Sub-regional Network Meetings for Intangible Cultural Heritage Safeguarding

Asia and the Pacific is a considerably sizable region to begin approaching a task as substantial as safeguarding intangible cultural heritage. As a regional centre, ICHCAP has set out to pursue this task by reaching out to those involved in the field within the individual sub-regions in hopes of gaining knowledge as well as share it. This initiative, which focuses on the Centre's mission of disseminating information and developing networks, led to two sub-regional meetings held in Uzbekistan for Central Asia and Fiji for the Pacific, in March and April 2010. The meetings were a valuable opportunity to hear firsthand the challenges and needs in the field of ICH safeguarding from the Member States as well as building a foundation for future collaboration among Member States in Asia and the Pacific.

Central Asia and ICHCAP: Building a Partnership for Sustainable Safeguarding of ICH

The Central Asian Sub-Regional Network Meeting for Intangible Cultural Heritage Safeguarding was held 22-23 March in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, and was co-organised by ICHCAP and the National Commission of the Republic of Uzbekistan for UNESCO in collaboration with the International Institute for Central Asian Studies (IICAS), and UNESCO offices based in Tashkent and Almaty.

The meeting aimed to promote ICH safeguarding activities in the Central Asian sub-region. The primary objectives of the meeting were to foster an understanding for the current status of intangible cultural heritage safeguarding activities, particularly inventory-making in the Central Asian sub-region, build a cooperative network between the States Parties of Central Asia and ICHCAP in the sub-region, enhance the implementation of the 2003 UNESCO Convention, and expand opportunities for cooperative projects between the Member States, UNESCO Field offices and ICHCAP.

The first day of the meeting began with welcoming remarks from the Deputy Minister of Culture and Sports for the Republic of Uzbekistan, Bakhodir Akhmedov and Head of the UNESCO Tashkent Office, Jorge Ivan Espinal. These were followed by keynote presentations by ICHCAP Executive Director, Seong-Yong Park who addressed the issues and tasks in the Implementation of the 2003 Convention and regional collaboration, succeeded by the Secretary General of the National Commission of Uzbekistan, Alisher Ikramov who spoke about the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage. The presentations for national case studies on ICH inventory were followed by participants from Kyrgyzstan (Bakyt Amanbaeva), Tajikistan (Farogat Azizi), Kazakhstan (Yuri Peshkov), Uzbekistan (Urazali Tashmatov) and the Republic of Korea (Dong Joo Jo).

The first day laid the groundwork by presenting background information of ICH activities in the sub-region as well as international safeguarding measures, while the following day provided a chance to develop a path toward future cooperation. On the second day, talks focused primarily on sharing information and experiences surrounding issues regarding the ICH Convention, such as draft revisions of the 2003 Convention Operational Directives, guidelines and formats for periodic reports, and drafts of the operational directives on raising awareness of ICH. These sessions provided an understanding of the Operational Directives of the Convention and addressed the regional needs and challenges of its implementation.

During the final session, Seong-Yong Park gave an introduction of ICHCAP and its activities, as a UNESCO category 2 regional ICH centre. A discussion of concrete measures for building a cooperative network for ICH safeguarding in the Central Asian sub-region led to the unanimous agreement for the adoption of an action plan which was reached among participants.

The adopted action plan entitled Central Asia and ICHCAP: Partnership for Sustainable ICH Safeguarding comprises useful measures to promote cooperation in regards to developing multinational nominations for the Representative List, Urgent Safeguarding List, register of good practices, as well as studies on the harmonisation of national inventories of tangible and intangible heritage, networking between documentation centres in Central Asia and ICHCAP, and translation of the ICH Courier newsletter.
The Pacific and ICHCAP: Forging a New Alliance toward ICH Safeguarding in the Pacific Islands

The Pacific Sub-Regional Network Meeting for Intangible Cultural Heritage Safeguarding was held in Nadi, Fiji from 27-28 April 2010 and was co-organised by the Intangible Cultural Heritage Centre for Asia and the Pacific (ICHCAP) and the Institute of Indigenous Language and Culture (IILC) in collaboration with the UNESCO Apia Office.

The objectives of the meeting were to promote the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage in the Pacific, share information regarding the current situation of ICH safeguarding present in the region and build a cooperative network among States Parties of the region and ICHCAP. As Fiji, Tonga and Papua New Guinea are currently the only three Pacific Member States who are States Parties to the 2003 Convention, a fundamental element of the meeting was also devoted to handling the issue of encouraging the remaining Member States to become States Parties.

The Permanent Secretary for the Ministry of Education of Fiji, Robokua Naiyaga directed the meetings attention to factors present in the Pacific region regarding the risk of disappearing history and oral culture with the onset of this neo-colonial era. In light of this, Seong-Yong Park’s presentation emphasised the necessity of partnership and cooperation within the Pacific to mobilise collective efforts to safeguard the ICH of the region. Country reports describing the status of current ICH safeguarding efforts were presented by representatives from Fiji (Sekove Bigitibau), Papua New Guinea (Hale Lahu), Tonga (TU‘lōkamana Tuita) and Vanuatu (Abong Marcellin). Additional presentations included an explanation by Setoki Qalubau, Administrative Researcher for IILC, regarding how inventory-making has been utilised with the Cultural Mapping Program in Fiji as well as an introduction to ICH safeguarding activities that the UNESCO Apia Office is involved with, presented by UNESCO Programme Specialist, Akatsuki Takahashi.

During discussions, participants of the meeting described the current situation in Pacific countries which are typically governed by the chiefs of indigenous groups whom hold ultimate authority. The importance of cooperation between local experts who can communicate with indigenous communities and leaders to safeguard ICH in the Pacific was heavily emphasised. Additionally, other issues were mentioned such as, the weakness of cultural identity among particular indigenous communities caused primarily by an aging population which is subsequently a repercussion of the developing economy.

ICHCAP and the participants of the meeting adopted an action plan for ICH safeguarding of the Pacific region before the closing session. The adopted action plan includes items regarding dissemination of the meetings’ outcome to both States Parties and States non-party of the Pacific region, support for the multinational nomination of UNESCO ICH Lists, building on the existing partnership with Fiji to further explore possibilities of expanding the involvement of both States Parties and States non party in the ongoing and future activities of ICHCAP and a follow up meeting to be held in the Pacific in 2011.

Director’s Note

Placing Greater Emphasis on Endangered ICH

Taking a closer look at the current situation of intangible cultural heritage in our societies, it seems readily apparent that the numbers of endangered ICH elements far surpass those being safeguarded successfully.

The unfortunate reality is that globalisation is transforming our society and we are rushing to keep up with the need to urgently safeguard endangered heritage. In a sense, safeguarding ICH could be seen as a race against time and within this context the necessity of placing a priority on heritage in need of urgent protection is paramount.

