



MONDIACULT 25
ESPAÑA

CONSULTATION REPORT

Stakeholder category

Relevant cultural stakeholders: civil society, cultural organizations, educational institutions, non-governmental organizations.

Submission category

Alliance of organizations

Name of organization(s) submitting the consultation report

	First Name	Last Name	Position	Organization
Author 1	Kenzi	Riboulet-Zemouli	Head of Mission to Geneva, Paris, Rome, Montréal	Cannabis Embassy – Legatio Cannabis – 大麻大使馆 – سفارة القنب
Author 2	Ricardo	Carvajal	Cultural Director	Fundación Todo lo que Cultivas, Eleva

The Cannabis Embassy and Fundación Todo lo que Cultivas, Eleva are responsible for the choice and presentation of the ideas and opinions expressed in this technical paper, which do not necessarily reflect the views of UNESCO and do not commit the Organization in any way.

Basic consultation information

Date	24/05/2025
Location	Cultural Association La Crème Gràcia (Barcelona, Spain) & Online (meets)
Hosting organizations	Fundación Todo lo que Cultivas, Eleva Cannabis Embassy – Legatio Cannabis – 大麻大使馆 – سفارة القنب
Name of main contact from hosting organization	Kenzi Riboulet-Zemouli
Email of main contact from hosting organization	geneva@cannabisembassy.org
Name of moderator	Ricardo Carvajal
Position of moderator	Moderator
Organization of moderator	Fundación Todo lo que Cultivas, Eleva
Language(s) of consultation	Spanish and English (interpretation)
Duration (hours etc.)	1h15
Number of participants	9+2
Countries represented (list all countries represented by participants)	Argentina, Chile, Czech republic, France, South Africa, Spain, USA.
Profiles of consultation participants (select all that apply)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Civil society <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cultural organizations <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Educational institutions <input type="checkbox"/> International organizations <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Non-governmental organizations <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Artists and creatives <input type="checkbox"/> Youth <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other: Patients groups and affected populations
Key question addressed (select 1)	What are the main challenges/problems/gaps in the culture sector in relation to the theme(s) you have selected?

Relevant MONDIACULT 2025 theme(s)

Indicate the relevant MONDIACULT 2025 themes for this consultation (maximum two).

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cultural rights | <input type="checkbox"/> Culture and climate action |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Digital technologies in the culture sector | <input type="checkbox"/> Culture, heritage and crisis |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Culture and education | <input type="checkbox"/> Artificial intelligence and culture |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Economy of culture | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Culture for peace |

Relevant Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Indicate any relevant SDGs that were emphasized during the consultation (select all that apply).

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SDG 1: No poverty | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SDG 9: Industry, innovation, and infrastructure |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SDG 2: Zero hunger | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SDG 10: Reduced inequality |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SDG 3: Good health and well-being | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SDG 11: Sustainable cities and communities |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SDG 4: Quality education | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SDG 12: Responsible consumption and production |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SDG 5: Gender equality | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SDG 13: Climate action |
| <input type="checkbox"/> SDG 6: Clean water and sanitation | <input type="checkbox"/> SDG 14: Life below water |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SDG 7: Affordable and clean energy | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SDG 15: Life on land |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SDG 8: Decent work and economic growth | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SDG 16: Peace and justice, strong institutions |
| | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SDG 17: Partnerships to achieve the goals |

Synthesis of contributions

The consultation meeting opened with welcoming remarks and a brief overview of UNESCO's mandate, the MONDIACULT 2025 Conference. The themes of cultural rights, cultural heritage in crisis, and culture for peace were introduced.

In the introduction, the symbolic relevance of the conference location was noted—in a city where cannabis has been present since the Neolithic, where archaeological and textual evidence show a continuous presence and use for fibers, for seeds, and for psychoactive tops masticated or smoked in pipes continuously for more than ten centuries, and today a well-established multicultural central city for cannabis cultures—as well as the significance of its opening date—a hundred years to the day after cannabis was included in the early international pharmacopoeia adopted on 29 September 1925. These geo-chronological coincidences were viewed as a confirmation of the discussion's relevance, and as an opportunity for a deeper, historicised cultural reflection.

