as e.g. broadcasting systems
 - co-production treaties with selected foreign entities (film)
 - immigration treaties to ensure some preference to local artists
 - tax credit systems that favour local over foreign artists or entities.

7. WHAT WILL THE IMC ACHIEVE THROUGH THE MMAP?

The IMC's aim is to make an impact on the situation for music in societies around the world through its *Many Musics Action Programme*, and to support and influence the main stakeholders in the music life of any society:

- artists
- musical institutions
- governments and other decision-making bodies
- the general public.

The IMC will address three areas of cultural policy:

- local/national cultural policies with special emphasis on the means applied for promoting musical diversity on national, local and community levels
- local/national educational policies with special emphasis on the means applied for giving young people the best possible opportunities to appreciate and celebrate musical diversity
- international treaties and agreements that influence the cultural situation on national and local levels.

It is the aim of the IMC to

- empower musical artists in all cultures to sustain and enhance their musics
- empower and assist music educators in all cultures to celebrate the musics of their own culture as well as musical diversity
- inspire and empower communities to protect, share and develop their musical cultures
- inspire and assist musical institutions to increase awareness with regard to musical diversity and the demands musical diversity put upon the infrastructure of a culture
- influence, inspire and assist governments in designing their cultural and educational policies to promote musical diversity
- influence decision-makers on the international level to an awareness and appreciation of the sensitive and important grey zone between music as a commodity and music as a powerful and equally fragile vehicle for communication between people and peoples.

The IMC believes these aims can be achieved through the following means:

- production and dissemination of powerful statements and advocacy materials for IMC members and other influential organisations world-wide to use
- production and dissemination to decision-makers of examples of ideal conditions and best practices regarding solutions to the various issues related to musical diversity
- active and targeted participation at conferences, seminars, meetings and other gatherings where cultural and educational policies are being discussed and developed
- production of information and educational materials by local experts and masters on their own musical cultures, and making such materials available and accessible internationally
- developing systems/vehicles for musicians all over the world to be promoted and be known and appreciated in the world cultural market
- initiating and supporting international actions on behalf of musical diversity
- targeted co-operation with other organisations working toward similar aims.

8. HOW WILL THE MMAP BE IMPLEMENTED?

The IMC Executive Committee has appointed a Steering Committee for the programme.

The IMC and the Many Musics Steering Committee are highly aware that the success of the MMAP is dependent upon co-operation on many levels, in particular the following:

- *Firstly*, the MMAP will co-operate and take advantage of projects, initiatives and achievements already in existence, within the IMC family as well as outside.
- *Secondly*, interaction will be established between the MMAP as a global concern and all IMC members – national IMC committees as well as international organisations. Consequently, all IMC members will be encouraged to put musical diversity on their agendas for two reasons: to influence and support the work at the MMAP level, and to take advantage of the results of the MMAP work on the national level or within the various fields of interest.
- *Thirdly*, the MMAP will seek partners in a variety of directions: in organisations with agendas compatible to that of the IMC, in national governments, in foundations and other structures established with cultural and educational objectives, and in corporations and businesses with an awareness of the importance of the future cultural and educational landscape.

This document is a slightly revised version (December 2002) of the document endorsed by the IMC Executive Committee in Berlin in July 2002. Its source is the IMC programme document *Music in a Globalised World: Sustaining and Enhancing Musical Diversity. An Action Programme*, approved by the IMC General Assembly in Tokyo, October 2001.