By focusing our collective safeguarding efforts on heritage facing the greatest threat, we may prevent more ICH from disappearing. For this, awareness raising is vital and within this context inventory-making is an important method towards that.

At the recent sub-regional meetings co-organised by ICHCAP in both Uzbekistan and Fiji, there was a special focus on inventory-making in both Central Asia and the Pacific, respectively, and on how these efforts fit in with urgent safeguarding endeavours. These meetings provided a valuable chance to develop concrete action plans for future collaboration in dealing with endangered ICH elements in these sub-regions.

You can read more about these meetings in the ICH Issues section as well as a feature article about Fiji’s Cultural Mapping Program in the Inventory Making Efforts section. Further, UNESCO’s efforts and concerns in regards to raising awareness of the importance of ICH are presented in the Expert Remarks section. As we move ahead, I hope that the ICH Courier will continue to provide an interactive platform for the most relevant issues facing ICH safeguarding today.
UNESCO’s efforts to raise awareness about the importance of intangible cultural heritage are central to our mission as the Secretariat for the Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage. We seek to be not only a clearing house of information, but also a catalyst for international cooperation in the safeguarding of ICH. Through our multilingual website (www.unesco.org/culture/ich), we explain what intangible heritage is and how it might be safeguarded through the employment of publications and exhibitions. We provide up-to-date information about the Convention, all of its procedures, meetings of its governing bodies, as well as other conferences and seminars from around the world. The website also brings together texts, images and videos for all of the elements inscribed on the Urgent Safeguarding List and the Representative List in addition to information on safeguarding projects implemented in recent years by UNESCO or selected by the Committee as good practices.

The Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage has emphasised time and time again the fundamental importance of international cooperation in promoting awareness of ICH. External visibility and recognition, whether local, national, or international, can help communities to identify with their own heritage and recognise its importance not only for themselves, but for others as well, in turn encouraging greater pride in their heritage and motivating them to transmit it to younger generations. Respect for the heritage of others is fundamental to the Convention, and so our awareness-raising activities aim to ensure such mutual respect. Increased visibility of ICH can also bring greater awareness among policy makers, government officials, and civil societies about the importance of intangible cultural heritage and the means to safeguard it.

When new operational directives were adopted for raising awareness about intangible cultural heritage (to be presented for final adoption by the General Assembly in June 2010), the Committee emphasised the primary responsibility of each country to raise awareness among its own people about their heritage and that of others. The Committee also insisted on the necessity of fully involving the communities in all stages of awareness-raising. According to the Committee, the respective country’s free, prior and informed consent is a precondition for awareness-raising activities, any customary practices governing access to specific aspects of heritage must be strictly respected, and the communities themselves should benefit from such activities.

Special care needs to be taken because increased visibility may inadvertently bring negative consequences. Making some things visible may make others ‘invisible’, creating tension among communities or countries. It is essential to listen to heritage bearers and communities, and to make every effort to ensure that raising awareness serves their interests and respects their wishes.

In the future, UNESCO would like to tap into mediums of mass media to communicate our message about the importance of intangible cultural heritage more vigorously. Creating strategic partnerships with other cultural institutions, such as museums, will also play a pivotal role in our visibility work. A partnership agreement that UNESCO recently concluded is the Musée de quai Branly, which aims to share information about the elements inscribed on the Lists of the 2003 Convention, thus creating a new channel of diffusion for UNESCO’s message. This partnership is a pilot initiative, which UNESCO would like to extend to other museums around the world.
Gold has been long viewed and used as an ornament of preciousness and luxury. Gold is often used to decorate textiles and this process is referred to as, ‘Gold appliqué’. Gold appliqué has a long history in Korea and there are several records explaining a particular situation where the government prohibited the use of gold appliqué during the Three Kingdoms era (4-7AD) due to concerns about the dissipation of the country’s wealth.

According to historical records, gold appliqué was called soguem (銷金) during the Goryeo period and geumbakjang (artisans responsible for executing the task of gold appliqué) are the artisans who worked at the crafts workshop. During the Joseon Dynasty, people often decorated noeui (overcoats), jeokeui (ceremonial robes embroidered with peacock related patterns), myeonsa (veils), seonja (fans), dae (belts) and lib (traditional hats) with gold appliqué.

The earliest object related to gold appliqué is from the Goryeo period (918-1392 AD). There are quite a few articles of cloth that were excavated and most of them belong to the late Joseon period (1392-1910 AD).

Gold appliqué was used for various purposes. In the royal court, it was mainly used for women’s clothing, overcoats, ceremonial robes, formal dresses, upper garments of traditional clothes and long skirts. In communal houses they also decorated their overcoats, jackets, skirts for ladies, etc. Additionally, boy’s clothing, ornaments, utensils and headgear were also decorated with gold appliqué.

Patterns of gold appliqué were selected in accordance to cloth type. During the Joseon dynasty, patterns were strictly limited to your particular social rank, however, the boundaries faded over time. Burial objects from the Goryeo dynasty are covered in floral designs, dragons and phoenix decorations. During the Joseon Dynasty, patterns of dragons, phoenixes, fruit, birds, insects, flowers and treasures in which case represent wealth, power, honor, peaceful life as well as prosperity were widely used and Chinese characters representing such ideals such as 喜 (pleasure), 壽 (longevity), and 福 (fortune) were used as decorative symbols for certain objects as well.

Gold appliqué can be produced using two techniques: one is geumbak (attaching gold ornaments by heating them by hand) and the other is bugeum (pasting gold layers directly to the fabric). Unfortunately only the bugeum technique has been transmitted up to this point. For Gold appliqué, first an artisan needs to draw design patterns and apply the pattern to the wooden blocks then carve them accordingly. This carved wooden block is called a geumbakpan, literally meaning plate of gold appliqué. Carving geumbakpan requires skillful craftsmanship and it is one of the most important steps in the process of gold appliqué. Once geumbakpan is ready, the artisan makes a starch based paste (traditionally air bladder of a croaker was used for making the starch), when everything is ready, the artisan places a piece of fabric on the table and begins to spread starch over the geumbakpan and stamps the fabric. Then he places a gold leaf on the stamp site and gently grazes over the area. The gold leaf needs to dry for a few days and when the gold appliqué has dried enough the artisan takes the gold leaf off the unglued area leaving behind only golden patterns. Generally it takes approximately two weeks to complete only a few pieces of cloth.

