The Expert Seminar for Establishing a Safeguarding System for ICH of Lao PDR was held in Seoul, Republic of Korea, from 12 to 18 July 2011. The seminar was co-organised by the International Information and Networking Centre for Intangible Cultural Heritage in the Asia-Pacific (ICHCAP) and the Ministry of Information and Culture of the Lao People’s Democratic Republic, in sponsorship with the Cultural Heritage Administration of Korea. The seminar aimed to share information and experience on intangible cultural heritage (ICH) safeguarding in Laos and Korea and to provide a venue to develop a joint project on establishing an ICH safeguarding system of Laos.

For the seminar, five administrators from the Ministry, including Mr Thongsa Sayavongkhamdy, Director General of the National Heritage Department, were invited, and they were joined by Korean experts who participated in the expert meeting on 12 July. During the meeting, five presentations from the Ministry were delivered on current issues and systems for safeguarding ICH elements in Laos, including lambong (circle dance) and basi (ritual). In particular, they underlined the need to promote activities for awareness-raising and research on ICH safeguarding policy. Presentations on ICH categories and safeguarding systems in Korea were followed. As the meeting closed, Mr Sayavongkhamdy explained the integrated law of Laos on cultural and natural heritage, including ICH, and Dr Seong-Yong Park, Acting Secretary-General of ICHCAP, highlighted that ICH safeguarding systems should be established with special consideration to the legal basis, as well as the historic and social background, of Laos.

The expert meeting was followed by four days of field trips to relevant institutes and ICH communities involved in the transmission of ICH elements. The seminar resulted in a joint project agreement that was signed by ICHCAP and the Ministry. According to the agreement, the two parties will work closely to establish an ICH safeguarding system in Laos.

The 2nd Central Asia Sub-regional Network Meeting on the Safeguarding of ICH, organised by the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Tajikistan and ICHCAP in collaboration with the Tajikistan National Commission for UNESCO, was held on 28 and 29 July 2011 in Dushanbe, Tajikistan. Experts from four Central Asian countries (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan), the UNESCO Office in Tashkent, and the International Institute for Central Asian Studies attended.

Entitled ‘Development of an Online System for ICH Inventory-Making in Central Asia’, the meeting was a call to action and an opportunity to explore the possibilities of an online system that was first conceived in 2010. Opening the meeting, Mr Mirzoshohrkh Asrori, Minister of Culture in Tajikistan, welcomed the participants and expressed his anticipated success of the meeting while Dr Seong-Yong Park mentioned the possibility of utilising online system as an alternative to top-down inventory-making systems being used by governments. In her keynote speech, Dr Faroghat Azizi, Deputy Minister of Culture in Tajikistan, called for future cooperation among participants toward ICH inventory-making. In the following session, Mr B. Altayev (Kazakhstan), Ms C. Beksultanova (Kyrgyzstan), Ms G. Djamiieva (Tajikistan), and Mr B. Durdiev (Uzbekistan) delivered their country reports, sharing information on ICH categories, tentative lists, and organisations related to inventory-making.

On the second day, participants further explored cooperation measures and finally decided to adopt an action plan and a guideline on implementing a project for 2011 to 2014, which activates the cooperative project, Facilitating ICH Inventory-Making and Utilising Online Tools for the ICH Safeguarding in the Central Asian Region. Through the project, Central Asia and ICHCAP will work on onsite surveys on ICH elements, online system development, and the creation of an ICH atlas. Currently, ICHCAP and Central Asian countries are setting up project plans for respective states and forming expert groups.
Bhutanese Authorities Take the First Step Forward for the National Inventorying of ICH

Workshop on Intangible Cultural Heritage Inventory-Making of Bhutan

The Workshop on ICH Inventory-Making of Bhutan was held at the National Library and Archives in Thimbu, Bhutan, on 27 and 28 September 2011. The Workshop was co-organised by ICHCAP and the National Library and Archives, Ministry of Home and Cultural Affairs of Bhutan.

