Intangible Heritage Beyond Borders: Safeguarding through International Cooperation

On 20 and 21 July, a regional consultation meeting, 'Intangible Heritage Beyond Borders: Safeguarding through International Cooperation', was held in Bangkok. The meeting gathered more than 30 government representatives from across the Asia-Pacific region aiming to strengthen international cooperation for the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage and preventing conflicts that might otherwise arise over the ownership, exploitation or misinterpretation of intangible heritage. The focus on intangible cultural heritage is exceptionally pertinent: contrary to monuments, intangible heritage is embedded only in humans and their locations often change without heed of national borders.

In 2003, UNESCO adopted the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage which addresses this human element. The Convention was a milestone and added a new dimension to UNESCO’s well-known programmes dedicated to the preservation of world heritage that generally comprises of monuments, as well as cultural and historical sites in fixed locations. Intangible cultural heritage is defined as the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills, etc. that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognise as part of their cultural heritage. Continuously evolving, it is transmitted from generation to generation providing communities and groups with a sense of identity and continuity. Intangible heritage may be manifested in a variety of forms and domains, such as 'oral traditions and expressions, performing arts, social practices, rituals and festive events, knowledge and practices concerning nature, the universe, and traditional craftsmanship'.

A distinguishing feature of this Convention, and perhaps its biggest challenge, is that it attributes the central role of safeguarding heritage to the communities and groups concerned, its bearers and practitioners. When speaking about intangible heritage, we are in fact speaking about the communities, groups and people that enact and transmit it. The reason is obvious: it is borne by people. People speak, sing, dance, play, make music, perform rituals or engage in handicrafts using their bodies, and often specific impermanent objects. Required knowledge and skills are also lodged in humans. When we are speaking about the location or distribution of living heritage, we are also speaking about the location and geographical distribution of the people concerned. When communities move or disperse, they take their heritage with them. When their territory straddles a national border, the community continues to exist, and its heritage is shared across national borders. Intangible heritage also diffuses, thanks to contact between communities, and like culture in general, it seldom develops in isolation. Expressions and practices constantly influence each other, and may eventually give birth to new forms or be absorbed within others. A considerable part of the ICH of humanity is spread over more than one country, and as a result of widespread migration, not only between adjacent countries, but sometimes between countries that are geographically distant. Even if people are not moving, cultural and social expressions or practices may spread and be adopted by groups elsewhere.

The meeting allowed for officials to discuss the issue of international cooperation, and address debates which were stimulated by presentations given by experts from Africa, Latin America, and Asia focussing the issue of intangible shared heritage, shared across borders.

International cooperation concerning shared heritage is not always easily achieved when neighbouring countries have different means of identifying the communities and heritage present on their territories. The Convention strives to safeguard intangible cultural heritage to ensure its viability so that future generations may be persistent in transmitting it as part of their identity, even in the face of an increasingly globalised world. International cooperation and assistance for protecting and safeguarding heritage can help to ensure the effective safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage. For this, intangible heritage expressions need to be considered in their totality, not just in their geographical setting, so that appropriate safeguarding programmes can be employed. This is often well understood by the communities and tradition bearers, even if they are dispersed or separated by borders. UNESCO seeks to encourage countries to join their efforts and initiatives to achieve effective and lasting safeguarding of their shared intangible heritage.

Tim Curtis (Chief of Culture Unit, UNESCO Bangkok)
Recognising NGOs: A small but significant step forward

Seong-Yong Park (Executive Director, ICHCAP)

Momentum from the Asia-Pacific region has been noticed and efforts to their drive in safeguarding intangible cultural heritage have been acknowledged. The General Assembly to the States Parties of the 2003 Convention accredited ninety seven NGOs at its third session. It is worth noting that, thirty one NGOs out of the ninety seven accredited are from the Asia-Pacific, which is a pivotal step forward for the often marginalised region. The accredited NGOs are expected to play an advisory role in the process of nominations for the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding and the verification of the spirit of the Convention. The ideal that NGOs in the field of ICH can and will contribute to bridging the gap between practitioners, communities, governments, and international organisations is one that is widely shared. On the other hand, we must understand that the perception towards NGOs in the field may not be familiar to many societies nor are they always fully operational. Thus, NGOs in our discipline are still required to put forth effort toward capacity-building under the terms of the Convention.

I recall that during the Director-General’s Regional Consultation Meeting with the National Commissions for UNESCO in the Asia-Pacific, from 21-24 May 2010, in Changwon, Korea, Irina Bokova, Director-General of UNESCO, stressed the importance of encouraging the concerted efforts put forth by Member States, the UNESCO Secretariat, NATCOMS, UNESCO category 2 centres and other civil societies in safeguarding cultural heritage. Along the same line, ICHCAP will continue to strengthen collaborative efforts and partnerships with various entities in the field of ICH. Undoubtedly, more involvement and input from civil societies, including NGOs in the field of safeguarding ICH will add to the motivation of executing our common goals and interests.
UNESCO’s programme on ‘Non-Physical Heritage’, which was on the verge of ‘extinction’, was given a new impetus in 1992 under the title ‘Intangible Cultural Heritage’ on the occasion of the organisations significant restructuring of the cultural programme. I was given the task of leading this new programme under renewed conceptual underpinnings. Before reconceptualising the programme, I began taking stock of the activities carried out in the field of ICH during the previous two decades.

In light of developing a new orientation for the intangible cultural heritage programme, a meeting of experts: The International Consultation on New Perspectives for the Intangible Cultural Heritage Programme, convened in June 1993 at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris, France. The experts, after having examined the results from the information gathered during the stocktaking process, realised a new paradigm was introduced concerning the concept of intangible cultural heritage. The results made it clear that priority went to the order of scopes, objectives and actions to be undertaken as well as newly proposed methodologies. They addressed a series of recommendations that were taken into account in the Medium Term Plan (1996-2001). Priorities were set on the revitalisation of intangible heritage, and recommended that the selection of cultural expressions and practices being revitalised and transmitted to future generations, be made by their practitioners. Research efforts should not be the priority of UNESCO, but be left to scientific and academic institutions. Experts emphasised the crucial roles of practitioners and communities as well as necessary measures that are to be taken to ensure that they participate on all levels of the safeguarding process. In this regard, the significance of training was championed. Experts also underscored the importance of recognising the continuous evolution of ICH expressions and practices.

