



PRESS RELEASE
Arts, Culture and Sustainability:
Building Synergies between Asia and Europe

Alongside UNFCCC COP15

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Danish Cultural Institute, Copenhagen, Denmark

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Cultural leaders reaffirm their engagement with environmental sustainability

Leading cultural leaders from Asia and Europe call for self-reflective practices and trans-disciplinary collaborations to address environmental sustainability

On 6 and 7 December 2009, a distinguished group of cultural leaders from Asia and Europe came together in Copenhagen to discuss their vision in addressing challenges of environmental sustainability alongside the UNFCCC COP15.

This exceptional two-day meeting was an unique opportunity to broaden the dialogue on sustainable development and to engage a wide range of cultural practitioners against the backdrop of UN climate talks. Participants included Spain's Rosina Gomez-Baeza Tinture, Director of the first Architecture, Art and Landscape Biennial of the Canaries, Germany's Bernd M. Scherer, Director of Haus der Kulturen der Welt (House of World Cultures) in Berlin, Slovenia's leading new media artist Marko Peljhan, and Thailand's Dr. Singh Intrachooto, considered a pioneer of ecological design in his country. They were joined by artists from both regions including theatre director Ong Keng Sen from Singapore, Maria-Rosalie Zerrudo from the Philippines and Finland's well known artist Tea Makipaa.

The group emphasised that the arts and cultural sector can provide alternative narratives and perspectives in the global dialogue on environment and stressed the importance of holistic approaches that foreground the human dimension of social development and address complex questions of economic justice. It also assured the cultural sector's potential for engagement and closer cooperation with other partners towards achieving this goal.

The outcome of this dialogue resulted in a Discussion Paper which will be published in electronic format in 2010, and which will eventually lead to a conference and a series of policy inputs in preparation for the 8th Asia- Europe Meeting (ASEM) Summit in Belgium in October 2010.

The event was promoted by the **Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF)** with the support of the Danish Cultural Institute, the Khoj International Artists' Association (New Delhi, India) and the International Network of Contemporary Performing Arts (IETM). It is part of ASEF's Connect2Culture programme - a three-year initiative that explores the connections between arts, culture and environmental issues - launched in conjunction with the 7th Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) Summit of Heads of State and Government (Beijing, 2008) .

.More information and reports of Connect2Culture are available at
http://www.asef.org/index.php?option=com_programme&task=view&id=43&Itemid=162

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The Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF) promotes greater mutual understanding between Asia and Europe through intellectual, cultural and people-to-people exchanges. Through ASEF, civil society concerns are included as a vital component of deliberations of the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM). ASEF was established in February 1997 by the participating governments of ASEM. Since then, ASEF has implemented over 350 projects, engaging over 15,000 direct participants as well as reaching out to a much wider audience in Asia and Europe. www.asef.org

The Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) now brings together 43 member states (Austria, Belgium, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Cambodia, China, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Indonesia, India, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Korea, Laos, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Malta, Mongolia, Myanmar, the Netherlands, Pakistan, the Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Thailand, United Kingdom, Vietnam) plus the European Commission and the ASEAN Secretariat. www.aseminfoboard.org



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