Discussion started with a focus on the persistent gaps in recognising and safeguarding cannabis-related knowledge and cultural expressions, particularly in relation to cultural rights. Participants from various world regions stressed that cannabis cultures, often rooted in ancient practices, rituals, and traditional knowledge systems, but constantly-evolving and adapting to external circumstances, remain unrecognised when not actively repressed due to historical and legal stigma. This marginalisation undermines the ability of affected communities to access, enjoy, and contribute to cultural life, as enshrined in international human rights instruments.

Several stakeholders underlined that prohibition frameworks have had a disproportionate impact on communities for whom cannabis holds cultural, spiritual, medicinal, and economic significance. In this context, it was highlighted that women—often at the core of the most labour-intensive aspects of cannabis production and trade—are even more disproportionately affected. Prevailing legal regimes for cannabis frequently obscure the distinction between cultural actors and illicit networks, fuelling discrimination, erosion of trust, and further alienation of these communities. In several regions, this has contributed to a climate where traditional knowledge is criminalised, weakening intergenerational transmission and placing intangible cultural elements and practices at risk.

This dynamic is evident across regions where cannabis traditions remain vibrant, for example, in the Himalayas, among Indigenous peoples and local communities in Southern and Central African countries, among cultural networks in the American continent, or around the Mediterranean basin where longstanding multicultural cultivation, craftsmanship, and ceremonial practices persist despite legal pressure.

The lack of appropriate safeguarding frameworks was widely raised. While cannabis-related cultures display many features of intangible cultural heritage as defined by the 2003 UNESCO Convention, they are often implicitly or explicitly excluded from protection schemes. Participants noted that inventories, documentation efforts, and public recognition remain scarce, and in many cases, obstructed by legal or institutional red-tape, and the barrier of stigma. It was further noted that when these cultures are made visible, such as through exhibitions or festivals, they are vulnerable to censorship or directly used to target and repress participants, which highly undermines cultural pluralism and the right to freely enjoy one's culture.

One participant recalled that some of the threats over the cultural rights of cannabis communities have recently been stressed to the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) in a 2024 *Joint Contribution of the Cannabis Embassy to the Annotated outline of the CESCR's Draft General Comment on the impacts of drug policies on economic, social and cultural rights*.

Another participant noted the cultural significance of cannabis resin (hashish) craftsmanship and pipemaking traditions —practices with documented archaeological continuity and evolution for almost a millennium, and ongoing social relevance— which face renewed suppression amid intensified enforcement, besides the century-old intercultural trade and exchanges that have characterised this cannabis product, and the safeguard of which could represent an important potential for peacemaking and the promotion of tolerance, mutual-understanding, and cultural exchange.

Another participant observed that the exclusion of cannabis communities from cultural life extends to official national cultural agendas, such as heritage days, where cannabis events may be subject to reduced visibility. It was shared that complaints have been submitted to regional human rights bodies in relation to such administrative actions happened at the national level in some countries, which were seen as “censorship” affecting the realisation of cultural rights and signaling a broader pattern of pre-emptive exclusion from the cultural policy landscape. Other participants linked these institutional censorship measures to the increasing “shadow banning” of cultural actors observed across online social media platforms, for the mere use of the word “cannabis” or of cultural symbols associated with it, further fueling the invisibilization of cannabis communities and their cultural stakeholders from public and cultural spaces.

The consultation also addressed challenges around legal protection of traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expressions associated with cannabis. Participants shared concern over the lack of recognition for collective intellectual property rights tied to cannabis-related knowledge systems, including those intertwined with spiritual and medicinal traditions, such as for example systems rooted in Ayurveda or Unani and regional religious and spiritual practices in parts of South and Central Asia, or in other regions. The current international framework —spanning treaties on biodiversity, human rights, and intellectual property— was described as fragmented and inaccessible for communities with limited legal resources. This gap leaves traditional custodians vulnerable to biopiracy, misappropriation, and unauthorised commercial exploitation, especially as the global cannabis market expands.