Geumbakjang was designated an Important Intangible Cultural Heritage (No. 119) and it has been transmitted by Kim, Deok-Hwan who is identified as a holder of this craftsmanship, Lee, Jeong-Ja (wife) and Kim, Gi-Ho (son).
Those familiar with Pakistan's history can easily appreciate the range and variety of its hand-made textiles and the sight of a humble villager using them as everyday wear. The cloth weaving and dying tradition from the Indus Valley which originated roughly five thousand years ago, has continued throughout the Middle Ages and received a tremendous boost of encouragement with the onset of new technological developments and the introduction of new motifs while under Muslim rule.

A greater part of Pakistan's cloth textiles are developed from indigenous cotton materials which remain a major cash crop for the country. Despite sharp fluctuations in output caused by the vagaries of nature and the international market, Pakistan has retained its position among the top cotton producing countries in the world.

The most important textile craft among all others is 'rilli'. The art of rilli is typically performed by Sindhi people, and the women of this art have acquired fame over its craft. The word rilli is derived from the ancient Sindhi words; rillial, millial and gaddial; which respectively mean, to spread or cover, to mix and match and gaddial means 'to be together'. When it is finished they call it rilli; a piece which is made entirely by hand with the ingenuity of a true artist.

Rilli consists of two 'purrs'; the upper and lower pieces. In between the purrs, clean pieces of rag are spread and tacked over. This process is called 'leh'. The lower purr (the reverse sheet) is a simpler piece. It is dyed in indigo or any other light coloured ink, preferably green, or what is currently popular, black. The upper purr (the face), must have a design, thus, the used ajrak worn by men is often used as the readymade lower purr to expedite the rilli making process. This is a more common type of rilli.

A more sophisticated type of rilli would have the upper purr made of patch-work cloth pieces cut into various designs so as to make it more attractive, more impressive and more colourful. This method of purr making is much more time consuming.

Rillies can be categorised as follows:
1. **Tukran or Tukrate wari rilli** – (small pieces) made of many colours in square forms or in designs which run lengthwise with variety of patterns.
2. **Tukk or Kataa** – a piece of cloth is measured by using ones palm and then they cut for an appliquè design.
3. **Chau Gullo** – designs of different flowers including roses with designs of bushes, butterflies and honey bees in the centre.
4. **Nau Gullo** – based on a cluster of nine stars in heaven, but they are actually flowers in the design of stars; these rillies are rare and beautiful and according to local ladies, if spread out under a moonlit sky, they become a rival in beauty.
5. **Ath Gulua** – comprising of eight kinds of flowers such as roses, jasmine, etc.
6. **Nau Tann** – a famous game in Sindh. A board is made in the centre of the rilli which is used for playing the board game.
7. **Sorhan Gulua** – made up of sixteen flowers with four corners of roses and jasmine in centre.
8. **Trekundi rally or Jhirmir** – the shape of small dolls in various colourful dresses with tiny mirrors used to decorate them. Pearls or beads are tied to the border and tassels are placed in the four corners with cloves and cardamoms tied for scent. This is typically used for weddings.
9. **Catah wari rilli** – comprised of six different designs.
10. **Ath Kundi** – eight dolls organised in the shape of circles mimicking the moon.
11. **Sindh jo galeecho** – these are made in the style of Irani carpets.

Other designs include: gull (flower); koonj (stork); uth kajao (Camel's hump); nang phan (Snake's hood); hindoro (motif); bansar and bulo (jewellery); chehen dablin wari (squares-six); sattan dablin wari (squares-seven); khooh pheri wari (circular designs) and dhatak wari (motif design).

The rich variety of appliquè work known as rilli is among the finest folk art coverlets in Pakistan. An overwhelming display of rillies can be observed throughout ones daily life as well as at outdoor religious festivals and shrines of the Sufi Saints where local people traditionally use them as ground covers. Rilli work is also associated with the Sufis who stitch together old scraps of cloth and use them as jackets, chaddars and caps to demonstrate their humility. Currently, rilli coverlets are a part of Sindhi households and have become a trend throughout Pakistan. The people of Sindh, rich or poor, equally recognise the importance of rilli and people of the world constantly admire it.
Traditional Indonesian batik was listed by UNESCO as an Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity on 2 October 2009. The unique and exquisite designs created by the artistic minds of citizens centuries ago, express their reverence to life and nature by painting cloth with symbols and characters bearing the philosophies of life.

Traditional textiles
Throughout the Indonesian archipelago, traditional textiles are one of the most interesting and exquisite forms of art and are not seen only as clothing, but are essential to ceremonies for the calling of divine intervention and protection. The spiritual and ritual importance that textiles play is reflected in their great mystery and splendor. The finest examples, often of elaborate and complex designs, display superb levels of technical skills in batik, dyeing, weaving, decorating and embroidery.

The art
Batik comes from the word ‘tik’ meaning dot. It is a technique used for applying patterns to cloth. With a drawing tool referred to as a canting filled with liquid wax, lines are drawn onto the cloth. When the wax hardens and the cloth is immersed in dye, the wax prevents color from seeping to areas that are covered. In the finest batik, the wax is applied on both sides of the cloth with exact symmetry. In the 19th century the waxing stamp was introduced to speed up this intricate process. The final product results in white patterns on a colored background. Batik is the name of the finished piece of cloth. Ancient batik in Indonesia demonstrate reliefs of the 9th century Prambanan Temple, featuring King Kertarajasa ruler of Mojopahit, wearing a cloth with the kawung motif, one of the oldest known batik motifs. Batik motifs are closely related to the agrarian basis of Javanese culture, the kawung motif is a pattern made up of cubes, each of which contain two aren (or fruits from the jaggery palm Arenga saccharifera) cut lengthwise, while the lereng (diagonal lines) motif symbolises the slopes of the mountain.

The people’s cloth
For the Javanese people, batik is inseparable from life because it embodies a philosophy that holds importance from birth until death. It is still common to wrap babies in a batik cloth, while a batik sling is used as a baby carrier. When one dies, a batik cloth will cover the body of the deceased. In weddings certain batik patterns such as truntum and wahyu tumurun are used to bless newly married couples and their parents. Annual offerings to the guardians of Java’s main volcanoes and the goddess of the South Sea include pieces of batik cloth. Civil servants, school children and other groups wear batik uniforms to identify themselves. It is also associated with traditional music of the gamelan; many batik patterns share similar names with certain gamelan melodies like srikaton, pisangali, kawung etc. Wayang puppet figures wear batik clothing according to their character: gods and kings wear batik with a lereng pattern, as they are deemed to have supernatural powers, only they can wear this powerful pattern. The same is true for the kawung motif, symbolising the relationship between omnipotence and the natural power of the universe.

Preserving the heritage
Indonesian batik is known in 20 provinces as either a traditional or newly developed craft, with 40,000 enterprises employing 800,000 people and an annual export value of 150 million US$ according to existing statistics.

To increase people’s appreciation, efforts are made by Himpunan Wastraprema, an association of traditional textile enthusiasts and other associations to promote batik, particularly among the younger generations through exhibitions, workshops, seminars and symposiums, and the inclusion of batik making in school curricula.

