



Research Unit
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G20 Series #100

India's G20 Presidency

G20 Culture Ministers' Meeting

(Varanasi– August 26, 2023)

(Ministry of Information & Broadcasting)

August 30, 2023

"We in India are very proud of our eternal and diverse culture. We also attach great value to our Intangible Cultural Heritage."

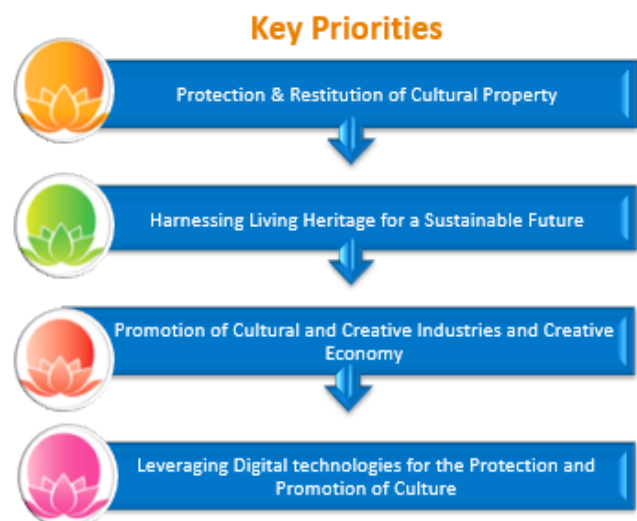
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi

The G20 Culture Ministers' Meeting, under India's Presidency, was held in Varanasi on August 26, 2023. The Ministers of Culture and dignitaries from G20 members and invitee countries attended the meeting along with representatives from international organizations.

The Culture Ministers' met for the first time on the sidelines of the G20 in 2020, under the Saudi Arabian Presidency. In 2021, Culture was formalised as a Working Group during the Italian Presidency, leading to the inaugural G20 Culture Ministers' Meeting and the adoption of the 'Rome Culture Ministers' Declaration'. The 'Bali Declaration' of 2022 under the Indonesian presidency further stressed the role of culture in sustainable development. In Varanasi, under the Indian G20 Presidency, was the fourth time that the Culture Ministers of the G20 members and invitee countries met.

Under the aegis of the Ministry of Culture, the G20 Culture Working Group (CWG) under India's Presidency engaged in shaping tangible action-oriented outcomes for the four priority areas articulated by India's CWG. The Culture Ministers' meeting was building upon the success of the four Culture Working Group Meetings as well as the four Global Thematic Webinars that aimed to arrive at actionable outcomes while positioning culture at the heart of policy-making. The following CWG Meetings have been held:

- ❖ 1st Culture Working Group Meeting in Khajuraho, February 22-25, 2023
- ❖ 2nd Culture Working Group Meeting in Bhubaneswar, May 15-17, 2023
- ❖ 3rd Culture Working Group Meeting in Hampi, July 9-12, 2023
- ❖ 4th Culture Working Group Meeting in Varanasi, August 24-25, 2023



The Culture Ministers' Meeting was attended by the Union Minister for Culture, Tourism, and DoNER Shri G Kishan Reddy; the Minister of State (MoS) for Law & Justice (independent charge), Culture & Parliamentary Affairs Shri Arjun Ram Meghal; MoS for Culture and External Affairs Smt Meenakshi Lekhi; and the Secretary, Ministry of Culture Shri Govind Mohan.



The Meeting began with a [video message](#) from the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi. The Prime Minister welcomed the dignitaries to Varanasi, also known as Kashi, and expressed delight that the G20 Culture Ministers' Meeting is taking place here as the city is one of the oldest living cities. *“Kashi is known to be a treasure chest of knowledge, duty and truth and it is indeed the cultural and spiritual capital of India”*, the Prime Minister remarked.

Highlighting the inherent potential of culture to unite and enable us to understand diverse backgrounds and perspectives, the Prime Minister said that the work of the G20 Culture Ministers Group holds immense significance for entire humanity. *“We in India are very proud of our eternal and diverse culture. We also attach great value to our intangible cultural heritage”*, the Prime Minister said as he underlined that India has been working hard to preserve and revitalize its heritage sites.



Speaking about the important issue of restitution of cultural property, the Prime Minister welcomed the efforts of the working group and said that tangible heritage is not only of material value but it is also the history and identity of a nation.