Former Ambassador of the Republic of Korea, Sang-Seek Park, a participant during the meeting, presented a successful anecdote of the nation putting to use the safeguarding of ICH through ‘transmission’, assurance for the transmission of the particular heritage to the next generation was stressed by experts and the recommendation was enthusiastically welcomed. Due to unanimous approval by the experts, the government of the Republic of Korea proposed a new project to the subsequent session of the Executive Board (at its 142 session) in October 1993. The initial proposal by Korea was to create a system of the ‘World Register of Living Human Treasures’. In spite of the eloquent and enthusiastic speech given by former Ambassador Sang-Seek Park, the Executive Board manifestly expressed its reservation to launch such an ambitious project baring a worldwide scope. The project proposed a progressive process and adhered to three steps: firstly, UNESCO promotes this system among Member States encouraging them to adopt it nationally; secondly, the organisation invites Member States to submit their national list of living human treasures to UNESCO once this system proves to become prevalent; and finally, UNESCO compiles a ‘World List of Living Human Treasures’. Following this decision, UNESCO drafted guidelines for the creation of a national Living Human Treasures System and distributed it to all Member States, inviting them to familiarise themselves with this new concept and to eventually establish this safeguarding system in their own countries. UNESCO also organised training courses to explain this system in more detail. Resulting from UNESCO’s promotional activities, a number of countries, such as the Czech Republic, Cambodia, Fiji, France, Nigeria and Senegal established the system with assistance from UNESCO.

The impact of these activities was much stronger than expected, in general, the term ‘Living Human Treasures’ contributed to raising awareness of ‘intangible cultural heritage’. The term was relatively unknown outside of Asia, but because it sounded intriguing to other countries in and near the region, it became somewhat of a ‘catch phrase’ triggering the interest of various Member States. During the debates of UNESCO’s governing bodies, a number of delegates requested further explanation regarding this term. Today, former Ambassador Sang-Seek Park recalls the difficult discussions he had with various Ambassadors and members of UNESCO’s Executive Board. Thus, the term ‘Living Human Treasures’ swiftly became prominent within UNESCO as well as externally thereof. Moreover, the ‘Living Human Treasures’ project contributed to focusing the attention of Member States on the significant role that practitioners, actors, and creators play in enacting and transmitting a particular heritage.

The Republic of Korea thus provided a conceptual impetus and marked a milestone in the history of the Intangible Cultural Heritage Programme of UNESCO. The Korean government continued to encourage countries, notably Cambodia and Fiji to establish the Living Human Treasures System through the Republic of Korea Funds-in trust endowed within UNESCO. The Living Human Treasures project thus laid the foundation for the principal concept of the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, that is, the safeguarding of ICH through ‘transmission’, aiming to ensure the viability of such heritage within the practitioners’ communities.

**Photo by Park Sangyun, courtesy of the National Research Institute of Cultural Heritage, ROK**
ICH and Oral Tradition  

Legends: The heart of a community’s ritual and societal gatherings

Windows to ICH provides an introduction to examples of intangible cultural heritage practices throughout the Asia-Pacific region in relation to specific themes presented in the issue. This issue takes a look at representations and practices of oral tradition. In these examples of intangible cultural heritage from Brunei, Nepal, Samoa and Kyrgyzstan, you can see the intersections of culture and oral tradition as well as their influence on public events within each community.

Brunei Darussalam  
Temarok belief, Siram-songs and the Repertoire of Epic Tales of Derato

Pudarno Binchin  
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The Dusun people of Brunei Darussalam, amounting to roughly 10,000 people, are traditionally swidden rice cultivators. They used to live in longhouses called alai gayo (‘big house’) that could accommodate three to four generations of bilateral family members, each administered by a council of elders known as tetuwo. The tetuwo were composed of both male elders (usually shaman and medicine men) and female elders called balian (i.e., Dusun religious priestesses) who are responsible for Dusun religious ceremonies referred to as temarok. Nowadays, they live in single houses distributed into small clusters of hamlets, due to the erosion of the traditional administrative system as a result of British colonialism in Brunei, beginning in 1906.

Dusun temarok belief is comprised of a series of ritual performances that are divided into the monthly temarok diok (minor temarok) ceremony and the annual temarok gayo (major temarok) rice festival. These ceremonies are performed to propitiate a mystical group of supernatural beings called derato who are believed to live in pagun sawat (the ‘upper world’) located in the sky. According to Dusun myth, the origin of temarok rituals, these deities gave the Dusun people their first rice seeds. Before the first seeds were bestowed to them, the Dusun people were said to eat charcoal instead of rice. For this reason Dusun balian regularly perform temarok ceremonies to invite the derato down to earth to give blessings to the people and share in entertainment with the balian and Dusun audience. Until today, the newly harvested rice has classically been presented in specific manners, typically in the form of ‘games’ with given ceremonial names such as temarok berayo (crocodile temarok ceremony), temarok lanat (snake temarok ceremony), temarok dulang (rice tray temarok ceremony), etc.

Having temarok rituals to maintain, the Dusun also retain a repertoire of sung epic tales known as siram ditaan that amount to roughly 40 titles. Siram is a traditional Dusun song sung in the form of verses that follow the rhythmic beat of a dambak drum. There are two main categories of siram songs: siram sindir and siram ditaan. Siram sindir is a siram song used to convey criticism (also known as siram nama hot, i.e., a siram song to advise) and is sung both by female and male siram singers. The sindir song is composed spontaneously in the presence of the criticised person(s) using allegories and metaphors to conceal its real meaning from the general listeners.

On the other hand, Siram ditaan consists of epic narratives about derato that normally take several evenings to recount by talented siram singers who are generally female; sometimes they are also balian. These epic tales depict the romantic lives and feuds among members of the derato community. These narratives are composed of stocked phrases that are archaic and some words carry no meaning to modern Dusun listeners. Siram ditaan is very difficult to master and proficient singers are very rare nowadays. Therefore, most raconteurs prefer to narrate the epic tales in ordinary Dusun language where in this form they are known as kata-kata (i.e., ‘narrated words’ vis-à-vis sung verses). Both types of siram songs are usually performed in major Dusun social gatherings such as wedding ceremonies, ‘cleansing’ ceremonies for newly completed houses and temarok ceremonies.

