



WCC-Asia Pacific Region (WCC-APR)

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JAIPUR CONSENSUS

We participants from over 30 countries at the World Craft Council–Asia Pacific Region Conclave on *Hand Crafts – Future Horizons*, held in Jaipur (Rajasthan, India) from 16-18 December came together to exchange ideas, experiences and actionable strategies toward sustainable livelihoods through handcrafts. The Conclave partnership includes the Government of India, the Government of Rajasthan state, and organizations as well as individuals representing artisans, designers, educators and entrepreneurs from every part of India and across Asia. Against a backdrop of global anxiety on the impact of economic and trade uncertainties, rising climate change and the Covid 19 devastation, our call is for priority understanding of artisans and their wisdom as a force for social, economic, environmental and cultural stability in our region and throughout the world.

It is of significance that we have met in Jaipur, a World Heritage City recognized by UNESCO for its extraordinary creativity and in the state of Rajasthan which in 2005 introduced the world to the concept of creative and cultural industries through the *Jodhpur Consensus on Cultural Industries*. Through three days of reflection we have built on that Consensus which recognized handcraft as a source of capital assets for economic, social and cultural development and as a “vital resource for the cultural identities of communities and individuals” leading to further creativity and human development. “What cultural industries have in common is that they create content, use creativity, skill” to “produce goods and services with social and cultural meaning”. The Conclave reflected on this reality in the context of the challenges experienced over these two decades including economic and political upheavals, the acceleration of climate change, and the worldwide devastation of the Covid pandemic. Yet artisans and their crafts have emerged as a space and as an activity that offers a rare degree of assurance at times of uncertainty and anxiety. To the strengths of handcraft identified by the international community at Jodhpur twenty years ago, in Jaipur we have added the qualities of resilience and disaster management, noting that handcrafts *directly* address 11 of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals. This powerful reality offers a future path that should give the sector a fresh priority that is entirely its own.

In this endeavor the Conclave has been encouraged and inspired by the commitment expressed by the Government of India and by our hosts, the people and Government of Rajasthan. Their offer to sustain Rajasthan as a space for international craft collaboration strengthens a strong partnership in a shared cause, with Jodhpur and Jaipur as landmarks.

In Jaipur we have learned that building artisans and their crafts is not only about protecting heritage and enhancing the aesthetic quality of our lives. It is also about building livelihoods through production that is sustainable and equitable. In that spirit we offer these *Guiding Principles* to assist our members, our hosts the Governments of India and of Rajasthan, the World Crafts Council and other multi-lateral institutions in strengthening their future strategies and plans.

Guiding Principles:

The crafts of Asia and the world constitutes a heritage that demands protection for the wellbeing and identity of people as well as for creativity relevant to the **social, cultural, economic and environmental needs of a changing world.**

This reality demands careful attention to **communicating the value** of artisans and their handskills toward a sustainable future of the planet. Such understanding remains inadequate at many levels of decision-making. This must change, through a greater awareness of the contribution artisans make to global wellbeing as well as to local and national economies.

The relevance of traditions that have journeyed thousands of years demand that the **voices of artisans be heard at every level of governance** – local, national and international – and that their capacities be strengthened through opportunities for education, training and regular exposure to the shift and changes of today's markets.

Spaces are severely restricted that give artisans the opportunity to be heard. This must change. We urge that authorities (including governments, civil society and the private sector) collaborate toward such **inclusion and empowerment**, symbolized in Jaipur by artisan participation and contribution in every aspect of this Conclave experience.

In these efforts the needs and aspirations of **younger generations** of both artisans and users will need particular attention. They are the future of our craft heritage.

There is a specific need to encourage **youth and women** to remain within and to help build the sector, and to acknowledge their contribution in every way, including financially.

Priorities that have emerged at this Conclave include extending **technology, design, finance, raw material and marketing services to artisans in their own locations**. The pandemic has underlined how critical it will now be to build rural non-farm livelihoods that offer sustainable opportunities to artisans in their own locations. It is critical to the future of handcrafts to reduce the miseries of artisans migrating to urban slums in pursuit of services essential to their growth within increasingly competitive markets. Jaipur has signaled the importance of **de-centralisation** to a sector that is largely rural and often home-based.