Noting that technology is an important ally in celebrating culture, the Prime Minister mentioned India's [National Digital District Repository](#) which is helping rediscover the stories of freedom struggle. He emphasized India's usage of technology to ensure better preservation of its cultural landmarks while also making places of cultural importance more tourist-friendly.

Concluding the address, the Prime Minister expressed delight that the G20 Culture Ministers' working group has launched the [‘Culture Unites All’](#) campaign which encapsulates the spirit

of *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam* - **One Earth, One Family, One Future**. He also commended their pivotal role in shaping a G20 Action Plan with tangible outcomes. *“Your work reflects the importance of the four Cs - Culture, Creativity, Commerce and Collaboration. It will enable us to harness the power of culture to build a compassionate, inclusive, and peaceful future”*, the Prime Minister concluded.

This was followed by the welcome remarks by the Union Minister for Culture, Tourism, and DoNER, Shri G Kishan Reddy. In his remarks, Shri G Kishan Reddy shared, *“Under India's Presidency, we have tried to capture the spirit of our collective vision and commitment to progress together. Through our combined wisdom and shared responsibility, we can transform the challenges that lie before us into opportunities, raising the profile of culture within our public policies while consolidating the positioning of culture as an engine for sustainable and inclusive development.”*



The **G20 Culture Ministers agreed to harness the transformative power of culture** to address today's multifaceted development challenges such as climate change, rising inequalities and the impact of the digital transformation among others, laying forth the need to shape more inclusive societies, grounded in the full respect for and recognition of the diversity and equal dignity of all cultures.

The [Outcome Document](#) of India's Culture Ministers Meeting has been christened the **“Kashi Culture Pathway”**. It summarizes the commitments and consensus arrived by the G20 Culture Ministers on the priorities articulated by the G20 Culture Working Group under India's G20 Presidency.

The report **[‘G20 Culture: Shaping the Global Narrative for Inclusive Growth’](#)** was launched. It includes insights and recommendations from the expert-driven four [Global Thematic Webinars](#) on the priorities articulated by the Indian presidency that were held during the months of March and April 2023. This compendious publication documents the proceedings of the Global Thematic Webinars organised by India's G20 Presidency.

The Culture Ministers released a [special edition stamp](#) too. This special stamp was launched to commemorate the hallmark campaign ‘Culture Unites All’. Throughout the course of the CWG, the ‘Culture Unites All’ campaign stood as a testament to India's unwavering belief in multilateralism for inclusive growth.



Thereafter, the Culture Ministers and the delegates witnessed the [G20 Orchestra- ‘Sur Vasudha’](#), organised by the Culture Working Group under India’s G20 Presidency. ‘Sur Vasudha’ or a treasure trove of melodies celebrates the rich musical knowledge and heritage of G20 member nations and guest countries.



In the spirit of ‘*Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*’ or ‘One Earth, One Family, One Future’, the concert incorporated the music and musical instruments from the G20 member and guest countries. This shared platform for musicians aims to promote inclusion and diversity, and encourage exchange of ideas and international collaboration through music.

The delegates also visited the historic site of Sarnath and the Archaeological Museum where they learnt about the life of Buddha and the rich heritage of India.



The important outcomes of the Culture Ministers’ Meeting will feed into the ambitious and collective actions that G20 Leaders will discuss during the G20 New Delhi Summit in September 2023.

Global Thematic Webinars:

[1st Webinar – Protection and Restitution of Cultural Property](#)

[2nd Webinar – Harnessing Living Heritage for a Sustainable Future](#)

[3rd Webinar – Promotion of Cultural and Creative Industries and Creative Economy](#)

[4th Webinar – Leveraging Digital Technologies for the Protection and Promotion of Culture](#)

References:

[The G20 Culture Ministers' Meeting, under India's Presidency, concluded today in Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh](#)

[PM addresses G20 Culture Ministers' Meeting](#)

[Text of PM's address at G20 Culture Ministers' Meeting](#)

[G20 CULTURE MINISTERS' MEETING KASHI CULTURE PATHWAY Outcome Document and Chair's Summary](#)

[G20 Culture Working Group TERMS OF REFERENCE](#)

[Shaping the Global Narrative for Inclusive Growth](#)

X Links:

<https://twitter.com/kishanreddybjp/status/1695663862174064868>

<https://twitter.com/kishanreddybjp/status/1695664239212671332>

<https://twitter.com/kishanreddybjp/status/1695664479521173535>

Video Link:

[Inaugural Session of the G20 Culture Ministers' Meeting in Varanasi](#)

NR/HP/RK/KG