Siram-singing performance is a dying Dusun tradition. Firstly, both the Dusun language and its related oral traditions are losing their bearers as Dusuns younger generations have no interest to inherit and continue them. Secondly, migration of the Dusun population from rural to urban centres with limited shared social spaces to accommodate traditional ethnic practices naturally deprive and also hinder the continuation of rural tradition in the modern Brunei urban environment. Thirdly, conversion of Dusun ethnic members to other major religious faiths, namely, Islam and Christianity, by some measure and restriction, forces them to totally abandon their former animist practices. With such radical social situations to deal with, Dusun tradition that has been built on the backbone of rice cultivation ultimately must succumb to the forces of modern Brunei social development which is generated by its oil industry. Nowadays, many Dusun farmers have abandoned their rice cultivations in search for stable salaried jobs both in the government and private sectors. Consequently, these oral traditions may one day disappear if no drastic measures are taken to safeguard them.
The Ramayana is one of the two greatest Hindu epics of South Asia, the other being the Mahabharata. The Ramayana, authored by Sage Valmiki, tells the story of Lord Rama (the seventh incarnation of Lord Vishnu, 'The Preserver'). Rama is referred to as Maryada Purushottam (the most superior man who embodies both divinity and humanity). The central message of the Ramayana is to demonstrate to worldly individuals how to lead a virtuous life that does not violate any laws of nature.

Ramayana begins with the birth of Prince Ram and his three brothers, Lakshmana, Bharata, and Shatrughna to King Dasharatha in Ayodhya, India. Rama was the eldest and his mother was Kaushalya. Bharata was the son of Dasharatha’s second and most favorite wife, Queen Kaikeyi. The other two siblings were twins, Lakshmana and Shatrughna.

Rama won the hand of Princess Sita, daughter of King Janaka of Janakpur, Nepal, in a ceremony where he not only strung the bow, gifted by Lord Shiva to Janaka, he broke it. A few years later, King Dasharatha, decided to concede his throne to his eldest son Rama, but Queen Kaikeyi requested that the King crown her biological son Bharata and banish Rama to the forest for fourteen years. Due to an oath Dasharatha made to her years before, he was helpless. Sita and Lakshmana also set out for the forest with Rama.

One day Rama and Lakshmana wounded a rakshasas princess, Suparnakha, who tried to seduce Rama. She returned to her brother Ravana, the ten-headed demon king of Lanka who then tricked Rama and Lakshmana as to abduct Sita. Rama, with the help of the monkey king named Sugriva and his general Hanuman, was able to locate Sita and found an opportunity to then attack Lanka. Rama and Lakshmana killed several of Ravanas brothers and sons.

Rama then killed Ravana and rescued Sita. Following her rescue, Sita proved her purity by walking through fire, they then returned to Ayodhya and Rama became king.

The spiritualistic and religious background of Ramayana gave birth to several elements of intangible cultural heritage. One is Vivah Panchami, a celebration of the divine couple Rama and Sita, on the fifth day of the light fortnight in the month of Agrahan (November to December), to remember the marriage between Rama and Sita in Nepal. Another well renowned and sacred festival is the birth anniversary of Rama, known as Rama Navami. It is a great Hindu festival which falls on the ninth day of the bright fortnight of Chaitra (March to April) and has been performed since time immemorial. In this festival, devotees pay homage to Lord Rama with great reverence and respect. The festival of Rama Navami is regarded as one of the five Mahavratas (great festivals). It is a festival to celebrate the performance of righteous duties, as well as being a ritual for marking attributes of victory of virtue over vice. It is also a day to mark his divine achievements which are an eternal source of ideal attributes for all humanity.

Murals and miniature paintings are some other examples of folk cultures which originated from this epic. Hymns, narrating the deeds of Lord Rama, and folk dances are other examples of living culture that originated from Ramayana.
Samoan has rich oral traditions, mythologies and legends and some have been closely associated with traditional festivals and rituals such as the ‘Ava (or Kava) ceremony. ‘Ava is a beverage produced from the root of Kava which is consumed throughout Polynesia, Melanesia and some parts of Micronesia. The dried Kava root is consumed throughout Polynesia, Melanesia and the dried Kava root. Kava is a beverage produced from the root of Kava which is consumed throughout Polynesia, Melanesia and some parts of Micronesia.

In Samoan myths, legends and written records, there are many connections between Samoan people and those of other Pacific islands such as Tonga, Fiji, Uvea, Tuvalu, Tokelau, Papua New Guinea and others. There is a popular Samoan legend entitled, ‘The Crew Who Changed into Dolphins’ that illustrates the voyage Tuifiti’Li made with his crew and his daughter Sina to Fiji, when his daughter went missing as a result of preparing his drink.

The legend begins with Tuifiti’Li, his daughter Sina and crew sailing towards the eastern part of Samoa. During this journey, Sina’s responsibility on the boat was to mix the ‘ava for her father, Tuifiti’Li. Since the distance from Fiji to Samoa was quite far, it meant a long voyage at the sea.

Having left Samoa behind, they dropped anchor before the village of Fagasa. Here Sina went ashore to fetch water to mix her father’s ‘ava drink. Accompanied by some of the crew, they located water at Taputapu. The men returned with the water while Sina proceeded to pick Joab’s tears, which were abundant in the area. But alas, Sina did not pay attention to the water she was to fetch for Tuifiti’Li’s ‘ava drink, for she was immersed in what she was doing. The men who accompanied her had tired of waiting so returned to the boat.

Sina’s desire to collect the seeds caused her to forget the water for the mixing of her father’s ‘ava drink. Meanwhile, in the soft evening breeze, Tuifiti’Li’s boat was slowly pulling out of the bay. We were told that just as the island was merging into a cloud of oblivion, Tuifiti’Li asked about Sina. Just as the breeze blew softly, Tuifiti’Li said, “ask Sina to mix the ‘ava, and let my assistant take the helm.” Except for the crewmen who accompanied Sina ashore and knew where she was, the rest of the crew looked perplexed. The assistant took the helm while Tuifiti’Li sat down in his chair waiting for a drink to be delivered to him.

Tuifiti’Li called out for his drink and by that point the whole crew knew that Sina was absent. He was informed that Sina was missing and quickly turned the boat around to find her.

When no crewman was left on the boat, he angrily called out, “May you all turn into dolphins!” We are told that suddenly Sina’s father saw the dolphins swimming together close to the boat, just as the boat was going through the passage in the reef towards Fagasa.

Meanwhile, Sina remembered that she was sent ashore to fetch water to mix ‘ava for her father, she picked up her water containers and started walking with her bag of Joab’s seeds. Poor Sina, she was startled to look at the sea and realise that the boat was almost disappearing from sight. In her sorrow, she threw down one of the containers of water which became Tufu spring. While she was crying, carrying the other container, it dropped and broke, forming another shallow pool, Fagasa.

A fisherman named Togamana came across Sina, took her home and stayed with her. On the same day before her tears were dried, her father’s boat was seen approaching the channel.

After greeting each other happily, Tuifiti’Li said, “I thank you Togamana for your love for Sina. You will live with her. Every year you will see the dolphins in your coastal waters together with the ‘ota (larger fish), which will guide the horse mackerel. On the coastal waters you will receive fish, but never kill the ‘ota, as they belong to the dolphins. Those are the bridal gifts for my daughter Sina.” These were Tuifiti’Li’s last words as he said farewell to his daughter.