Opening the first session of the Workshop, Mr Dorjee Tshering, Director-General of the Department of Culture, Ministry of Home and Cultural Affairs of Bhutan, pointed out that a variety of intangible cultural heritage still tends to be handed down in daily life in Bhutan, but that it has also been facing difficulties in transmission due to rapid social changes. The second presentation was followed by Dr Francoise Pommaret who introduced recent research on traditional culture that relates to ICH inventory-making in Bhutan.

In the following session, Dr Seong-Yong Park, Acting Secretary-General of ICHCAP, delivered his presentation on the concept and meaning of ICH inventory-making, which the 2003 UNESCO Convention emphasises as an important ICH safeguarding measure. Prof. Han Hee Hahm from Jeonbuk National University of Korea and Mr Weonmo Park, Chief of the Information and Research Section of ICHCAP, introduced diverse methodologies for making an ICH inventory, including the inventory-making system of Korea. After the presentations, participants shared their views and international issues on ICH safeguarding as well as inventory-making. Around twenty government officers from the Ministry of Home and Cultural Affairs attended the two-day workshop, and inventory-making as an ICH safeguarding measure in Bhutan was discussed among the participants. ICHCAP agreed with the Department of Culture, under the Ministry of Home and Cultural Affairs of Bhutan, to assist in a project for ICH inventory-making in Bhutan, and the project will be implemented by the National Library and Archives of Bhutan.

Director’s Note

Combining Knowledge and Expertise for ICH Safeguarding

Some of the most notable events of ICHCAP this quarter included the Workshop on ICH Inventory-Making of Bhutan, the Expert Exchange Programme for Establishing a Safeguarding System for ICH of Lao PDR, and the 2nd Sub-regional Network Meeting on the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Central Asia. On the heels of such specific outcomes of the cooperative projects, the future activities of ICHCAP promise to be more engaged with ICH safeguarding in the region with support from Member States.

What I have come across through these series of activities is that networks among ICH stakeholders are essential for safeguarding activities. They were indeed great occasions to share the knowledge and experience of policy-makers, community representatives, and experts I met in Dushanbe, Thimbu, and Seoul over the past several months. The Centre will play a coordinating role to combine their individual knowledge and expertise in a collective effort to safeguard ICH in the region.

I am also very pleased to inform you that the Editorial Advisory Board Members for the ICH Courier have recently been organised. Considering equal regional distribution, five advisory members were invited to participate and represent South-West Asia, Central Asia, East Asia, South-East Asia, and the Pacific. The new team, made up of experts of culture and ICH, has participated in bringing together ICH Courier Vol. 9. From this volume forward, under the advice and leadership of the Editorial Advisory Board, the ICH Courier is expected to have a higher order of professionalism to help instil greater public confidence. I hope the ICH Courier will nourish the curious minds of readers all over the world.
Artefacts and art works, often classified as material culture, have long been targets of collectors’ classifications, typologies, or taxonomies. In architectural and urban preservation, inventories play a major role as tools for the identification of monuments and sites of patrimonial value. The Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (UNESCO 2003), however, requires a totally new approach to this matter.

Safeguarding is a public policy that aims at protecting cultural elements in the context of the social experiences that create and nurture them. Moreover, it is concerned not only with heritage value as attributed by preservation agencies but also—if not mainly—with those ascribed by local cultures and embedded in cultural dynamics. This is what seems to be at stake when safeguarding is conceived as “ensuring the viability” of intangible cultural heritage (ICH) as living and changeable social practices. Consequently, the following conceptual issues must be raised in relation to inventory-making in this field of cultural preservation.

Cultures provide the basic chart that gives meaning to peoples’ shared experiences. Social practices, knowledge, and forms of expression having patrimonial value or not are created, appropriated, developed, or forgotten by particular populations in specific times and places. They pertain to ways of life and constitute the historical presents of real human beings; they are not fragments of past events, reminiscent of some golden age of cultural history. Hence, their significance is grounded on the social contexts in which they are formed and transformed.

These ideas lead to a central issue for inventory-making, namely, that the identification of cultural elements and their inclusion in heritage lists must take into account that the practices with which they are interconnected, as well as the resources (material and intellectual) needed for their production and reproduction, change in specific times and places.
Furthermore, social facts should not be represented in inventories as static flashes, but as realities in motion, in at least two senses of the word: in the sense that they imply duration in time and that they are changeable (not fixed) products of human agency. This implies that, as far as cultural processes are concerned, lists produced by surveys are necessarily dated and open-ended.

