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Chair of the MMAP Steering Committee

SPEECH
AT THE OPENING OF THE IMC MANYMUSICS CONFERENCE
MONTEVIDEO, 16 OCTOBER, 2003

Your Excellency, Minister of Culture and Education, Dr. Guzman; Honoured Guests and Members of the IMC; Dear Friends,

Two years ago I was given a charge by the IMC ExCom. I agreed to chair a committee consisting of John Drummond, Ramon Santos, Richard Letts, Frans de Ruiten and Jean Vincent. The charge was to lead an Action Programme whose framework was established by the 2001 General Assembly, an Action Programme aimed at Sustaining and Enhancing Musical Diversity.

Before I continue, let me introduce those of my Steering Group colleagues who are here: John Drummond and Ramon Santos (explain the others).

We approached the work in ways which are known to you by now through

- information given through various channels in the course of the biennium
- a special web-site which all IMC members have been informed about separately
- a written documentation available here in Montevideo
- an introduction two days ago in this very room.

I shall not repeat what you know already. Let me instead take a minute or two to introduce you to a few of the very many people I've met on the road in my country, while working with musical diversity issues. I'll leave protocol aside and first introduce you to the youngest of them.

Meet my oldest grandson, Gaute. Gaute is 12. He lives only 20 minutes from where my wife and I live, but we don't see him very often, because Gaute is very busy. He plays football. Football is his life, and he spends every free minute – and a few more on the football-field with his mates. His closest friend – on the football-field and elsewhere – is Raymond. You hardly ever see one of them without the other.

Gaute does not *only* play football. He also plays the cello. He goes to the municipal music school for lessons. He has an excellent teacher, principal cellist in the Radio Symphony Orchestra. Gaute's grandparents have offered to pay for his lessons – not a big cut in the family budget, I can assure you, because most of the costs are covered by tax money – local and central. Now, Gaute's friend Raymond would also like to play an instrument. He wants to play *kora*. Kora is the instrument his grandfather has played for years in his local village in Senegal. His grandfather would love to teach him – he is after all the musical master in his community, but he's of course too far away. The local music school where we live doesn't offer kora, nor do the neighbouring music schools. There is a kora player living on the other side of the city, far away, an excellent artist with an international career. But the costs are too high for Raymond's family to manage, and there is no tax money available to support him. Raymond still

dreams and talks about playing his grandfather's instrument. Will he every, I wonder, while approaching the next person I'd like you to meet.

It is an honour for me also to introduce you to our Minister of Culture, Ms. Haugland. You won't be able to meet her personally, because she and her group of advisors are, just as I speak, checking in in a hotel in the south of Europe. She is not on holiday. She is attending a very important conference. She will be meeting colleagues from all corners of the world. They are concerned about the future for cultural activities and indeed cultural freedom, and therefore they and their expert advisors have been spending quite some time the last few years elaborating on how best to prevent that the freedom any society should have to own its own culture, its own art, its own music, be limited by international trade agreements and commercial interests. They are just about to prepare a draft convention that they hope UNESCO eventually will make its own and enforce.

I also want to take you to a meeting called by two of my colleagues in the music life of Norway, Geir and Anne. Geir is the director of our major festival for contemporary music, Anne is in charge of our major festival for musics from non-Western cultures, world music if you wish. They have called a short meeting to review and assess the public response to their last festivals. Both of them are happy because ticket sales were very good and the artistic quality was excellent – both domestic and international artists really fulfilled their highest expectations. There is a big difference, though. Geir brings with him a big box of press clippings: Interviews, feature articles, concert reviews and much more. High level articles written by well qualified critics and journalists. Anne, on the other hand, pulls out a more modest file from her handbag. She puts on the table a few well meaning concert previews, and a few interviews with a couple of – according to the journalists – 'exotic' artists who have been brave enough to come to Norway - cold and dark as it is in the autumn. Lack of interest in the press, we ask? More likely a lack of knowledge is the answer. No critics or other experts in Norwegian press are able to write intelligently about musics from Madagascar, Mongolia and Peru.