Being aware of the importance of Samoan oral traditions as well as risking the disappearance of this tradition due to rapid modernisation and globalisation, the Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture (MESC) has been working on the safeguarding of Samoan legends, which has led to a compilation of six volumes of bilingual publications of Samoan legends. This work was a result of intensive community consultations and field works. The draft Ten-Year Cultural Policy of Samoa (2011-2020) places special emphasis on the safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage (ICH) in Samoa including its oral traditions and legends. More recently, MESC organised a workshop on the Safeguarding of ICH in Samoa with support of the UNESCO Office for the Pacific States. The workshop adopted recommendations with the objective to strengthen ICH safeguarding in the country, which include several measures, among others, the establishment of a Committee on ICH safeguarding, a review of the existing legislatures, and nationwide inventory making of ICH.
The rapid processes of globalisation and mass culture have increased interest among the Kyrgyz people regarding traditional culture for the preservation of historical memory and ethno-cultural identity. In this, the role of UNESCO is remarkable, which promotes the preservation, development and dissemination of national culture, as well as contributing to the transmission of culture and its continuity over time.

The Kyrgyz people are of a small nation in Central Asia, which has an ancient history and rich intangible cultural heritage. The nomadic people of Kyrgyzstan did not lose their statehood, territory and system of writing just once, but throughout their nearly two thousand years of existence, it disappeared for three to five centuries from the historical annals and chronicles of Chinese and Arab authors, then re-emerged once again. Regardless of all circumstances, they were able to preserve and enrich their own cultural heritage. Foremost, the Kyrgyz shrine, an epical trilogy called 'Manas', along with other forms of ICH is an essential part of their intangible cultural heritage.

It is surprising that in the 21st century folklore not only survived, but is very prominent in Kyrgyzstan. It is particularly significant that the interest of the youth to the legendary past of its people is not lost.

Modern Manaschi (epic-teller) of different ages compete in their skills, but not everyone can be awarded this honour, which is given only from ‘above’, through the dreams or inheritance of ancestors (the guiding motives of the chosen ones) to become a speaker of ‘the word’, which refers to the half million verse lines of the epic Manas.

Epic-tellers perform a sequence of text, images and forms of emotional quality of the philosophical and poetic narration of a particular verse of the epic for hours, days or weeks, sometimes falling into a trance, without losing rhythm.

Sacred-rituals and cosmogonic components are the most important parts of the recognised narrator’s creation, who is trusted to deliver ‘Manas’ to the masses. The narrator disseminates epochal historical events, centuries old struggle of the Kyrgyz people for freedom, independence, and unity, which was lead by the hero Manas and his descendants, Semetei and Seitek. In fact, the epic is composed of 14 parts, seven generations of ancestors and seven generations of descendants of Manas.

Researchers of ‘Manas’ who analyse the mythological layer argue that it is mainly connected with Central Asian folklore, but some parts of it exist in other international analogues. In addition, the epic contains information about three worldly religions, which are confirmed by the historical and archaeological monuments located on the territory of Kyrgyzstan. In the past, the nomadic people of Kyrgyzstan were mostly pagans worshiping the sky, celestial bodies, various natural objects and phenomena; the manifestation of shamanism was very strong during that time. Nowadays, shamanistic traditions occur in Kyrgyzstan as a residual, but steady phenomenon of nomadic culture, and above all, in close relationship with the holders, custodians and transmitters of the spiritual culture.

Researchers noted that there is a fine line that distinguishes between a rhapsode (epic-teller) and a shaman, but at the same time, the phenomenon is of the same order, and relates them to the society-rooted idea of supernatural findings and elevation (i.e. the art and status of the ones who were designed to be mediator between the world of people and the world of spirits). Thus, the creative spirit of Manaschi is based on the natural strength of the ethno-genetic memory of the Kyrgyz people and on the perception, transformation, and transmission of all information regarding Manas from generation to generation.
Afghanistan is a culturally rich and diverse country with an abundance of tangible and intangible heritage stretching back from over a millennium. The nation has suffered a lot during the long years of war and conflict and the generations of ancestors who depended on transferring their intangible cultural heritage skills and knowledge to descendants were severely affected and displaced during the years of war.

As for the generations of individuals currently subjected to their land being divided by war, the importance of intangible cultural heritage is not the cultural manifestation itself, but rather the sense of cultural identity. Intangible cultural heritage plays a vital role in the transition of existing lifestyles and traditions to future generations. Intangible heritage can be preserved only through the fostering of a deep understanding and recognition of its significance by policy makers and communities.

Afghanistan is a land where you cannot escape from the sound of wind and rivers; one howls its way until it peaks as high as Koh-e-Baba (Baba Mountain) in Bamiyan and another sweeps across the plains and deserts of Helmand. Generally, the people of Afghanistan contribute to this source of inspiration by imitating and composing the voice of nature through music and literature. This common fount was a representation of the hope for unity everyone wished for during the war and disunion that carried on for many decades. Musical instruments such as the dambura, qicha and tabla are used to mimic the sounds of nature and in turn have been used as tools for defusing the effects of war, conflict and disharmony.

All the notes and rhythm of music derived from Afghanistan are very precise. There is a real language of folk music with an extremely rich vocabulary that may sometimes sound strange or peculiar to more youthful generations who have been away from their homes for a long time, which is typical in Afghanistan with its numerous emigrants, refugees and displaced individuals. Some themes return more often than others, such as love or tragedy, and they use common expressions such as braveness, hardiness and martyrdom. Utilising several traditional musical instruments such as the dohol and somai, people have combined the music derived from these instruments with traditional dance and beats called atan, which was inspired by the lives of mountain dwellers. The dance is quite often performed by males, females or both at weddings, especially during Navruz* and times of harvest as well as some religious festivals. It is usually composed of a group of people who are moving in a harmonious

*Navruz means ‘new day’, which is the first day of the year determined by the solar calendar. Navruz was inscribed on UNESCO’s Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2009.
circle and following the actions of the leader while keeping to the rhythm of the song.

UNESCO, as the only specialised agency for cultural heritage in the United Nations system, has the mandate to assist its Member States in taking necessary measures for the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage.

