

At the closing of the 3rd World Forum on Music (Tunis, October 17-22 2009), the 150 participants from 59 nations were unanimous: This third edition had offered an outstanding knowledge-building and knowledge-sharing platform while contributing to setting the stage for the free celebration of music in the world! As set out in previous editions, the 3rd Forum was again concerned with a number of issues that are crucial to the music world today. Under the title “Access to musical diversity”, this year’s edition dealt with the impact of the UNESCO convention on cultural diversity for national and international cultural policies, the challenges and opportunities that come with the digital music distribution, cultural policies seen from European, African and Arab perspectives, the role of advocacy for music education, questions related to audience development for art music worldwide. The speakers, who came from all over the world, were experts of international stature.

His Exc. M. Abderraouf Basti, Minister of Culture and Heritage Preservation, and IMC President Richard Letts inaugurated the Forum with inspiring speeches that set the stage for four days of high-level presentations and discussions.

The first session, dedicated to cultural diversity, focused on the implementation of the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions and specifically of its objectives to support cultural diversity within national borders, cultural development especially in developing countries, and international cultural exchanges. Panelists representing governments, civil society organizations, academic scholars and musical practitioners looked into the threats and opportunities of the convention and how civil society players such as IMC and its members could position themselves in the debate.

Under the title “Riding the digital tiger”, the next session dealt with creativity and innovation in music distribution and continued as it were the discussion started at the second World Forum on Music in 2007 while highlighting in particular the new developments in digital distribution, which offered eye-opening effects for the audience.

The changing paradigms of cultural policy from regional perspectives were discussed in a high-level panel featuring the Tunisian Minister of Culture, the Head of the Unit for Cultural Policy and Intercultural Dialogue at the European Commission, and the Executive Director of the Observatory on Cultural Policies in Africa. Forum participants were given the opportunity to hear about the latest trends of culture and music politics in Africa, Europe and Tunisia and to learn more about inter-regional cooperation for cultural development.

Another session looked closely at music education globally in relation to advocacy, policy development, network and partnerships, with speakers from all five continents. The session showed that advocacy for music education can also be subject to controversial approaches. IMC members presented projects to illustrate the changing paradigms in music education practice, in different educational and cultural contexts.

The session on challenges to art music around the world reached in full its objective to map out the state of affairs of the art music in different parts of the world with regards to their

audiences. It also explored the challenges and possibilities to develop the art music.

The 3rd World Forum on Music seized the opportunity of being held in Tunisia to offer a platform for expert presentations on Tunisian music and music in Tunisia, presenting converging and distinctive aspects of these two terms.

The rich musical diversity present in Tunisia was perfectly well reflected in the artistic programme offered by the Tunisian hosts to Forum participants, ranging from liturgical music to music from the classical modern Tunisian and Arab repertoire, from Bedouin and Sufi chants to contemporary creation.

On October 18th, the Forum was the stage for the presentation ceremony of the inaugural IMC Musical Rights Awards for projects or programmes that give exemplary support to one or more of the IMC's five music rights: the rights for all persons to free expression in music, to a music education, to participate in various ways in music making and listening, and the rights for musical artists to develop their art, to communicate, and to be fairly remunerated. Three top winners were celebrated and six projects received a Special Commendation.

The 3rd World Forum on Music saw for the first time ever the participation of a number of youth delegates who seized the occasion to gather and discuss the role of youth in the work of IMC and its members.

The Forum was organized by the International Music Council and hosted by the Ministry of Culture and Heritage Preservation of the Tunisian Republic. It benefitted from the support and partnership of UNESCO, NAMM - the trade association of the international music products industry, the European Music Council and the Tunisian National Tourist Office.