A number of stakeholders from different continents provided evidence of how prohibitionist legacies continue to affect cultural governance. In one region, cannabis prohibition historically served as a mechanism for cultural suppression under colonial and post-colonial regimes, with laws targeting specific ethnic groups. In some countries, despite the recent decriminalisation or legalisation for medical or industrial purposes, traditional and community-based uses remain criminalised or left out of licit schemes. Participants noted that licences and benefits often accrue to well-resourced newcomers, while historically affected communities, custodians of the natural and cultural cannabis heritage, continue to face criminalisation, limited access, and cultural erasure.

Participants discussed the emerging contribution of cannabis cultures to sustainable development, emphasising that cannabis communities already contribute to a wide range of Sustainable Development Goals despite prohibition, and that better regulations could represent an even more positive contribution of the cannabis sector to better and more resilient societies (in addition to some aspects of prohibition directly conflicting with the full

achievement of the SDGs). Participants recalled the critical relevance of policy tools such as the *Sustainable Cannabis Policy Toolkit* published in 2020 (cannabis2030.org) and the UNCTAD report *Commodities at a Glance: Special Issue on Industrial Hemp* (doi.org/10.18356/9789210019958). Participants recalled the fact that “industrial hemp” and “marijuana” are botanically the same plant: *Cannabis sativa* L.; they agreed with the strategy outlined in the UNCTAD report to favour “multipurpose crops” where the entire plant is valorised. In some regions, the multipurpose use of local varieties of the plant already supports low-carbon housing and food security strategies, particularly where cannabis crops are used locally for insulation, sustainable construction, and nutrition in crisis-affected areas. Cannabis communities’ traditional knowledge holders are cultural custodians of this optimised use and holistic view of the plant, which represents an invaluable contribution to ecosystems management and ecological transition efforts. Despite this, cannabis communities’ role is systematically overlooked in national development strategies, impeding their inclusion in cultural, economic, and sustainable development policy frameworks, and blocking the possibility of cannabis cultures and knowledge contributing to the broader fabric of society.

In moving forwards, the importance of community-led safeguarding was highlighted as a central recommendation. Many participants emphasised that States have a responsibility to act as facilitators rather than arbiters of cultural value. This includes supporting ethical documentation efforts, promoting inclusive inventories, and providing legal and financial tools that enable communities to protect and revitalise their heritage. Consent-based governance and the principle of free, prior, and informed consent of cannabis communities and stakeholder groups were widely cited as necessary to uphold the dignity and agency of cannabis-heritage communities.

Decriminalisation of personal and collective cannabis-related activities and the end of reliance on stigmatising language and attitudes in political arenas were also called for. In line with this, the cross-cutting theme of “culture for peace” was viewed as particularly salient. Cannabis cultures, shaped by traditions of sharing, tolerance, happiness, healing, spirituality, and communal life, were described as embodying values of non-violence, reciprocity, and ecological awareness. Participants strongly emphasised that putting an end to the “war on drugs” was essential to the culture of peace our planet needs. Participants also agreed in suggesting that recognising and integrating cannabis —hemp, भोग, dagga, ganja, konopi, 麻, pot, ntsangu, haschisch, ramba, قنب, siddhi, kif, cáñamo, mambe, 大麻, chanvre, marihuana— communities and cultural systems into broader peacebuilding strategies could contribute to reconciliation and social cohesion in post-conflict and structurally marginalised contexts, in every country.

The consultation concluded with a collective call to reframe cannabis not as a threat to be eradicated, but as an ancient yet evolving cultural phenomenon worthy of respectful engagement. Participants expressed hope that MONDIACULT 2025 might serve as a platform to open dialogue, promote inclusive cultural policies, and begin the process of historical redress through cultural recognition and participation, allowing cannabis cultures to flourish as living expressions of peace, identity, and mutual understanding.

Additional feedback

Indicate any other relevant issues that should be considered regarding cultural policies at local, national, regional or international levels.

Not applicable

Provide any additional comment you wish to share with UNESCO or the organizers of MONDIACULT 2025.

Participants extended appreciation to the Secretariat for the efforts put into organising MONDIACULT 2025, the Digital Library, and the various open participation and consultative mechanisms put in place.

List of participants

[Redacted for privacy]