

## **UNESCO-ACCU Expert Meeting on Community Involvement in Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage: Towards the Implementation of the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage**

**Tokyo, Japan, 13-15 March 2006**

### **Conclusions and Recommendations**

We, the experts attending the UNESCO/ACCU Expert Meeting on Community Involvement in Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage: Towards the Implementation of the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (hereinafter “the 2003 Convention”);

Acknowledging with thanks the Asia/Pacific Cultural Centre for UNESCO (ACCU) for their excellent organisation of the meeting;

Expressing our satisfaction with the interest shown by UNESCO’s Member States in developing policies and activities in the field of intangible cultural heritage (ICH), which is reflected in the fast ratification of the 2003 Convention;

Taking into consideration that the 2003 Convention will enter into force on 20 April 2006 and that its implementation will have to be ensured, among other things, through the preparation of a set of Operational Directives by the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (hereinafter “the Committee”);

Aware of the importance given by the 2003 Convention to the involvement of communities, groups, and where appropriate, individuals and/or non-governmental organisations in the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage;

Suggest that the Committee take into account the following definitions and considerations in the preparation of the abovementioned Operational Directives:

#### **Definitions**

- 1. Communities** are networks of people whose sense of identity or connectedness emerges from a shared historical relationship that is rooted in the practice and transmission of, or engagement with, their ICH;
- 2. Groups** comprise people within or across communities who share characteristics such as skills, experience and special knowledge, and thus perform specific roles in the present and future practice, re-creation and/or transmission of their intangible cultural heritage as, for example, cultural custodians, practitioners or apprentices.
- 3. Individuals** are those within or across communities who have distinct skills, knowledge, experience or other characteristics, and thus perform specific roles in the present and

future practice, re-creation and/or transmission of their intangible cultural heritage as, for example, cultural custodians, practitioners and, where appropriate, apprentices.

### **Guidelines recommended to States Parties drawing up inventories of intangible cultural heritage**

1. Create appropriate institutional arrangements as follows:
  - a. Establish or designate an intersectoral administrative body or bodies for the purposes of:
    - i. assessing relevant existing legislation, institutions and traditional safeguarding systems to evaluate their usefulness in inventorying ICH and identify best practice and areas for improvement.
    - ii. drawing up of inventories of ICH and developing safeguarding policies;
    - iii. establishing a public process to raise awareness about the importance of ICH and encourage public participation in inventorying and safeguarding ICH;
    - iv. ensuring and, where necessary, developing appropriate safeguarding measures for ICH listed in the inventory;
  - b. establish advisory bodies, comprising cultural practitioners, researchers, NGOs, civil society, local representatives and relevant others, for the purpose of consultation on inventorying and safeguarding ICH;
  - c. establish local support teams including community representatives, cultural practitioners and others with specific skills and knowledge in training and capacity building to assist in inventorying and safeguarding specific cases of ICH;
2. Develop a method for inventorying ICH, including the following steps
  - a. identify the ICH;
  - b. identify and inform all relevant stakeholders, foregrounding communities, groups and individuals, and including NGOs;
  - c. Identify representatives of the communities and groups to ensure the involvement of the community in the process;
  - d. identify potential consequences of inventorying and obtain free and prior informed consent for the ICH to be inventoried;
  - e. establish procedures, if possible in the form of protocols, to ensure an ethical relationship between stakeholders;
  - f. identify and respect customary practices governing access to the ICH;

### **Guidelines recommended for nominations to the Representative List**

Assuming that this List will be managed with the use of a sunset clause, it is proposed that

1. ICH elements proposed for nomination to the Representative List should:
  - emanate from a national inventory or inventories as referred to in article 12 of the Convention, and be included in a national tentative list;
  - be submitted with materials documenting the following –
    - the ICH has been adequately identified with the involvement of relevant communities, groups and, where appropriate, individuals;

- assessment of likely consequences for the ICH of inscription on the List and measures for mitigation of any negative impact,
  - free and prior informed consent by the community for the ICH to be nominated, e.g. in a “Memorandum of Understanding”,
  - involvement of relevant communities, groups and, where appropriate, individuals in all phases of the process of documenting ICH,
  - description by the community of the significance of the ICH with support, where appropriate, from other relevant parties,
  - an explanation of the selection criteria and adjudication process used to determine the state party’s nomination of ICH elements to the Representative list,
  - that ethical procedures and protocols, as identified in the inventory process, have been followed,
  - a sustainable action plan for the safeguarding of the ICH,
  - the level of endangerment.
2. The Representative List should be chosen from nominations of ICH that have been identified and are being safeguarded using best practices following an adequate sustainable safeguarding plan (under articles 13, 14, 16 and 18);
3. The element proposed contributes to the diversity of the Representative List.

**Furthermore,**

Considering that, in order to further interregional cooperation and mutual understanding, in the spirit of the 2003 Convention, world-wide initiatives for regional cooperation between States, Centres and Institutions are to be encouraged in order to safeguard ICH,

Taking into account the significant and wide-ranging expertise of ACCU in the promotion and protection of intangible cultural heritage in Asia and the Pacific, which makes ACCU an appropriate institution for furthering capacity-building and cooperation in the field of ICH safeguarding in general, and in that of inventory-making in particular,

Expressing their interest in continued cooperation with ACCU,

Call upon

ACCU to strengthen its interregional contacts and cooperation with institutions and experts in the Asia-Pacific region and beyond,

UNESCO to continue its cooperation with ACCU and to cooperate, when possible, in the implementation of ACCU’s 2006-2010 programme.

Other relevant bodies worldwide to develop the necessary expertise and structures to assist in the safeguarding of the ICH.

UNESCO Member States that have not yet ratified the 2003 Convention to do so.

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This recommendation was adopted on 15 March 2006 by the participants at the Expert Meeting on Community Involvement in Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage, held in Tokyo, Japan, from 13-15 March 2006.