Inventories result from the segmentation of social reality in flux by classificatory systems of thought, which are intrinsically culturally biased. Indeed, societies do not necessarily build theories about their own cultural practices and do not sort out aspects of their social life in categories and types, such as religion, art, economy, public ceremonies, etc., as Western thought has done for centuries. Know-how or artistic skills are not usually dissociated from other forms of participation in cultural performances, just as prayers and spells are not set apart from the activities in which people engage in their rituals and in everyday life.

It is crucial for surveys to unveil the practical and symbolic links of ICH with the territory and natural environment as well as its social embedment and socio-psychological rooting— that is, its implications for self-esteem, personal identity and belonging. For these reasons, inventories should take into account not only what is highlighted by legal and administrative parameters, but also what is empirically indicated by fieldwork.

According to the Convention, inventories should identify and document the cultural items that are recognised by specific social groups as their patrimony and by the safeguarding authorities as suitable for protection within the limits of existing legislation. Consequently, its implementation requires tools and procedures that give adequate responses both to the demands implied by the conceptions underlying the Convention and to the historically accumulated experience, actual demands, constraints, and possibilities that are proper to the specific national and local contexts in which safeguarding is developed.

In brief, the construction of internationally agreed safeguarding practices—and particularly inventories—demands the development of research and management strategies and methods that (i) raise questions on the basis of these general parameters and (ii) effectively illuminate issues and give answers to priorities that are put forth by the protagonists of heritage creation: the so-called cultural communities. It also leads to the understanding that inventories must be reasonably dense in terms of ethnographic and historic interpretation, because they are tools of strategic importance in mediating the cultural and political gap existing among the local, national, and international levels. Consequently, they should be supported by in-depth ethnographies.

The segmentation of cultures and heritage management are complex intellectual operations that require specialised training. The subject is as polemical among anthropologists as it is strategically relevant both for designing the policies required by the ICH Convention and for evaluating their consequences for local lives.

In order to achieve this purpose, inventories should respond to the cultural and political issues and demands raised locally “with the widest possible participation of local communities, groups and individuals”, as phrased by the Convention. Consequently, methodological issues should not be dealt with only in theoretical terms. Of course, questions of social theory and epistemology must be thought of in their own right, but matters of the politics of representation and decision-making must be faced and resolved politically in the concrete arenas where they are raised. This is the crucial aspect of inventory-making, an approach that provides a safe basis for identifying the patrimonial value of ICH elements as well as for designing realistic and socially sustainable action plans.

2) Antonio A. Arantes (BA, M.Sc. University of São Paulo; Ph.D. University of Cambridge/Kings College) is a professor of social anthropology. His expertise on public policies and cultural heritage was consolidated in consultancy assignments to several programs developed by non-governmental, governmental, and multilateral organisations. He has actively participated in international experts’ meetings organised by UNESCO as well as in designing and implementing the ICH inventory methods adopted in Brazil and in Mozambique.
3) Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage (UNESCO, 2003), Art 2(3).
ICH and Circle Dances

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 circle dances. In these examples of intangible cultural heritage from China, India, and the Republic of Korea, you can see the intersections of performing arts and societies as well as their influence on public events in each community.

China Circle Dances of the Miao Ethnic Group Thriving in China

Wu Yunming (Former Professor of the Dance Research Institute, China National Academy of Arts)

The Miao people are a linguistically and culturally related ethnic group who settled in the Chinese provinces of Guizhou, Yunnan, Hunan and Guangxi. While the Miao are disbursed over a large area and are subdivided into a number of different branches, they share a common heritage element called the circle dance, a general category for various dances that have their own particular content and purpose. Often accompanied by a lusheng (a bamboo musical instrument), the circle dance is the most important dance and the most popular among all Miao branches.