The art of batik has come a long way from being a mere handicraft. Designers use traditional cloths as their prime material and put traditional textiles at the forefront of Indonesian fashion. Since the inclusion of batik on UNESCO’s list, education and training of the batik heritage directed towards students at various museums is very popular, the sale of batik has increased significantly and is well appreciated.
Traditional handicrafts are described as objects that are made manually and are influenced by an area’s geographical condition, history and climate, which have supported people’s lives throughout history. Amongst various traditional handicrafts, textiles have long been one of the most fundamental and requisite elements in people’s lives everywhere in the world. Textiles fashioned into clothing have been used to cover one’s body in order to provide protection from the elements, as well as to express personal character and social status. Textiles have also been used to cover various items, to protect and contain them. In order to make such traditional textiles, diverse types of plant and animal fibres have been used as materials, and varied techniques such as weaving, dyeing, stitching etc. have been discovered in different areas. From one place to another, the techniques spread across borders and many people began to share similar traditional textile techniques suited to their life styles.

Among the most fundamental traditional handicraft techniques used to make textiles are hand-weaving and natural dyeing. Indigo is one of the most time-honoured and widely-used natural dyes in the world. In Japan, this indigo dyeing technique and products made using it are called ‘Aizome’, and its existence in Japan precedes the 6th century. Indigo pigment is called indican and produces a distinctive indigo blue colour we call ‘ai’, it can also be taken from plants of various families, such as polygonaceae, fabaceae and asteraceae. The colour ai was called ‘Japan Blue’ by a foreign chemist in the Meiji period, who praised the Japanese taste for wearing beautiful clear deep blue Aizome Kimonos. Aizome was preferred by nobility, as well as by ordinary people, for the toughness and durability that it would add to the fabric through the dyeing process. It is also said that wearing aizome clothing has a medicative/curative/restorative effect on the human body. Looking at the industrial aspect of aizome, there used to be vendors called kouyaor konya, literally meaning ‘dark blue shop’ in Japanese, who were specially engaged in aizome during the Middle Ages. Also, during the Edo period, several clans utilised ai dye so as to financially support the clan according to the monopoly act of that time.

As a form of intangible cultural heritage, aizome became one of the traditional techniques that is indispensable for the preservation of cultural properties in Japan. For example, one of the conditions for designating ‘Kurumekasuri’ in 1957 as an Important Intangible Cultural Property was that it had to be dyed using pure natural ai indigo. Also, Ryukyu indigo dye production, dyeing with true indigo and awa indigo production are designated as Selected Conservation Techniques under the Law for the Protection of Cultural Properties in Japan. Needless to say, aizome has been applied to many different textile materials and has been popular for a long time because of its beautiful appearance and practical function, which makes it desirable to pass down from generation to generation.

Cultivating Ryukyu Ai (Photo by Masakatsu Mitoma)
Navruz: Uzbekistan’s annual spring festival

Rustambek Abdullaev (Professor, Republican Music College of the Ministry of Culture and Sports, Republic of Uzbekistan)

One of the brightest folk festivities, which has been with us since ancient times, is the Navruz spring holiday festival. Navruz, celebrated on 21 March symbolises the ‘universal date of birth’, for when the departure of winter and arrival of spring was interpreted as the ‘rebirth of nature’. Its origin is connected to ancient astronomical observations which were based off solar and stellar motion as well as the motion of the moon. Ideas of peace, solidarity, prosperity and mercifulness are reflected in each motion of the moon. Ideas of peace, solidarity, prosperity and mercifulness are reflected in each

Traditions and rituals related to Navruz are inseparably linked to people from all walks of life. It is widely spread in different forms and is celebrated in various parts of the world. Even within a single country, there are a variety of Navruz rituals that stretch from village to village. Traditional rituals and rites on the eve of Navruz begin with the appearance of buds of the first spring flowers. Common features of Navruz festivities in Uzbekistan are public gatherings and meetings. Groups of people, usually consisting of children and youngsters, go around to the houses of a village with bundles of snowdrops and blueflags (irises) or tulips, while singing songs dedicated to the arrival of spring. Usually such walking is called ‘gulgardoni’ (the carrying of flowers) or ‘boychechak’ (a parade with snowdrops). Residents of these houses invite the participants into their homes, take the flowers and express their good wishes while making some gifts for the children. In such a way the group walking around from house to house lets the people know the arrival of spring.

Until recently, rituals for ‘boychechak’ (the first flower) festival also known as ‘iola sayli’ (outing with tulips), or ‘iqizil gul bayrami’ (holiday of the red flower) were preserved, they were organised immediately after the Navruz holiday. The fore-mentioned were often accompanied by performances of ritual songs. In the evening, on the eve of Navruz, there is a ritual that is organised which is accompanied by the lighting of a festive campfire near to where people gather for folk parades, sing festive songs and have a pleasant time.

A specialty for Navruz people is to collectively prepare ceremonial dishes: women prepare an exquisite dish called sumalak, from the sap of germinating seeds of wheat and flour, kuk samosa (national spring patty from green herbs), patties, baked flat cakes and different national confectionery goods. Whereas the men prepare a dish called khalim, a festive ritual porridge made from flour, sprouted wheat and meat.

There is also the following rule that indicates: on the feast table, in a mandatory manner, there should be seven items or meals, the titles of which start with the letters of ‘sin’ (‘khahf sin’), sabzi (a greenery, germinating seed), sabze (raisin), seb (apple), sirko (wine vinegar), sandjit (dzhida), sumakh (barberry), sir (garlic); or with the letters of ‘mim’, for example: magiz, sirini, sham, etc; or with ‘mim’, for example: meva, may, magiz, etc. The number seven plays a very important role in arranging the festivities table. It was in ancient times when astronomers paid special attention to the different phases of the moon, paying particular attention to every seven days when it changes its position. The organisation of field work according to the phases of the moon originates from this fact.

Since ancient times, Navruz and its festive rituals and rites deeply penetrated the people’s daily life. The solemnity of Navruz was promoted by the organisation of different traditional games and methods of entertainment (such as: horse races known as at chopar; competitions referred to as kapkara, buzhashi and ulog; wrestling known as kurash and gushtingir; sheep and cock fights, etc.); enthralling the public with performances from rope walkers, acrobats, comedians, and puppeteers.

Also, during Navruz it became a tradition to conduct several rituals, for instance, the festival of the first furrow (prior to the making this ritual of the introducing the plough for the spring season, nobody had the right to start spring ploughing because it was believed that rich
Field Report

harvest and abundance of moisture for the fields is dependent on the fortune of the ploughman who undergoes the first furrow ritual.