In order to support Afghanistan in conserving its richness of intangible cultural heritage, a pilot project for the documentation of Afghanistan’s Traditional Music was undertaken by the UNESCO Kabul Office in 2006. This involved a mapping of the traditional and classical music of the country. UNESCO has also supported various exhibitions of calligraphy and art in order to continue promoting inter-cultural and inter-religious dialogue in Afghanistan, along with multiple publications on the said subject matter for dissemination of information throughout Afghanistan provided in the country’s various native languages. UNESCO Kabul also supported the creation of a national music festival for traditional music in Kabul in 2008 and 2009 and will continue to support such events during the 2010 year and so on.

This assistance helped the Afghan government pave the way for ratification of the 2003 Convention, which took place in 2009, along with the 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions. The focus of the Kabul Office in this area has moved towards assisting the State Party with the implementation of these Conventions.

In coming months, as part of its efforts to contribute to issues regarding policy, UNESCO Kabul will assist the government of Afghanistan in preparing a policy framework for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage and the Promotion of Creative and Cultural Industries that will address gaps in the policy’s structure and critical duties necessary to be carried out to strengthen the capacity of the Ministry of Information and Culture to protect and promote intangible heritage, as well as to implement the UNESCO 2003 Intangible Cultural Heritage Convention. This endeavour will also provide an opportunity to support the new Afghan National Council for Music recently founded due to the encouragement and guidance provided by legislative and institutional organisations.

Peace building and sustainable development will never be accomplished until and unless all the Afghan nations consider their dignity, identity and sense of unity for where they came from and where they want to go to. To that end, UNESCO is committing itself hand-in-hand with the government and people of Afghanistan, to safeguard the richness and diversity of the intangible cultural heritage of the country.

Photo by Reza Mohamadi

An elder Ostad training a youth on how to play Tabla Kabul

Course for training of traditional instruments for youths in Kabul

Two girls from Bamiyan in traditional dress during the annual Navruz festival

Navruz festival in Bamiyan (Photo by Reza Mohamadi)
ICH Inventory-Making Efforts in Cambodia

Sonnara Prak (Deputy Director, General Department of Heritage, Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts)

Inventory-making efforts of intangible cultural heritage in Cambodia are aimed at providing the reader with a representation of the diversity of Cambodian culture and arts which include, but are not limited to performing arts, music, handicrafts and languages. It does not aim to give an in-depth study on each of these forms, but rather, provide a complete overview of all the known forms of intangible cultural heritage with practical information regarding each element.

Cambodian classical dance is a unique art form of Cambodian intangible cultural heritage. In Cambodian tradition, the dancer performs a succession of choreographed postures that smoothly flow from one to the next without any abrupt movements. The dance is a passionate art form in which controlled movement is used to communicate drama and intensity. Each of the slow, carefully composed gestures is precisely marked by orchestral accompaniment.

Taking inventory of this element ensures the eternal existence of the dance. It is imperative to document the gestures, songs, music, stories, costumes, stage decoration and other ways of performing khmer classical dance. Inventory-making efforts will contribute to the safeguarding of this element and assist in the collection of basic data for the preservation and development of the dance for future generations.

The Royal Ballet of Cambodia, also known as Khmer Classical Dance, was declared a 'Masterpiece of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity' by UNESCO on 7 November 2003. In 2005, an Action Plan for the Safeguarding of the Royal Ballet of Cambodia project was established. The objectives and methods for implementation are as follows:

**Objectives**
- Research and collect existing documents and knowledge regarding the Royal Ballet or Khmer Classical Dance;
- Revitalisation of 'lost' choreographies and surviving knowledge;
- Assistance provided to elder masters and practitioners of the Royal Ballet for their efforts...
to ensure the transmission of their knowledge to younger generations;
• Strengthening the research and training capacities of the Faculty of the Choreographic Arts and the Department of Performing Arts;
• Raise public awareness, particularly among younger generations regarding the significant value and traditions of the Royal Ballet in order to enhance recognition and involvement.

Implementation

For the implementation of the project, a task team was established and divided into four components. They are as follows:

Component A
• Training for research methodology and project management
• Research and inventory of the Royal Ballet

Component B
• Training for current dancers to become instructors
• Training for provincial and private troupes
• Revitalisation of the ‘lost’ choreographies and surviving knowledge

Component C
• Production of one set of musical instruments

Component D
• Organisation of the annual Royal Ballet Performance

In close collaboration with artists and representatives of the Provincial Departments of Culture and Fine Arts, research and the collection of surviving documents were conducted along with the documentation of knowledge from principal masters of the traditional Royal Ballet throughout Cambodia, particularly:
• Performing Arts (traditional dances, stories, choreographies, etc.)
• Traditional oral literature (traditional oral folktales)
• Traditional costumes
• Traditional practices

A compilation of inventory information of the masters and practitioners of the Royal Ballet is necessary in order to produce a document which will include:
• Brief history and presentation
• Name of each form of dance
• Revival history
• Vital stories in the repertory
• Major masters and practitioners

The working group of the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts defined and achieved the following works:
• Selecting surviving documents
• Identifying principle masters
• Interviewing principle masters
• Recording music, songs, gestures, and art styles

The safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage in Cambodia, including both royal and the popular traditions as well as festivals of the different regions and ethnic groups, is a primary concern of the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts who provide support through teaching and conducting activity programs to maintain these traditions and encourage research, data collecting, and documentation.

The UNESCO Phnom Penh Office was one of the first to publish an inventory of Cambodia’s intangible cultural heritage in 2004. At the same time, projects were started with relation to the development of a Living Human Treasures system in Cambodia and the revival of the ‘Royal Ballet’ tradition. A sub-decree is now proposed by the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts in close collaboration with UNESCO to officially institutionalise the system and selection of Living Human Treasures in Cambodia.

1. Costumes for Khmer Classical Dance, Neay Rong, Neang, Yoka, and Hanuman (Photo by P. Sonnara)
2. H.R.H Princess Norodom Bopha Devi performing Apsara dance adapted from Nagara Khmer in 1967 (Photo by MoCFA, Cambodia)
3. Khmer Classical Dance, Royal Ballet (Photo by MoCFA, Cambodia)
4. Senior officers attending training seminar of classical dance (Photo by MoCFA, Cambodia)
5. Transmission of classical dance (Photo by P. Sonnara)
6. Field research on classical dance (Photo by P. Sonnara)
Understanding the Cultural Heritage of Korea

Cultural heritage training programme for students and researchers from abroad

In the wake of globalisation and urbanisation, the Intangible Cultural Heritage Centre for Asia and the Pacific (ICHCAP) is determined to put forth every effort to aid in the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage throughout Asia and the Pacific region. Among these efforts for Asia and the Pacific, ICHCAP in collaboration with the Training Centre for Traditional Culture (TCTC) at the Korean National University of Cultural Heritage, created a well organised programme directed toward the understanding of culture in Korea titled, Understanding the Cultural Heritage of Korea.

