Cultural Democracy and Cultural Heritage Policy
at the Smithsonian Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage

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Monday, February 23, 2015, 11:00-12:30
Hortense Amsterdam House (2110 G St.) 202

The Smithsonian Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage (CFCH) has represented cultural traditions to millions of visitors since 1967 through the Smithsonian Folklife Festival. It shares traditional American and world music through Smithsonian Folkways Recordings and played a significant role in drafting UNESCO's Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage.

The idea of cultural democracy unites all these activities. Cultural democracy supports the right to define one’s own cultural life. It embraces the idea of cultural action, encouraging people to use art forms as tools to seek their own interests and cultural values to chart their course into the future. It celebrates cultural diversity and nurtures participation in cultural life. As CFCH approaches its sixth decade, it has renewed its commitment to this orientation toward people and their desire for self-expression and self-determination.