The wood drum dance is popular among the Fanpai Miao in Taijiang County, Guizhou province. It is a cheerful circle dance for young people to court lovers and for entertainment. Accompanied by a fast-moving drum beat, young people gather around. Although the participants are generally shy and reserved at the beginning, their passions are gradually heated up by the hypnotic power of the drum, and eventually the dancers raise one leg and begin turning left or right. With the pleated skirts of female dancers rising and falling, a layer of visual excitement is added to the already energised sounds coming from the drum. The length of wood drum dance is not predetermined; instead, people usually dance on and on until they feel exhausted. This circle dance is enjoyed by not only the young dancers, but also the spectators as it is beautiful sight. It is a rare cheerful dance among the Miao people.

In Sandu County, Guizhou province, married women like to perform bandeng, which literally means “stool dance”. Traditionally, women would work in the fields sitting on little wooden stools. During rest hours, they would gather with their stools in their hands, forming a circle. Eventually, this rest time evolved into bandeng. Today, the dancers either walk along a circle or dance face to face. During the dance, they pat the surface of the stool to create an accompanying rhythm. Or they may use their stools to touch the dancers standing on their left and right. Bandeng is graceful and slow, but also lively and interesting. There are no limits as for time, place and number of people. With its free movements and tempo, bandeng is a versatile form of entertainment most loved by Miao women.

Miao groups living in Danzhai, Leishan, Sandu and Rongjiang in Guizhou province, enjoy a different, but quite traditional circle dance named gupiao. Like other Miao dances, it is a social event, during which dancers find their lovers. At night, unmarried women meet at the village grounds and wait for the moon raising. When the moon comes out, they dance with the young men playing the piaoqin, a wooden string instrument.

The rhythm and speed of gupiao fluctuates according to the melody the men play. The moves and poses of gupiao are simple but graceful. When a man or woman sees someone of interest, he or she will gently step on the other’s foot to show love. The dance may last throughout the night until daybreak.

Wood stool dance, Qiandongnan Miao (Photo by Wu Yunming)
While the circle is a quantifiable and concrete geometrical shape, the abstract idea of the circle has many different meanings, interpretations, and symbolic significance in Indian philosophical systems. These ideas have also culminated in varied manifestations of the concept into intangible cultural heritage. Garba is a ritual dance form where the knowledge and belief systems regarding the circle find choreographic expression. It is a social-community dance performed primarily by women in the Gujarat region in India. Performed during the nine-day Hindu festival of Navrātī, the dance is primarily a celebration of feminine energy and an offering to the feminine divinity. It is also performed during the celebration of Sivaratri, on the occasion of weddings, and in certain pregnancy rites.

Historical significance
The name garba is derived from the Sanskrit term garbha meaning ‘womb’. The history of the garba can be traced back to an old Hindu legend that tells of Lord Krishna’s granddaughter-in-law, Usha, and the way she danced and popularized a precursor to the garba, known as lasya nritya. Traditionally, the dance is performed in circles around a decorated lamp known as the garbi. The lamp represented embryonic life and quite often a coconut would be placed atop the pot to give it the appearance of the sacred Kumbh. Often, the dancers carry the garbi on the head while performing. At the centre, a representation of the Mother Goddess is also placed in the form of an idol or image. Its origin is believed to be in the worship of goddess Jagdamba. While on one hand, the circle symbolises the divine feminine energy and fertility, it also signifies the cyclical aspect of time. The circle of life, consisting of birth, death, rebirth, and so on, is symbolised by the rhythmic movements of the dancers. In the midst of this time cycle is the constant, unchanging and absolute energy of the Goddess. Another important aspect of this community dance is that it is participatory and inclusive by nature. There is no differentiation between dancers and spectators, and people who are watching the dance soon join in, and the circles continuously expand.

Thematic content
Garba songs are mostly devotional and invoke the blessings of the Goddess. The thematic content for garba songs also expresses the hopes and desires of women, and it is rich in metaphors connected with nature and seasons. These song texts are an invaluable aspect of living traditions since they are an oral archive of value systems, and they define women’s social roles and behavioural codes that have been handed down through the ages. As a living tradition, the form also continually evolves, and new songs are being written with relevance to the changes in status of women today.