This annual three day programme was launched in December of 2008 in the ancient city of the Baekje Kingdom, Buyeo, Korea. It consisted of participants from 9 countries, of which 24 were international students and researchers, staff members from TCTC, staff members from ICHCAP, a member of the Jeonju City Council, and a few staff members from the Jeonju Traditional Cultural Centre.

The objectives of the 2008 programme were to promote awareness of Korean cultural heritage, in particular traditional Korean culture; promote mutual understanding and solidarity among various cultures; provide opportunities to learn about Korean traditional culture through hands on experience; and to construct an international network of experts, researchers and individuals who are interested in the cultural heritage of Korea. The programme covered a wide range of activities and historical visits including a visit to the Tomb of King Muryeong and Magoks Temple in Gonju City, historical sites in Buyeo, lectures on the world heritage of Korea and Korean traditional music, as well as a trip to Jeonju where participants made a traditional Korean dish, bibimbap, in addition to intertwining cultural presentations by experts throughout the workshop period.

The following year in 2009, at the 2nd annual training workshop of Understanding the Cultural Heritage of Korea, individuals from 13 countries were in attendance, an increase of participants from the year prior. Participating countries included: India, Bangladesh, USA, China, Philippines, Vietnam, Uzbekistan, Japan, Cambodia, Kazakhstan, Jamaica, Mongolia, and Thailand. Additionally, there were students from the Korean National University of Cultural Heritage who also helped enrich the programme. For this workshop, ICHCAP and TCTC were able to develop the programme further by building on experiences of the previous year. In comparison to the year prior, the national and cultural diversity of the participants was greater which provided them with a platform to discuss, understand and experience cultural diversity beyond a bias cultural heritage educational programme.

During this year of the programme, the focus was divided into four different categories: 1) lectures to build a theoretical foundation, 2) workshops of Korean pansori and crafts for hands on experience, 3) performances of Korean traditional music and dance, and 4) site visits to cultural heritage and historical places.

First-hand experience in each of these categories gave participants a well rounded view of Korean traditional cultural heritage. Field trips ranging from museum visits to observe artefacts, to traveling to the holy land of Korean traditional music located in Namwon and taking part in a pansori class. It was from first-hand experiences like these that provided participants with the opportunity to appreciate Korean traditional culture while fulfilling ICHCAP’s mission of dissemination of information and networking among individuals related to the field of cultural heritage as well as all those interested.

In addition to this, much more was achieved exchange, providing them the opportunity to cultivate a broader perspective toward cultural safeguarding; illustrate the Republic of Korea’s direct or indirect efforts in cultural heritage safeguarding through activities provided by the sponsoring organisations, TCTC and ICHCAP; as well as promoting ICHCAP as a cultural heritage safeguarding hub in Asia and the Pacific; and finally, promote an understanding and awareness of cultural diversity in the context of cultural heritage among younger generations, who are the important actors of the future, whether they choose to stand inside or outside the boundaries of the cultural heritage field.

TCTC and ICHCAP organised this programme to provide an opportunity for foreigners living in Korea to gain a more in-depth experience of Korean culture. This programme is a platform for establishing friendships and building networks. ICHCAP will continue to organise similar programmes to encourage the understanding of Korean cultural heritage and promote international relationships.

It is through this ongoing annual programme that TCTC and ICHCAP are able to 1) enhance recognition of cultural heritage in Korea for national and international researchers, 2) build networks as well as create a system which promotes the exchange of ICH safeguarding measures and information in addition to the cooperation of various institutes and individuals among national and international researchers in the field of cultural heritage safeguarding.

In addition to this, much more was achieved such as: providing students majoring in cultural heritage the chance to experience cultural
Safeguarding Pioneers

Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy: The Guardian of ICH in Bangladesh
R.A. Mahmud Selim (Director of Music & Dance, Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy)

The Ganges Delta that makes up almost 90 percent of present day Bangladesh is one of the most ancient human habitats in the world. The vast alluvial plain of Bangladesh is watered by the great rivers of the Padma, the Meghna and the Jamuna. The land is so fertile that little diligence is required to produce crops and blessed with monsoons from the Bay of Bengal, the climate is very pleasant. In a word, it is a land of 'abundance'. That is why this land has beckoned people from the furthest corners of the world, thus becoming a crucible of diverse cultures. People of different castes and creeds have been living in this part of the world for thousands of years. Numerous heritage sites and colourful lifestyles of its people bear the testimony of the rich and varied culture of this land.

Considering this, Bangladesh has emphasised the utmost importance of safeguarding its cultural properties from the very beginning of its journey as a sovereign state. The Constitution of Bangladesh itself is the strongest binding instrument for the safeguarding of its own culture. Adopted in 1972 the Constitution explicitly declares that the State shall adopt measures to conserve the cultural traditions and heritage of the people, as so to foster and improve the national language, literature and arts so that all sects of people are afforded the opportunity to contribute towards and to participate in the enrichment of the national culture (Article: 23).

In compliance with the Constitution, many government institutions are currently working for the protection and promotion of the tangible and intangible cultural heritage of Bangladesh. As many as 17 government agencies including 7 exclusive institutions for small indigenous ethnic groups are there to protect and promote cultural heritage in Bangladesh.

Among all these institutions, the Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy (Bangladesh Academy of Fine and Performing Arts) is the apex institution in the field of culture. Located in the heart of the capital city Dhaka, and overlooking the historic Ramana Park, an oasis to the bustling city of nearly 15 million people, the academy is a huge complex of three magnificent buildings that bear the hallmarks of modern architectural beauty.

The Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy is a statutory body under the Ministry of Cultural Affairs. It was established in 1974, under the Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy Act. With a few amendments, the ‘Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy Ordinance in 1989’ was accepted by the National Assembly and now runs the Academy. Its main objective is to safeguard and foster national cultures as well as intangible cultural heritage in Bangladesh.

The overall direction for the functioning of the academy is provided by a 29 member Executive Council (Shilpakala Academy Parishad) headed by the Minister of the Ministry of Cultural Affairs. The Director-General of the Academy is responsible for its day to day administration.

The duties and responsibilities of the academy include promotion of arts and national culture as well as the creation of necessary facilities for their development. The activities of the academy also include organising workshops, seminars, discussion meetings, short-term specialised training sessions, providing scholarships and financial grants for talented artists, organising competitions in the various fields of fine and performing arts and it regularly holds the Asian Biennial Art Exhibition. Recently it has completed a project in cooperation with UNESCO Dhaka for the safeguarding of the Baul Song, the only intangible cultural heritage element of Bangladesh on the Representative List. The Academy is the premier venue for the expression of traditional and contemporary arts and culture of the people of Bangladesh irrespective of colour or creed, and its planning to extend its collaborative activities internationally, especially through the Asia-Pacific region.