Notably, in some places the birthday and adulthood of boys from any particular village (with participation of all local community members) were celebrated collectively, it was the first ceremonial appearance of a boy, officially acknowledging them as an equal member of the men’s congregation of the village. It should be noted, that the New Year traditionally has been the reference point for age among people of the Eastern and Central Asia regions. Irrespective of the ‘real’ age of a baby, with the arrival of Navruz one year is added to his/her age.

On the day of Navruz, young girls gather together and prepare beautiful flower garlands. They bring spring water in their pots, throw their rings, coins, etc. inside and then while being accompanied by folk songs, lapars and good wishers take out the items thrown in the pot which are seen as symbols of happiness.

The main feature of Navruz and of its traditional rites and rituals have always been folk songs and instrumental music. On festive occasions, not only ceremonial music, but also different folk songs and melodies are performed. Music accompanied all folk shows and games. For festive days consisted of special ceremonies, ritual melodies and inviting tunes, which were performed on instruments called karnai, douls (drums) and nog’oras.

The advent of Navruz is accompanied by entertainment and merrymaking. In some places people arranged impromptu fairs, where sellers sell different souvenirs, delicacies and national dishes. Taking advantage of the opportunity to enjoy folk singers and musicians, ropewalkers and acrobats, magicians and gaggers display their skills is a great show for anyone given the good fortune to experience it. However, most of the attention from spectators is directed to the contests organised for national wrestling, ‘kurash’. One of the other beloved and fascinating shows exhibited during Navruz is goat-hunting ‘kopkara’.

Taking into account these different features of Navruz, this festival was inscribed on UNESCO’s Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2009. The inscription was supported by Azerbaijan, India, Iran, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Turkey and Uzbekistan. The element represents all the domains of intangible cultural heritage according to Article 2.2 of the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003): oral traditions and expressions; performing arts; social practices, rituals and festive events; knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe; traditional craftsmanship.

The United Nations General Assembly, in its 64th session on 18 February 2010, proclaimed 21 March as the International Day of Navruz. This holiday has been celebrated by more than 300 million people worldwide throughout a vast geographical space including: Central Asia and the Caucasus, the Middle East, the Black Sea Basin, the Balkans and other regions.

Popular game-qo terakmi, kok terak

National Park: Main venue of Navruz Holiday (Photo by Usmon Qoraboev)

Snowdrop, herald of spring (Photo by Usmon Qoraboev)
Knowledge is the foundation of indigenous cultures, it is in itself an expression of the culture it originates from and creates relationships among an indigenous community with respect to its ancestral territory. The concept of knowledge or traditional knowledge is closely related to intangible cultural heritage, which is central to the promotion of it. Intangible cultural heritage shapes the ‘spirit’ of a culture and central to its promotion and protection is the revitalisation and safeguarding of knowledge and cultural systems.

Indigenous Fijians are unique because they are born into very particular social roles which tend to hold specific responsibilities. Responsibilities of a particular family would include special knowledge and skills that have been passed down from generation to generation. The knowledge and skills passed are regarded as divine inheritance that is not easy to part with, like other matters of choice or preference may be. Predominantly, intangible characteristics of the Fijian culture are mainly unrecorded such as indigenous customs, language, dances, traditional etiquette, etc., these are more commonly performed through oral or visual means and its preservation rests fundamentally on continuous usage and observance. Given the onset of a dominant global culture, with the combined influence of a non-conducive cosmopolitan livelihood, an apathetic youthful population, and emphasis on economic development, intangible heritage is in a precariously desperate position as it is continually threatened and exploited for economic gain.

The establishment of a National Inventory for Traditional Knowledge and Expressions of Culture and its Subsequent Protection was initiated with the following issues in mind:

- preservation and safeguarding of tangible and intangible cultural heritage
- promotion of the value of cultural diversity
- respect for cultural rights
- promotion of tradition-based creativity and innovation as ingredients of sustainable economic development

The Cultural Mapping Program began in 2004 after the Fijian government decided to adopt the regional model legislation that was developed by a group of eminent legal and cultural experts in the Pacific region. The decision to develop a regional model legislation to facilitate the protection of Traditional Knowledge and the Expressions of Culture was reached in a Trade Ministers meeting of Pacific Island States in Noumea, New Caledonia in 2003. The Institute of Indigenous Language and Culture of the Ministry of Indigenous
Affairs was then mandated by a decision from the government cabinet in September 2003, to be responsible for the development of Fiji’s legislation on Traditional Knowledge and Expressions of Culture.

The Cultural Mapping program, which involves the collection, recording and documentation of indigenous tangible and intangible cultural heritage in all 14 provinces of Fiji, is the ICH inventory-making component that forms the foundation for the model law that is being developed. It has been noted that indigenous Fijians do not have an inventory that properly documents the aspects of their intangible cultural heritage, and the only medium of transmission is through verbal and observational activities performed by elders. Due to the changing times and the advent of technological innovation, the world has been led to endure a significant loss of ICH and the changing perception of younger generations in regards to their culture.

The first batch of researchers who had a combination of fieldwork experience and traditional iTaukei protocols were recruited in May 2005 and underwent an intensive training workshop that was funded by UNESCO. In collaboration with other stakeholders and experts, a cultural research framework was developed and piloted before finalising the research outline which was to be adopted throughout all of the provinces of Fiji.

Prior to the data collection stage of this project, an awareness raising campaign commenced in the proposed sites where piloting took place. Provincial council members responsible for the cultural locales piloted, were briefed on the purpose and objectives of the visits accordingly, and their assistance was also rendered in the promulgation of the entire process to the grassroots community living in villages. Since then, the theme of awareness raising is used to formally spread the ‘positive news’ of a visit and to seek villagers consent for research to be undertaken in their respective localities.

In 2005 a database system was specifically developed and launched for the project to facilitate the input of final data collected from respective villages and provinces. The system has enhanced proper storage of information accumulated from the field and ensures that each cultural expression is filed appropriately. In this way, the data is retrieved easily and efficiently when it needs to be accessed by curators, individuals and parties with the traditional bearer’s consent. Records entered into the database are based on the domains outlined in the research framework and stored in the following format: text, images (digitalised photos), audio recordings and accompanying film footage. Hence, each Fijian village will have entries of their community’s particular characteristic(s) of ICH in our database.

The institute is focused on efforts for completing the program as early as possible, and it is envisaged that with the current available resources and funding, the program has a strong opportunity to carry on for a prolonged amount of time.

1. Constructing Fijian bure  2. Roof making  
3. Carving war clubs   4. Kutaweaving  
5. War clubs

(All photos by the Institute of Indigenous Language and Culture, Fiji)
Intangible heritage is a vital factor in cultural identity among communities, promoting creativity and the preservation of cultural diversity. As a safeguarding measure for intangible heritage at the national level, the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003) emphasises intangible cultural heritage inventories as it is stipulated in Article 12.