I could take you to a number of other people. All of you would be able to introduce me and the rest of us to people in your environments who are effected by or involved in musical diversity issues.

Because musical diversity is about *people*. The Steering committee has – virtually that is - met a number of them during these two years, people who have not been able to celebrate their music freely, equally to others. But we have also seen wonderful examples of successful initiatives, taken by people, to make musical diversity come true in communities. And we have seen wonderful initiatives that have fallen to the ground because of lack of understanding, lack of will, lack of resources. We have seen individuals and systems, institutions and policies, communities and ministries. Because musical diversity is about all of these: people, systems, actions, affirmative action – perhaps, mindsets, attitudes, understanding, policies, resources, infrastructures.

The Steering committee has moved between the construction of conceptual frameworks, and very down to earth issues. We strongly believe that musical diversity needs to be rooted in ideological concepts and human values. But it is

very clear to us, at the end of the day it is what is being done in society – be it schools, musical institutions or communities – that matters to people.

I've felt humble these two years, working with this huge area, complex as it is. I still feel humble. But even more I've felt inspired, even encouraged, because I've believed from the very start that even minor, local improvements in the conditions for musical diversity will have an impact for individuals.

Today I'm not only inspired and encouraged. Today I feel excited! Simply because the members of IMC yesterday afternoon gave itself a new life. Yesterday IMC promised itself that it will be "the world's leading professional organisation dedicated to the development and the promotion of diverse music". If the work toward this vision starts today, IMC can make a major impact for all those who want to celebrate their own music, whatever that music may be and wherever they live in the world. Not in one week, not in one year. Maybe even not in our lifetime. But if we don't start today...do I need to say more?

What is the future of the MMAP about? Like the future of any programme or project which is agreed upon by a group, a family, and organisation, it is about:

- sharing successes in setting the stage for musical diversity in our societies. Not to teach each other, but to support each other, give each other inspiration.
- It is about advocating for musical diversity as a concept – as a value.
- It is about identifying concrete challenges in our local environment, in our nations and regions, and to launch target action in order to make changes.
- It is about supporting each other – compare notes, share information and experience.

Think globally, act locally, is a slogan used by others. It is good, why shouldn't we use it as well?

And it is more than that. Yesterday we promised each other that our organisation, IMC, shall support us. (As the president just said), the only reason for having a membership organisation is that we want one plus one to be more than two. *We* – the members of IMC - need to show that this is important to us, that we will invest in concrete, substantial, outcome-based initiatives which will have impact on our members and on music life. If we do that and do it well, then IMC – *our* organisation – has offered support. That's my interpretation of the contract that was made yesterday.

It is often said that it is impossible for people to have two thoughts in one's head at the same time. That is nonsense! We are indeed able to have many thoughts in our heads at the same time. We are able to hold on to concepts, even develop them further, and at the same time act fast and effectively as any serious environmental organisation will act when concepts and principles are not met by real life – for us, in music education, in musical production, in policy-making, national and international. We are able to identify and work efficiently on the specific challenges in our own back yards, and at the same time have an engagement and a concern for the situation in our neighbours' back yards, even to jump over the fence and help out if they ask for our help. It is indeed not only possible but necessary to have more than one thought in our heads when we work on musical diversity!

IMC gave me a charge two years ago. IMC gave the Steering Committee a charge two years ago. Above all, IMC gave itself a charge two years ago. The Steering Committee, with the help of IMC members and others all around the world (and I do acknowledge all those who have contributed) has brought us to where we are today. The question is: Are we, as a global organisation – the world's leading organisation dedicated to the development and the promotion of diverse music – able to take this charge further. Is it still an important charge? In which direction or directions should we go to make the most effective impact? How should we organise ourselves to get to where we want to get? These are the questions this conference is about.

NOBODY BUT WE, TOGETHER – THE IMC MEMBERSHIP – CAN GIVE ANSWERS TO THOSE QUESTIONS! We've got two days – today and tomorrow!

Thank you!