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UN report outlines creative industries' potential to boost development



30 March 2011 – Trade in creative goods and services has remained robust despite a decline in global commerce as the result of the world financial crisis, reflecting the potential of the “creative economy” to boost economic growth particularly in the developing countries, according to a new United Nations [report](#) unveiled today.

Global trade in services and products of creativity continued to register an annual average growth of 14 per cent even as world commerce declined by 12 per cent in 2008, according to *Creative Economy Report 2010: A Feasible Development Option*, launched at UN Headquarters in New York.

Global exports of creative goods and services, including ideas and creativity-centred industries such as arts and crafts, audiovisuals, books, design, films, music, new media, visual and performing arts, more than doubled from 2002 to 2008, reaching nearly \$600 billion, according to the report.

“This is a confirmation that the creative industries hold great potential for developing countries that seek to diversify their economies and leapfrog into one of the most dynamic sectors of the world economy,” the report states.

It pointed out that the export of creative goods from developing countries – the so-called South – to the world reached \$176 billion in 2008, accounting for 43 per cent of total creative industries trade, with an annual growth rate of 13.5 per cent during the 2002-2008 period.

According to the report, South-South trade of creative goods amounted to nearly \$60 billion, a growth rate of 20 per cent over the period, a trend it said should encouraged developing countries to include creative goods in their list of products in negotiations under the Global System of Trade Preferences in order to give impetus to the expansion of South-South trade in the promising sector.

“The report shows that well-nurtured, along with the traditional sectors, the creative economy can be a source of growth, job creation, innovation and trade, while at the same time contributing to social-inclusion, cultural diversity and sustainable human development,” Rebeca Grynspan, the Associate Administrator of the UN Development Programme ([UNDP](#)), told reporters at the report’s launch.

The publication cites, as an example, the case of Nigeria where the country’s \$2.75 billion film industry is the third largest in the world, following the United States and India. Nigeria’s so-called “Nollywood” produces more than 1,000 films annually, creating thousands of jobs and is the country’s second most important industry after oil. As a result, the Government has invested in the film industry, reforming policies and providing training to promote film production and distribution.

“New technologies and the internet give developing countries a feasible option to promote their creativity and entrepreneurship in the global market,” said Edna dos Santos-Duisenberg, Chief of Creative Economy and Industries Programme of the UN Conference on Trade and Development ([UNCTAD](#)).

Speaking on behalf of the Presidency of the General Assembly’s High-Level Committee on South-South Cooperation, Josephine Ojiambo described the creative economy as a “dynamic solution for some of the most critical issues the world is facing today,” citing the empowerment of women, creating opportunities for the younger generation, reducing conflict and promoting inclusive development.

The report was prepared by the UNCTAD and UNDP and showcases more than 40 concrete examples ranging from the fashion industry in Africa and Asia to soap operas in Mexico and Brazil, and from the film industry in India, to reggae in Jamaica and the carnival in Brazil and the Caribbean.

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