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**Preliminary notes**

**1. Definitions : Communities, groups, individuals**

I attended two of the three government experts meetings for the preparation of the 2003 Convention. I remember that the definitions raised very passionate debates among participants. Those related to the categories of “communities”, “groups” and “individuals” were discussed. In my sense, “communities” refer to large human entities living in a defined territory and sharing a language, a common local history, a common set of tangible and intangible cultural features. One or two of these modes of self-definition can be found among those communities: territorial and genealogical.

The first one, the territorial, refers to a land on which the members of the Community live and from which they get the means of their subsistence. The borders of the territory can be well-known for all community members but they can also fluctuate through history of the area, stretching or diminishing depending on the community power to defend them. They can also be submitted to redefinition because of national, transnational or international migration of individuals or groups of that community which acquires a virtual dimension as we can see it under globalization (see Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large. The Cultural Consequences of Globalization*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1996).

The second mode of self-definition is generally related to the first one. It is based on the belief that all community members belong to the same entity due to kinship/blood ties, real or supposed so. In general, the genealogical mode has a tree-featured figure. An ancestor is believed to have had a number  $X$  of male descendants who gave birth to  $X^n$  Individuals considered as the direct ancestors of the smaller groups that form the larger community. This schema is to be found in tribal communities of North Africa for example.

Since the deep changes introduced in tribal communities of these area, namely during the XXth century on, the territorial mode of self-definition has become more relevant than the genealogical one.

As a result of different factors, political, socio-aeconomic, cultural, tribal communities disintegrated progressively and land ties become more strong than blood ones. But, this doesn't mean the complete irrelevance of the latter. The preparation of the candidature of the Moussem of Tan-Tan in Morocco for the Third Proclamation of masterpieces of Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity (more than that of the first candidature, i.e. Jemaa el Fna Square in Marrakech) demonstrated the importance of both territorial and genealogical mode of self-definition for local communities.

In the case of Jemaa el Fna Square, we had to deal in a higher level with the population of the city of Marrakech. But, in a lower level, the groups of stakeholders were to be taken into consideration. The Proclamation of the Square in 2001 contributed to the raise of a claim for recognition and fed a strong competition not only among the stakeholders but also among political and socio-aeconomic forces.

Unlikely, in the case of the Moussem of Tan-Tan, proclaimed in 2005, the tribal feeling seemed still strong. Tribal communities, strengthened by the census conducted by United Nations under the Sahara Conflict between Morocco and the Polisario Front, claimed blood ties, used genealogical mode of self-definition and insisted to present their traditional leaders to sign on the candidature document. And those leaders are designated on a tribal and genealogical basis.

But, at the same time, the territorial level was not completely absent. It even raised in an unexpected way. The fact that the land of the Moussem (where it is organized) is situated on the territory of a rural “Commune”-- an administrative sub-division of the province of Tan-Tan – raised a competition between the rural “Commune” and the Municipality of Tan-Tan, each of them searching to get control on the Moussem. The “Commune” defends a territorial right where the Municipality defends a wider conception of the territory and the proximity of the Moussem Land, four kilometers far from the city center.

Now we come to the “groups” as another item of the 2003 Convention. In the mind of the experts who prepared the Convention (to whom I belong), “groups” are parts of communities as it is understood in the order of occurrence of the two terms : “groups” comes after “communities”. It is also, in my sense, a matter of scale in the sense that “communities” are larger “groups” and the latter are smaller “communities”.

But there is another difference due to the nature of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) we deal with : if it concerns all the community or a certain group of that community (Charmers of Snakes in Jemaa el Fna Square for example are a group in the wider community of stakeholders of the ICH of the Square).

Finally, a group is more likely to be involved in the safeguarding of the ICH considered than will/may do the wider community.

At this stage, we touch the third category defined by the Convention, i.e. “individuals”. They are concerned in two ways: whether they are more engaged than others in the process of safeguarding the ICH or they are the unique beholder of a specific kind of that ICH. The first case is referred to in the Convention by the expression: “...and, in some cases, individuals ...” (Article 2.1). The second one concern more specifically a part of ICH that is in danger of disappear if the unique beholder dies (a traditional craftsman for example).

## **2. The Involvement of Communities in defining, in defining, inventorying and safeguarding of the ICH**

The participation of Communities, groups and individuals in the process of identification, inventory and safeguarding of their own ICH is referred to in the Article 15 of the Convention. This article lets the practical modalities of such a participation to the States Parties and demands to them “to ensure the widest possible participation of Communities.”

On the basis of my own experience, it's much easier to involve communities at the stage of identification than in that of safeguarding. And experiences conducted in other countries or areas are of lesser help because every situation is unique and specific.

In the case of the Moussem of Tan-Tan, the involvement of the communities, groups and individuals was effectively reached during the first stages of the candidature. Stakeholders either women or men, traditional leaders of tribes, local political representatives, intellectuals, and artists took actively part to the revitalization of the Moussem (Great annual traditional festival of Saharian nomads) by participating to the first (2004) and the second (2005) editions. Between the two, the candidature was prepared. The Governor of Tan-Tan (representant of the Ministry of Interior) was the head of the Committee of preparation of the Candidature. I was named by the Ministry of Culture as the Scientific Coordinator of the project. About thirty persons representing local authorities, deputies, responsables of local administration, intellectuals, artists and influent tribesmen took part to the work conducted through several months. Periodic meetings were organized to discuss the contents and led to the final document submitted to UNESCO.

After the Moussem of Tan-Tan was proclaimed in 2005, the Minister of Culture organized a press conference in Rabat and the medias reserved some papers to the proclamation. In Tan-Tan, people were very proud of this international recognition of the Moussem.

But, the management plan is still waiting for its implementation. At that

point of the process, we touch the involvement of beholders in the safeguarding of the ICH. People get more and more aware that the proclamation is not the end but the beginning of a process of preservation. At the same time, everybody ignores how to do, with whom, with which means and during what time. A lack of experience in the management of cultural projects in general and of intangible heritage in particular is actually inhibating the good willing of the beholders and the responsables.