The dance usually starts with one dancer leading the group and others follow into the circle formation and start revolving around the deity with synchronised clapping movements. The stamping movement of the feet is coordinated with the claps, and then the circle moves forward in a counterclockwise direction. The tempo of the song and the frequency of the claps increase gradually. The musical instruments used for garba are mainly the drum, harmoniums and the nal, a kind of hand drum. A dholi, or drummer, who sits in the centre keeps the rhythm.

As a living and breathing cultural practice that is now prevalent worldwide, garba consistently adapts and evolves into contemporary idioms and themes. The free-flowing and flexible nature of the form also enables the community to come together, improvise and interact.
The circle dance, where people dance in a rotating formation, has appeared in many cultures since ancient times. The form and structure of the circle dance reflect the aesthetic concepts of mysteriousness, the incessant generation of filling and emptying, eternal return, unity, and defence. While there are various kinds of circle dance forms in Korea, the grandest one, with more than 250 dancers, is yeowonmu.

Performed during the Dano festival on the fifth day of the fifth lunar month, yeowonmu is a dramatic representation of the historical episode of General Han defeating Japanese invaders. In the dance, a diverse and dramatic cast of characters made up of male and female dancers appear in splendid costumes. Particularly dazzling is the ornate flower headgear, which, at three-meters high, is as immense as it is colourful. Because of the great size, the headgear must be placed on the dancers' shoulders instead of their head.

The earliest record on yeowonmu is found in a poem composed in 1593 by Munbyung Choi, a Confucian scholar and leader of loyal troops; he wrote, 'Yeowonmu at the Dano festival will be shining forever while the General is fighting in confidence,' honouring the fidelity of General Han. This suggests that yeowonmu was already popular as early as the sixteenth century. Moreover, a prayer composed in 1765 by Governor Chungeon Jung of Jain county says, 'There remains a dance called yeowon in the country… every year a ritual is done at the time of Dano,' which is evidence of yeowonmu transmission into the eighteenth century. According to these records and others, yeowonmu has been performed as a sacrificial offering to appease General Han and his sister as guardian deities of the village as well as to repose the spirits of the deceased Japanese invaders. This conciliation comes through the circle dance when the performers put on the flower headgear and centre around two yeowons.

On the day prior to the Dano festival, shamans and priests honour General Han by performing a ritual to invoke his spirit. Accompanied by music, the shamans and priests visit shrines to worship the General in a shamanic and a Confucian ritual. Before yeowonmu starts, several boy dancers, aged thirteen and fourteen who belong to the shaman family, put on traditional female costumes (long red skirts and green short jackets), and they hold a thirty-centimetre string in each hand. They proceed from the side of yeowonhwas, female dancers who wear the flower headgear, to the centre of the circle and then return. This act is followed by the dance of two male shamans disguised as females with flower headgear. Around them, a circle dance is performed by thirty to forty dancers, including two boy dancers, two military servants, one to two military commanders, and twenty to thirty military officers.

The dance is accompanied by the dynamic music of a cylindrical drum (buk) and a small gong (guengguari). The musicians begin a circular formation, and then they are followed by the straight formation of the shamanic musicians, who play an hour-glass-shaped drum (janggu) and a large transverse bamboo flute (daegeum). The two yeowonhwas, performed by two male shamans to represent large flower trees, are the central elements of yeowonmu. As such, the whole scene of yeowonmu revolves around the two flower trees in the circle while inviting spectators to dance together, thus creating a symbol of the unity and harmony of the community.

Circle dances have been performed since ancient times to secure affluence, perfection, safety, harmony, peace, and so on. In this respect, the circle dance reflects the most substantial wishes of humanity from a cosmological point of view influenced by the circular motif of the sun, moon, and the sky. Through the circle dance, the human body and its movement are sublimated into the cosmological realm, and the yeowonmu is a majestic Korean version of this traditional form.
Samarkand, a UNESCO World Heritage site and one of the oldest urban centres, has a long storied relationship with music. Archaeological findings, such as the 3000-year-old flute discovered in the area of the old city, tell us that music culture has ancient roots in Central Asia. Additional studies provide evidence that the ud, a medieval variant of a lute, was spread throughout the orient much earlier than it was in Europe. One of the biggest influences on the music culture of Samarkand was its unique position as a crossroad of the Great Silk Road, a situation that allowed the melding of musical traditions from throughout Asia. In support and recognition of its ancient traditions in music and its position as a crossroad, President Islam Karimov of the Republic of Uzbekistan initiated an international music festival called Sharq Taronalari (Melodies of the Orient).