Design has emerged repeatedly as an essential capacity and force that empowers artisans and those who serve them, bridging the past with the future. The Conclave has noted the encouraging emergence of new generations of artisan-designers and of designer-artisans, reflecting a culture of collaboration and co-creation with major implications for the future. The importance has also emerged of partnerships between artisans, designers, educational institutes and researchers that can build design capacities at every level. These suggest the enormous scope for joint endeavor through local, national and international cooperation.

Market awareness will require constant attention to building opportunities for exposure through **fairs, exhibitions and exchange visits**. The Conclave was enriched by Asian artisans participating in its exhibitions, sales and fashion show, demonstrating how critical these services can be to taking forward its objectives.

Opportunities in the **export** sector make such strategies essential to assist artisans in understanding and benefiting from the growing demand worldwide from a sensitive younger generation for products of cultural and social significance, for encouraging systems of production that protect our planet, and to help empower those most in need.

Exports as well as changing domestic regulations demand the capacity of artisans to cope with complex and shifting **compliance** regimes. International collaboration can assist local entrepreneurship through capacity-building and access to market intelligence.

There remains inadequate attention to the **social security** of artisans, their families, and their children. Many continue to live and work in substandard conditions, with little provision for health or old-age. If inherited traditions are to move confidently into the future, systems of social security are an urgent necessity to address needs of occupational health, retirement, children's education, shelter, nutrition and basic services of water, sanitation and power. A **quality of life** must be assured that can protect and sustain craft heritage and encourage new entrants into promising craft careers. The Jaipur

Conclave recognizes the urgent necessity for craft activists and government authorities to work together worldwide toward such upliftment, a prerequisite for sustainable futures through handcraft.

Education will be a key force toward enhancing our craft heritage and ensuring its future relevance. **Education and training** must begin with outreach to artisans and artisan communities, developing opportunities for capacity-building through new technologies (including the smart phone and translation IT) and include the potential to document and promote heritage as well as to build market opportunities.

Education is needed as well to create a real **understanding of the value of crafts at every level of our societies**, starting at schools. Education must also include the sensitization buyers/users, and of decision-makers both in governments and in private enterprise. Creating demand for craft quality is thus an educational task, one that requires collaboration toward a lasting understanding of handmade value.

The Conclave recognizes the importance of artisans engaging with new technologies. That could urge us to pay attention to making AI know-how available to artisan communities by expanding the definition and evolving the concept of crafts to remain relevant to contemporary contexts and the next generation of practitioners.

Opportunities for Asian artisans to be heard and recognized at the Conclave were a stirring reminder of how critical **respect and recognition** can be to the future of handcrafts. Acknowledgement of artisanal quality emerged at Jaipur as a priority, including recognition of young artisans, women artisans and others so often left at the margins of our societies. Through its own work and that of its partners, WCC-APR members pledge to use every opportunity to showcase talent and to demonstrate respect for artisans as our living treasures. The impact of WCC-APR Craft Awards emerges as a major contribution on which Conclave members can build and share.

The Conclave was reminded that the case for handmade quality in a competitive world demands a foundation of **reliable data for the handmade sector**. Despite the scale of craft activity in Asia, reliable data is lacking to back demands for priority. This needs to change. Members welcomed efforts to establish the economics of the handmade sector in India and elsewhere. These need to be widely shared to ensure that crafts as a creative and cultural industry is given visibility, credibility and priority in the spirit of the 2005 Jodhpur Consensus.

The Conclave has been encouraged and inspired in all these efforts by the commitment of the Governments of India and of Rajasthan to the cause of the handmade in a changing world. Members recognize that progress will now depend on the quality of future collaboration and partnership. The task ahead is immense. Our strength is that of values we share together. In that spirit, the Conclave recommends these Guiding Principles to the attention of its members and of to all the networks represented at this Jaipur Conclave.



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