



**Government of the
Republic of Trinidad and Tobago**

POLICY FRAMEWORK FOR MULTICULTURALISM



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PHILOSOPHICAL PREMISE

The Republic of Trinidad and Tobago is a nation that has a long history of rich ethnic diversity, racial harmony and excellence across a wide variety of artforms. This cultural diversity is seen as one of the strengths of the society and one of the major factors in the quest for development. As we steadily improve the means by which we travel to the destination of our Nationhood and increase our interculturality, we hold that all Trinidadians and Tobagonians have in common a desire to enjoy life's greatest freedoms without fear, and in an atmosphere of peace, prosperity and harmony. This is our greatest communal legacy that has found its greatest expression in our people, from all walks of life - in our sundry forms of cultural expression.

The policy framework for multiculturalism is an initiative designed to give greater voice to the diverse cultural expressions of our common desires for individual and national identity. It shall be expressed within the context of our constitutionally enshrined rights to equality of treatment, political rights, education, freedom of religion, freedom of thought and expression, freedom of assembly and association, freedom of culture, and freedom of the press. Policies will be realigned to ensure that resource allocation meets with the objective of obtaining a more equitable recognition and fulfilment of the needs of the diverse proponents of our culture.

The support of multicultural manifestations is the overarching policy direction that will be taken by the state in reference to the Cultural Sector and encompasses diversity in all its forms. Considering our universally acknowledged history of racial harmony, the state will not take a top-down approach in mandating harmonious interaction between our various peoples. The state's primary consideration will focus on support for diverse types of artists and cultural workers within the national community, and the creation of a fertile environment in which various expressions of culture can flourish and contribute more significantly to our national and economic development.

VISION

Create an environment that facilitates the development of the diverse forms of culture practiced by Trinidadians and Tobagonians within the ambit of a national culture of patriotism.

OBJECTIVES

1. Achieve greater equity in the distribution of state resources across various art forms and forms of culture that comprise the Cultural Sector.
2. Celebrate our cultural diversity in the interest of greater sense of inclusion of all our peoples and their artistic practices and use this to bolster the development of our cultural industries and its contribution to our national economy.
3. Use the arts to strengthen our national identity and to foster the spirit of unity in diversity.
4. Take effective measures to review governmental, national and local policies, and to amend, rescind or nullify any laws and regulations which have the effect of creating or perpetuating racial and ethnic discrimination wherever it exists in the Cultural Sector.
5. Use instruments of good governance (policy articulation, strategic planning, stakeholder inclusion, monitoring and evaluation and reporting) to facilitate superior management of and greater transparency in state operations in the Cultural Sector.

CORE VALUES

6. Equality – dignity, respect and recognition for all cultural manifestations
7. Equity – sharing our finite resources in accordance with stakeholder needs
8. Merit – support for excellence
9. Diversity – support for a multiplicity of artistic and cultural expressions
10. Development – focus on growth and enablement

DEFINITIONS AND KEY CONCEPTS

Culture refers to the sum total of a people's way of life and as such comprises those social, political, economic, religious, technological, scientific, linguistic and artistic practices that facilitate the growth and development of individuals, households and communities that comprise the national society; are at the core of inter and intra generational transmission and linkages; and have been developed in relation to perennial, intermittent and dynamic forces and features in the geographical, ecological, political, social and economic environment.

Cultural activities are defined as activities related to the arts and heritage (see **National Cultural Policy**).

Multiculturalism refers to the active respect for, and acknowledgement and support of, diverse artistic and cultural manifestations and activities.

Cultural diversity refers to the manifold ways in which the cultures of groups and societies find expression and is made manifest not only through the varied ways in which the cultural heritage of humanity is expressed, augmented and transmitted through the variety of cultural expressions, but also through diverse modes of artistic creation, production, dissemination, distribution and enjoyment, whatever the means and technologies used.

Cultural expressions are those expressions that result from the creativity of individuals, groups and societies.

Cultural content refers to the symbolic meaning, artistic dimension and cultural values that originate from or express cultural identities.

Cultural policies and measures refers to those policies and measures relating to culture, whether at the local, national, regional or international level that are either focused on culture as such or are designed to have a direct effect on cultural expressions of individuals, groups or societies, including on the creation, production, dissemination, distribution of and access to cultural activities, goods and services.

Interculturality refers to the existence and equitable interaction of diverse cultures and the possibility of generating shared cultural expressions through dialogue and mutual respect.

Intangible cultural heritage means the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills – as well as the instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces associated therewith – that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage. This intangible cultural heritage, transmitted from generation to generation, is constantly recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment, their interaction with nature and their history, and provides them with a sense of identity and continuity, thus promoting respect for cultural diversity and human creativity. This is manifested inter alia in the following domains:

- (a) oral traditions and expressions, including language as a vehicle of the intangible cultural heritage;
- (b) performing arts;
- (c) social practices, rituals and festive events;
- (d) knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe;
- (e) traditional craftsmanship.

Ethnicity refers to that conglomeration of characteristics like religious beliefs, daily practices and cultural heritage, that a people use for their self definition and that are usually linked but not completely limited to their belonging to the said group by means of race.

LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

1. Constitution of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago
2. Equal Opportunities Act, 2000
3. Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage
4. Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions

AREAS OF REMIT

As detailed in the Cultural Policy:

- **HERITAGE:** Legacy and Tradition
- **ARTS** (Inclusive of Fine Arts, Folk Arts and Popular Culture)

PROGRAMMATION

Successful Programmation will include:

- A National Cultural Policy
- A Policy on Grants and Subventions