In light of this, the Cultural Atlas of India project was conducted in collaboration with the UNESCO New Delhi Office, Ministry of Culture, Government of India and relevant institutes in the field of intangible cultural heritage in India, and this project was supported by ICHCAP from 2007 to 2009.

**Objectives**

This project aimed to provide a tool for the Government of India to inventory and assess the condition of intangible heritage existing in its territory in a coherent manner, and to publicise the collected information. The project proposes to develop methodologies and a template for the inventorying of intangible heritage and associated elements. Furthermore, a web-based state inventory of the intangible was designed to enable each state to collect, store and publicise up-to-date information as a means to enhance their image and prestige.

By creating a common template and a web-based public database to be filled in under the responsibility of each state government, the project aims to develop:

- a minimum standard for, and consistency of, collected data among inventories of the same area;
- a decentralised mechanism to ensure the efficiency of the actual implementation of inventory making;
- a platform for each state to publicise its cultural wealth in a holistic manner to enhance their prestige, thereby providing an incentive for state governments to carry out the survey.

**Implementation**

For the implementation of the project, a task force team comprised of experts was formed, for their duty was to analyse existing templates used by various institutions in India and abroad. Based on the analysis, a standard template for the Cultural Atlas project was designed and the first version of the database structure was developed and tested internally by the National Informatics Centre (NIC).

During the second phase of the project, the system was examined by a larger group of partners in collaboration with some state governments for further improvement of the database structure and templates. A pilot web-portal and its templates were tested by four state partners (Kerala, Rajasthan, Nagaland and Orissa) and sample data was obtained. The partners for each state were SAHA for Kerala state, Jaipur Virasat Foundation for Rajasthan state, INTACH-Nagaland for Nagaland state and Council of Professional Social Workers (CPSW) for Orissa state.

The project is not only about creating a new system, but it also carefully looks to the users need. To have a better understanding of this project among the project partners, a workshop was organised from 21-23 April 2009 in Japiur at the premises of the Jaipur Virasat Foundation. The workshop was conducted in order to brief the project partners on the concept of the Cultural Atlas of India project and to discuss in detail the nature and purpose of each section of the draft templates. The workshop was focused on identifying some of the missing elements, redundant details and to improve terminologies used in the templates. The guideline/manual for use of the templates and the database system was also developed accordingly.

**Evaluation**

The evaluation mission conducted by the Intangible Cultural Heritage Centre for Asia and the Pacific (ICHCAP) was organised from 27-31 March 2009. The delegation for the project evaluation mission examined a developed template and portal website, and some points were brought up on how the system should take care of: improving access to the system among various stakeholders, copyrighting the updated data, and considering reward measures for data contribution to maintain sustainability.

Templates were reviewed and approved by test users with minor modifications and guidelines on how to fill-in the templates and use the database system developed, followed by an intensive discussion among test users. As a result of this project, positive feedback obtained from the Ministry of Culture to take the ownership of the Cultural Atlas of India project to serve as a basis for the future National Inventory Making process. The system and templates will assist the government in collecting and storing ICH information, in addition, the information will serve as a tool for ICH inventorying and assessing the condition of intangible heritage to ensure the identification of intangible cultural heritage in regards to safeguarding.

**Cultural Atlas of India**

A web-based inventory of cultural resources enabling anyone to access and contribute data and pictures using the standard format developed by experts.

The Cultural Atlas of India proposes four levels of use:

- **Administrator**
- **State Coordinators**
- **Reviewers and**
- **Data Providers**

The contributed data will be assessed by reviewers with extensive academic backgrounds and then transmitted to the publisher, appointed at each state government level for final validation of the content.

(Resource: Final report of the Cultural Atlas of India project by UNESCO New Delhi Office)
Nestled in the Himalayas between India and China, Bhutan is considered the only independent Mahayana Buddhist country in the world today. The rich and vibrant local customs, habits and traditions, crafts and artistic sensibilities, derived from Buddhist teachings and practices, give Bhutan a distinctive identity of its own. Bhutan has conscientiously safeguarded these rich religious and cultural traditions, both tangible and intangible, as being one of the pillars of realising the developmental philosophy of ‘Gross National Happiness.’

The Phelchey Toenkhyim (Folk Heritage Museum of Bhutan) founded and established under the patronage of Her Majesty the Queen Mother Ashi Dorji Wangmo Wangchuck, was opened to visitors in July 2001, symbolising yet another endeavor to safeguard and strengthen the intangible cultural heritage and skills of this society. It has dedicated itself to connecting people to the Bhutanese rural past.

Phelchey Toenkhyim attempts to preserve traditional artifacts, skills and culture of Bhutan in efforts to make the daily lives of the Bhutanese people more widely known. These efforts were also made to reinforce the knowledge of their traditional lifestyle and culture before they disappear from everyday life and lose their practical value.

While progress cannot be stopped or everything of the past be protected, examples of all that could be found are preserved, lest such traditions get buried beneath the sands of time. Most importantly, skills that are an intrinsic part of the past are preserved, which may in turn become a necessary part of our future. The museum building which dates back to the mid 19th century, is in itself a testimony of how important traditional skills are, which have stood the test of time. Such buildings are rarely seen in urban areas nowadays.

A visit to the Phelchey Toenkhyim is a unique experience because the activities offered by the museum follows a seasonal dynamic in the same pattern as how the management of a rural household is influenced by seasonal rhythm.

In order to present a more typical Bhutanese rural setting and flavor, paddy, wheat and millet fields, traditional watermill (with mill stones that date back more than 150 years), traditional kitchen gardens with vegetables that were grown and consumed for hundreds of years and the famous traditional hot stone bath all complement the museum building and the exhibitions within.

The exhibits are structured according to the way space is typically used in rural households of Bhutan. The first floor is used as a pen for livestock and houses a collection of items ranging from farming tools to equestrian equipment for riding, travel and transport. Among other purposes, the second floor is used as a family’s granary. Grains are stored in containers of various types and sizes. The top floor is where the family lives and houses religious artifacts as well as cooking ware.

Additionally, certain traditional knowledge and skills of domestic chores are demonstrated, for example: the natural extraction of oil, brewing ara (local beverage), pounding rice, roasting rice, et al. Pottery, an endangered profession, is given emphasis as training is passed on to interested youth, generating employment while preserving culture.