Existing Departments
- Fine Arts
- Drama and Filmatography
- Music and Dance
- Research and Publications
- Training
- Production
- Administration and Finance

Branches outside Dhaka: 63
Staff members: 300
Number of publications: more than 200
Journal (semester): 02 (in Bangla & English)
Bulletin (quarterly): 01 (in Bangla)
The Role and Accreditation of Non-governmental Organisations in the 2003 UNESCO Convention

Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in the implementation phase of the 2003 UNESCO Convention are appreciated as substantive actors in the arena of ICH safeguarding for several reasons. First, they are a useful source of important information in the field and can offer their knowledge and data to the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage and the UNESCO Secretariat. Second, they are an efficient networking resource and can contribute to connecting bearers, communities, governments and international bodies. In addition to NGOs making efforts to secure a regional balance and represent civil society by connecting UNESCO and the communities, they provide an advisory capacity for examination of the Urgent Safeguarding List as well as safeguarding programmes, projects and activities in conformity with Article 9 of the Convention.

In light of the participation by NGOs, Article 11 (b) of the Convention and Chapter III.1 of its Operational Directives stipulate that,

‘States Parties shall involve the relevant non-governmental organizations in the implementation of the Convention’, inter alia in identifying and defining intangible cultural heritage and in other appropriate safeguarding measures, in cooperation and coordination with other actors involved in the implementation of the Convention.’

For the advisory function of accredited NGOs, Article 9 regulates,

‘the Committees to propose to the General Assembly the accreditation of NGOs with recognized competence in the field of intangible cultural heritage to act as an advisory capacity to the Committee.’

Additionally, accredited NGOs provide the Committee with information to assist in the evaluation of nomination files for the Urgent Safeguarding List; programme, projects and activities for the safeguarding of the ICH; requests for international assistance; and the effects of safeguarding plans for elements on the Urgent Safeguarding List.

According to the Operational Directives (III.2.2), NGOs submitted for accreditation should,

(a) have proven competence, expertise and experience in safeguarding ICH, (b) have a local, national, regional or international nature, as appropriate, (c) have objectives that are in conformity with the spirit of the Convention, (d) cooperate in a spirit of mutual respect with communities, groups and individuals and (e) possess operational capacities.

Furthermore, requests for accreditation should be prepared by the completion and submission of a form (available on the UNESCO website or by request from the Secretariat) and should be received by the Secretariat at least four months before an ordinary session of the Committee.

To this end, the General Assembly of the Convention decided to accredit 97 NGOs for a period of four years to act in an advisory capacity to the Committee in its 3rd ordinary session which took place at UNESCO Headquarters from 22 to 24 June 2010. Among them, 31 organisations are from Asia and the Pacific region (see the list below) including 2 from the Republic of Korea.

The first accreditation of 97 NGOs during the 3rd session of the General Assembly is noteworthy and raised several issues among States Parties.

States Parties have given great attention to ensuring maximum participation of relevant NGOs from all regions concerning advisory assistance to the Intergovernmental Committee. In light of this, modalities and methods of facilitating the contribution of NGOs from developing countries need to be examined in accordance with the Operational Directives.

The Secretariat continues to diffuse information about the Convention among NGOs in developing countries to increase the number of institutions in developing countries to attain better geographical representation.

To facilitate the support of NGOs from developing countries and to enhance the effectiveness of their contribution, the Secretariat plans to organise a series of workshops that will bring together a number of NGOs recommended for accreditation from developing countries, and also with NGOs from geographically underrepresented regions. The workshops will most likely be led by experts on the Convention and representatives of some NGOs that have already been invited by the Committee as too provide an opportunity for NGOs to participate in forums and disseminate information about the Convention to NGOs from developing countries as well as support their capacity for the request of accreditation. Additionally, they will introduce to the NGOs of selected developing countries, mechanisms of the Convention and the criteria and procedures for the respective Lists and international assistance requests.

Accredited NGOs in Asia and the Pacific region (2010)

Association de Nasreddin Hodja et du Tourisme ........................ Turkey
Arundayyala mahila mandali ........................ India
Institute of Folk Arts and Culture ........................ India
Bugday Association for Supporting Ecological Living ........................ Turkey
Chinese Arts and Crafts Institute ........................ China
Chinese Society for the History of Science and Technology ........................ China
Contact Base ........................ India
Craft Revival Trust ........................ India
Dhrupad Institute Bhopal Trust ........................ India
Folkland, International Centre for Folklore and Culture ........................ India
Foundation of Folklore Researchers ........................ Turkey
The Foundation for Protection of Historical and Cultural Heritage ........................ Mongolia
Goa Heritage Action Group ........................ India
Him Kalakar Sangam, Shimla ........................ India
International Council for Traditional Music ........................ Australia
Jaipur Virasat Foundation ........................ India
Korea Cultural Heritage Foundation ........................ Republic of Korea
Madhuhal ........................ India
Meera Kala Mandir ........................ India
Turkey National Center of UNIMA ........................ Turkey
National Folklore Support Centre ........................ India
Natwari Kathak Nritya Academy ........................ India
Regional Resources Centre for Folk Performing Arts ........................ India
Sanskriti Pratishthan ........................ India
Soupamara Kalavedi ........................ India
Tamilnadu Rural Arts Development Centre ........................ India
Center for Research, Support and Development of Culture ........................ Viet Nam
International Mevlana Foundation ........................ Turkey
Vrinda Kathak Kendra ........................ India
World Martial Arts Union ........................ Republic of Korea
Young Mizo Association ........................ India

* This article refers to the 2003 Convention, the Operational Directives (2010), and the common statement of NGOs from the 4th session of the Intergovernmental Committee (September/October 2009).
ICH News Briefs

[ICHCAP] Notification to Member States for participation in Centre activities

According to the Agreement between the government of the Republic of Korea and UNESCO regarding the establishment of an international information and networking centre for intangible cultural heritage in the Asia-Pacific region under the auspices of UNESCO in the Republic of Korea, Member States of UNESCO wishing to participate in the Centre’s activities must notify the Director-General (DG) of UNESCO to this effect and the DG shall inform the Centre and the Member States mentioned above of the receipt of such notification.