The museum also acts as a hub for village artisans to demonstrate their skills in craftsmanship as well as being used as an outlet for their products. Such programs provide opportunities for artisans to use their skills and instill enthusiasm in the minds of younger generations to learn contemporary trades. The museum has a particular appeal for younger generations in that it provides insight into the past while simultaneously demonstrating its relevance to the present and future.
Safeguarding programmes, projects and activities that best reflect the principles and objectives of the UNESCO 2003 Convention

The Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage prescribes that the Intergovernmental Committee shall “periodically select and promote national, sub-regional and regional programmes, projects and activities for the safeguarding of the heritage which it considers best reflects the principles and objectives of this Convention, taking into account the special needs of developing countries (Article 18).” Such programmes, projects and principles selected are to be registered as ‘good practices.’

To this end, the Operational Directives for the implementation of the Convention regulates the proposal and selection procedure as well as the criteria for selection, promotion and dissemination of such programmes, projects and activities (Chapter 1.4). In detail, the States Parties may submit individual or joint proposals while the Committee selects among them, programmes, projects and activities that involve ‘safeguarding’ (as defined in Article 2.3 of the Convention), promote joint safeguarding efforts on regional, sub-regional and/or international levels, reflect the principles and objectives of the Convention, and engage communities, groups, and individuals in the implementation and preparation of proposals. Furthermore, the Committee shall establish and publish a register of programmes, projects and activities, and also make information available regarding the measures, methodologies and experiences gained. Additionally, Operational Directives encourage the Committee to provide guidance concerning best practices on the basis of experiences and lessons learned in safeguarding programmes, projects and activities.

Recently the Committee selected three safeguarding programmes, projects and activities as seen below.

Description of three safeguarding programmes, projects and activities

[Bolivia-Chile-Peru] Safeguarding intangible cultural heritage of Aymara communities in Bolivia, Chile and Peru (2009)

This sub-regional project aims to develop safeguarding measures to ensure the viability of oral expressions, music and traditional knowledge (textile art and agricultural technologies) of the Aymara communities of Bolivia (La Paz-Oruro-Potosí), Chile (Tarapacá-Arica-Parinacota-Antofagasta) and Peru (Tacna-Puno-Moquegua). The activities planned for implementation for the five-year project are: 1) identifying and inventorying customary knowledge and oral traditions of Aymara communities in the selected areas, 2) strengthening language as a vehicle for transmission of ICH through formal and non-formal education, 3) promoting and disseminating Aymara oral and musical expressions and 4) reinforcing traditional knowledge related to the production of textile arts and traditional agricultural techniques. These four actions have been established as priorities by the Aymara communities and they will be implemented with their full involvement. The project intends to employ the creation of a sub-regional and international network comprising of individuals, communities, groups, cultural managers, specialists, indigenous organisations, research centres, NGOs and governments, to promote the exchange of experience, information and training.

[Indonesia] Education and training in Indonesian Batik intangible cultural heritage for elementary, junior, senior, vocational school and polytechnic students, in collaboration with the Batik Museum in Pekalongan (2009)

Indonesian Batik is a traditional hand-crafted textile rich in intangible cultural values, passed down for generations in Java and elsewhere since the early 19th century, made by applying dots and lines of hot wax to cloth using a canthing tulis pen or canthing cap stamp as a dye-resistor. Patterns and motifs have deep symbolism related to social status, local community, nature, history and cultural heritage. The batik community noticed the younger generation’s interest in batik was waning and felt the need to increase efforts to transmit batik cultural heritage to guarantee its safeguarding. The program is a collaboration between the Batik Museum and elementary, junior, senior, vocational school and polytechnic students, to include the education of batik cultural values and traditional handicrafts in the curricula as local content or subject. The project has gone on for 3 years, and has continued to expand to the Pekalongan district and neighbouring Batang, Pemalang and Tegal districts.

[Spain] Centre for traditional culture - school museum of Pusol Pedagogic Project (2009)

This innovative educational project has two overall goals: to promote value-based education by integrating local culture and natural heritage within the curriculum, and to contribute to the preservation of Elche’s heritage by means of education, training, direct action and awareness-raising in the educational community. Implemented at the one-teacher rural public school of Pusol (Elche, Spain) in 1968, the project has successfully integrated heritage into formal education. The children do fieldwork data collection, museography, and teach one another as well as visitors about their heritage, by means of studying and exploring their heritage independently. The project has trained almost 500 students and has resulted in a school museum with more than 61,000 inventory entries and 770 oral files, preserving the heritage of everyday life and promoting the cultural mapping of traditional local resources. The project is highly esteemed by the local rural communities, the general population of Elche, and experts on education and culture for pioneering this method of safeguarding.

* This article refers to the UNESCO Convention (2003), the Operational Directives (2008), and nomination documents for the Register of Safeguarding Programmes, Projects, and Activities (PFA09 - No. 00299, 00318, 00306). [Source: www.unesco.org/culture/ich]
ICH News Briefs

[ICHCAP] Network Meeting for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Seoul

A network meeting for the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage was held at the National Palace Museum of Korea on 4 May 2010. The meeting was organised by ICHCAP and sponsored by the Cultural Heritage Administration. ICHCAP has been organising regular network meetings at the domestic level to provide stakeholders with relevant information and communicate international issues in the field of intangible cultural heritage within Korea.

Presentation sessions at the meeting were organised under three main themes: 1. Implementation of UNESCO’s 2003 Convention, 2. Building research and informational networks of ICH, and 3. Case studies of ICH safeguarding activities and a revitalisation of regional culture.

The keynote speech was given by Dawheem Yim (Chair-professor, Dongguk University) regarding ‘UNESCO’s safeguarding activities and ICH systems in Korea’, and topic presentations by additional speakers from the Cultural Heritage Administration, National Research Institute of Cultural Heritage, Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism, Bucheon World Intangible Cultural Heritage EXPO, 2010 Anseong World Folkloriada organising committee, Office for the Creative city of Dano culture, Chung-Ang University, and ICHCAP followed.

Following presentations, a comprehensive discussion session under the chairmanship of Mr Seong-Yong Park (Executive Director, ICHCAP) was conducted regarding the subject ‘Cooperation for the Implementation of the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage’.


A recent meeting held by UNESCO and co-organised by the section of Intangible Cultural Heritage initiated an in-depth reflection on the working mechanisms of the 2003 Convention, following the first cycle of its implementation.

The Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage meeting in Abu Dhabi (United Arab Emirates) during its 4th session from 28 September to 2 October 2009, noted an imbalance between the three Lists of the Convention with a pronounced interest in favour of the Representative List, and very little interest in the Urgent Safeguarding List or the Register for Good Practices (Article 18), mechanisms nevertheless central to the Convention. The Subsidiary Body, responsible for examining the nominations to the Representative List, underlined that its workload was very heavy and proposed amendments to the Operational Directives so as to have a more manageable workload in the future.

Additionally, UNESCO held an experts meeting under the theme ‘Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage’ in Paris, France on 15 March 2010. This meeting included presentations of the current procedures, discussions regarding working methods of the Committee including rationalising diverse procedures and possible revisions of the current timetable.