In light of this, the government of the Republic of Korea shall then proceed to inform Member States of UNESCO in the Asia-Pacific region of the approval by the General Conference regarding the establishment of the Centre, inviting them to participate in the Centre’s future activities by distributing an official letter to Member States in the Asia-Pacific region. As the DG receives such notification, she shall then inform the Korean government so that they may select up to five representatives from Member States of the region to join the Governing Board of the Centre and perpetrate the first meeting.

[UNESCO APIA] Workshop on the Safeguarding of ICH in the Cook Islands and Samoa

Workshops for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage were held in both Samoa and the Cook Islands this past June. The workshop which took place in the Cook Islands was in Rarotonga from 28 to 30 June 2010, and nearly a week prior to that occasion the workshop held in Samoa was orchestrated at Samoa Collage Hall, bringing together roughly forty experts.

The workshop in Samoa was opened by the Chief Executive Office of the Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture. A strong interest in Samoa was expressed regarding ICH safeguarding and the UNESCO 2003 Convention, which has been well reflected in the draft of the Ten-Year Cultural Policy of Samoa (2011-2020).

After presentations outlining UNESCO’s ICH safeguarding activities in the Pacific and its Operational Directives, national experts gave presentations on a wide range of aspects of ICH. Experts then participated in a group exercise which required them to draw up strategies and action plans for ICH safeguarding in Samoa.

A week later at the ICH safeguarding workshop in Rarotonga, nearly seventy experts from the Cook Islands were brought together including those from five outer islands of the country. The purpose of this workshop was to discuss strategies and action plans to strengthen the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage in the Cook Islands by making use of guidelines and practical tools made available through various UNESCO programmes in this field.

The 2nd day was devoted to presentations from national experts covering diverse areas of intangible cultural heritage in the country. The presentation from the Ministry of Cultural Development pointed to the recent shift in the national priority in favour of culture.

The workshop concluded with a speech from the Minister of Culture, encouraging participants to share and communicate the outcome of the workshop with other community members, colleagues and friends.

Workshop on the safeguarding of ICH, Rarotonga, Cook Islands (28-30 June 2010) © UNESCO

[ICHAP] Designation of the New President of the Korea Cultural Heritage Foundation

The Korea Cultural Heritage Foundation (CHF) organised an inauguration ceremony for the new president on 27 July 2010. Recently, Mr Se-Soep Lee was appointed as the new president for CHF by the Cultural Heritage Administration (CHA) in the Republic of Korea. The new president is greatly acclaimed with his plentiful experience of working in the field of traditional culture as a governmental officer as well as being praised for his insight and managerial skills in the execution of various projects and activities related to arts and culture in Korea. His previous experience includes holding positions such as Secretary General of the National Museum of Contemporary Art, Chief of Education and Cultural Exchange Delegation of the National Museum of Korea, Secretary General of the National Academy of Art and his most recent endeavor was in his position as former Secretary General of Korea National University of Arts.

CHF was established on the basis of the Cultural Properties Protection Law with aspirations directed toward the preservation of cultural heritage, promotion for various projects that propagate creative success and the transmission of traditional Korean culture. In an effort to expand upon the existing cultural underpinnings, the foundation also provides resources for the development of and utilisation of traditional cultural contents available for the general public in addition to ICH practitioners.

With the newly appointed president, Mr Se-Soep Lee, CHF will continue to make efforts to expand its promotional activities for traditional culture, and will attest to becoming a leading organisation for the safeguarding of traditional culture in Korea.

Mr Se-Soep Lee, President of CHF (Photo by CHF)

[ICHAP] International Intensive Course for Cultural Heritage

The Training Center for Traditional Culture (TCTC) in collaboration with the Intangible Cultural Heritage Centre for Asia and the Pacific (ICHAP) are hosting the 2nd annual ‘International Intensive Course for Cultural Heritage’ which is to take place from 22 October to 5 November 2010.

Key objectives of the International Intensive Course for Cultural Heritage are to strengthen networks among experts of government organisations and agencies in the field of cultural heritage safeguarding in Asia and the Pacific, but most importantly, provide a platform for the promotion of regional safeguarding activities through an international network.

In this course, fifteen cultural heritage experts will be invited from all over Asia and the Pacific region to exchange knowledge and experiences, as well as conduct discussions and lectures that focus on emerging contemporary issues in the field of cultural heritage safeguarding and necessary tasks to be taken for the search of solutions. Additionally, there will be study tours and institute visits to governments as well as NGOs related to cultural heritage safeguarding in Korea. It will also give a comprehensive overview of the full scope of the preservation policy of Korean cultural heritage through on-site experience.

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The head of ICHCAP’s Advisory Committee, Professor Dawnhee Yim was appointed as one of the international experts of the International Coordination Committee for the protection of Haitian cultural heritage (ICC) whose mission is to mobilise resources and coordinate all actions related to culture in Haiti.

The ICC was established by UNESCO as an international medium to bring forth efforts for emergency assistance and long term relief to Haiti in the aftermath of the devastating earthquake of 12 January 2010. The Committee is headed by Marie-Laurence Jocelyn Lassègue, Haitian Minister of Culture and Communication and composed of ten Haitian and international experts including Professor Yim.

The ICC identified capacity building, inventory-making and development planning as its missions of priority to safeguard cultural heritage in Haiti at its first meeting on 7 and 8 July at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris. Also, Irina Bokova, the Director-General of UNESCO emphasised the “healing power of culture, which is continuously more recognised by the international community as an essential component of reconstruction” at the opening of the meeting.

UNESCO has published three books of key components of the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage: the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding; the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity; and the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices. The publication of these first three books attests to the fact that the 2003 Convention has now reached a crucial operational phase.

These publications regarding the UNESCO Intangible Heritage Lists contain the descriptions and the selection criteria of elements that are inscribed on the UNESCO Lists. The Register of Best Safeguarding Practices also provides very useful information regarding various measures to enforce the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage of humanity. All the books contain interesting photographs that illustrate certain ICH elements.

UNESCO launched this much-awaited series of publications devoted to three key components of the 2003 Convention, and it will contribute greatly to the role of raising awareness and visibility of intangible cultural heritage. More detailed information is available on the UNESCO website.

Within the framework of the ‘UN Year of the Rapprochement of Cultures’, a festival on cultural diversity was held in Nuku’alofa, Tonga, from 26 to 31 July 2010, by the Ministry of Education, Women’s Affairs and Culture in cooperation with the Tonga Tradition Committee and UNESCO. The festival was composed of thematic panel discussions on the places of Tongan traditional values, such as respect, consensus, cooperation, and reciprocity in a contemporary context, and challenges they face in terms of religion, governance, environment and education. Performances by students and different communities in Tonga were presented and workshops on the transmission of intangible cultural heritage were organised during the festival.