[KOREA] Ceremony of laying the Cornerstone for the Asia-Pacific Intangible Cultural Heritage Complex

The Cultural Heritage Administration organised a ceremony of laying the cornerstone for the Asia-Pacific Intangible Cultural Heritage Complex on 26 March 2010 (Friday) in Jeonju city, where the complex is to be built. The complex will include divisions of operation for: exhibitions, archives, education, civil participation and international cooperation.

Additionally, the complex is planning to build an infrastructure for performance and exhibition while utilising digital high-technology mechanisms. Administrator of the Cultural Heritage Administration, Yi, Kun Moo; Governor of Jeollabuk-do, Kim, Wan-joo; Mayor of Jeonju city, Song, Ha Jin; with other relevant experts in the field of Intangible Cultural Heritage participated in the ceremony.

Jeonju city has been heavily supported in regards to the establishment of this complex. It is expected that this establishment will play a significant role in raising awareness about the importance of Intangible Cultural Heritage within the local government. The main part of the ceremony was then followed by Indian Sanskrit Theater, a play titled Kutiyattam, and Korean traditional dance, Cheoyongmu, which were inscribed on UNESCO’s Representative List.


The World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) is a particular agency of the United Nations dedicated to developing a balanced and accessible international intellectual property system, which rewards creativity, stimulates innovation and contributes to economic development while safeguarding public interest.

Each year, WIPO and its Member States celebrate World Intellectual Property Day with activities, events and campaigns. These seek to increase public understanding of what IP really means, and to demonstrate how the IP system fosters not only music, arts and entertainment, but also various types of Traditional Cultural Expression that shape our world.

The World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), which first began examining the relationship between IP and the protection, promotion and preservation of traditional cultural expressions (TCEs) (or ‘expressions of folklore’) several decades ago, has an active program of policy development and legislation which looks to find the line between ‘borrowing’ from a traditional culture as legitimate inspiration and inappropriate adaptation or copying.

WIPO’s work is, in line with its mandate, principally concerned with the ‘protection’ of TCEs in the intellectual property sense. There is an important relationship between IP ‘protection’ and ‘safeguarding’ in the cultural heritage context.

[UNESCO] Third International Festival of Cultural Diversity

The International Festival of Diversity is a worldwide celebration created in 2008 with respect to 21 May 2010, which is proclaimed ‘World Day for Cultural Diversity, Dialogue and Development.’ Events inspired by this
celebration will take place 17–26 May at UNESCO House in Paris, France.

This year’s Festival at UNESCO’s headquarters will once again entail a host of musical, artistic and intellectual events including: concerts, theatrical presentations and customary dishes of indigenous organic products from Bolivia as well as a concert provided by the Suanplu Chorus of Thailand. Thanks to the involvement of numerous Member States its scope will be unprecedented. While China organises over forty major events in Beijing, Canton, and Shenzhen, many other events are held in Italy, Morocco, Quebec, as well as numerous Latin American and Caribbean countries who have joined together to present an exhibition underscoring the diversity that characterises them on the occasion of the bicentennial of their independences.

For information and details about specific events planned for the year, please refer to evenements-speciaux@unesco.org.

[UNESCO BANGKOK OFFICE] Award of Excellence for Handicrafts: Launch of the 2010 Southeast Asia Programme

Applications are now open for the 2010 edition of the UNESCO ‘Award of Excellence for Handicrafts’ in Southeast Asia.

The Award of Excellence programme (formerly known as the SEAL of Excellence) has been established to encourage craft-workers to use traditional skills and materials in their projects. It aims to ensure the continuation of traditional knowledge and skills and the preservation of cultural diversity in the region. In addition, promoting ‘handicraft’ is a major contributing factor for sustainable economic development and poverty reduction in local economies.

This year the Indonesian National AHPADA Chapter (INAC) will be the lead agency for the 2010 evaluation cycle in close collaboration with the ASEAN Handicraft Promotion and Development Association (AHPADA), Regional Secretariat based in Bangkok as well as UNESCO Offices in Bangkok and Jakarta.

A panel of experts in design, handicraft production and promotion will meet in September 2010 in Jakarta, Indonesia to review submissions across a variety of craft categories, from household decorations to jewelry, musical instruments and fashion accessories. Craftspeople granted with the ‘Award’ will be presented with certificates in October 2010, and gain access to support and advice from UNESCO and AHPADA on capacity-building and promotional opportunities including national and international trade fairs.

The programme was established in Southeast Asia in 2001 by UNESCO and AHPADA and for each biannual event, organised and hosted in Bangkok.

Closing date for applications is 30 June 2010. All interested artisans and craft producers are encouraged to visit the website: www.unescobkk.org/culture/craftseal for further information.

[UNESCO] The 2nd World Conference on Arts Education

The 2nd World Conference on Arts Education will be held from 25 – 28 May 2010 in Seoul, Republic of Korea. It is organised by UNESCO and the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism in the Republic of Korea with ongoing preparation through numerous initiatives across the world.

The Republic of Korea was approved to host the Second World Conference during the 34th session of UNESCO’s General Conference in 2007. This Conference will be Asia’s first time hosting the world’s biggest international conference on arts education.

This event aims to promote and reinforce the value of quality in arts education for all, while developing a capacity for creativity in the 21st century for the youth and all other generations. There will be various participants from national establishments, local governments, teachers, artists, researchers as well as other associations and NGOs. Notably, distinguished guests will also be in attendance: Mr Robert Michele Root-Bernstein will be opening as one of the keynote speakers and prominent guests, Secretaries General of the National Commissions for UNESCO, President of the 35th General Conference, in addition to culture and education ministers and vice-ministers from 20 additional countries.

[ICHCAP] ‘Living Heritage: Exploring the Intangible’ Traveling Photo Exhibition

The Intangible Cultural Heritage Centre for Asia and the Pacific (ICHCAP) held a traveling photo exhibition titled, ‘Living Heritage: Exploring the Intangible’, to raise awareness regarding the importance of intangible cultural heritage to the general public. This event was held from 26-28 March during the Festival of Asia Pacific Intangible Cultural Heritage 2010 in Jeonju, in partnership with Jeonju City and supported by UNESCO, the Cultural Heritage Administration and the Cultural Heritage Foundation.

The exhibition consisted of photos of Intangible Cultural Heritage that have been inscribed on the UNESCO Representative List and Urgent Safeguarding List as well as the Important Intangible Cultural Heritage of Korea and also included an explanation of the 2003 Convention.

Over 2,500 people visited the exhibition during the 3 days it was open.

ICHCAP is now planning to hold five more exhibitions in different cities before the end of October 2010.