With the ornate architecture of Registan Square as the backdrop, Sharq Taronalari has been held between 25 and 30 August every two years since 1997 under the patronage of UNESCO. Other than the pure enjoyment of music, the main aims and objectives of the festival are to popularise the best achievements of traditional music art, to preserve and develop cultural traditions of people from all over the world, to encourage talents in musical and vocal sphere, to further international creative ties, to strengthen cultural-spiritual cooperation, and to promote peace, solidarity, and ideas of mutual respect. Because of these goals of promoting peace and intercultural dialogue and manifesting cultural diversity, the festival almost instantly won the approval of the international community, and it is now a premier international event for the arts. Testament to this is the extreme and rapid growth of the festival. The first Sharq Taronalari festival brought together artists from thirty-one countries, mostly represented by the Asia-Pacific region. The eighth festival held in 2011 included artists from fifty-six countries, representing Asia, Europe, Africa, and Latin America.

During the festival the performers are judged by an international jury made up of famous musicologists, art directors and managers of international festivals. This year’s panel of experts making up the jury hailed from Singapore, Belgium, the Republic of Korea, Indonesia, Morocco, Canada, Japan, China, India, Israel, and Uzbekistan. The function of the international jury is to select artists and groups for festival awards as a way encouraging artists and groups to further the transmission of music heritage to future generations. This year, the highest award, the Grand Prix, was awarded to Sodo Sori from the Republic of Korea for their performance of traditional Korean songs. First prize was split between two groups, Aisva from Lithuania and Dunhuang New Words from China, for their presentation of folk music in traditional and contemporary styles, respectively. The three-way tie for second prize went to Leader from the Russian Federation, Awae Mehbany from Iran, and Sato from the host country, Uzbekistan. Third prize was also split with the award going to Galkinish from Turkmenistan, Chveneburebi from Georgia, and Talilema from Madagascar. In addition, the international jury also awarded three UNESCO-sponsored Samarkand Taronasi prizes to Jivan Gasparyan Junior from Armenia, Nazaket Teimurova from Azerbaijan, and Ilyos Arabov from Uzbekistan. It is through these cash prizes that Sharq Taronalari festival helps preserve and develop tangible and intangible cultural heritage, transmit the heritage to future generations, and promote cultural diversity.

Another unique feature of the Sharq Taronalari is the organisation of a scientific conference that runs in tandem with the festival. In keeping with the framework and themes of the festival, well-known musicologists, composers, and performers participate in discussions and present academic research papers related to music as a science and an art form. The titles and themes for the past eight conferences were, respectively: ‘Commonalities of Eastern Music Art’; ‘Oriental Music Instruments’; ‘Art of Maqom’.
Field Report

'Creativity and Interpretation Eastern Music', 'Traditions of Shashmaqom and Modernity', 'Music Arts in Architecture and Paintings', and 'Documentary Heritage in Music Arts'. In addition, these conferences complement the goals of the festival by providing an international forum for discussion and allowing a free exchange of knowledge related to the issues and challenges that are faced during the processes of preserving music heritage.

As a follow up to and in the spirit with the Sharq Taronalari, Uzbekistan is organising annual nation-wide festivals and contests to promote various aspects of music arts. Some of these events include Ilhom XX Tashkent Festival of Modern Music, Tashkent Spring Festival of Symphonic Music and Opera, Aslar Sadosi Folk Festival, and the following music contests Ofarin, Zamin yulduzlarì, and Nihol. Moreover, according to the decision of the Government of Uzbekistan, 119 new music schools and lyceums have been constructed in provinces throughout country between 2009 and 2011. The aim of such policy measures is to attract youth to the musical legacy of their country and to transmit these cherished masterpieces of intangible cultural heritage.

Since antiquity, music has been an essential and important part of intangible cultural heritage, serving as the basis of cultural life, as a crucial and refined criterion of development, and most importantly, as a language of communication among linguistically and culturally diverse people, who can understand music without the need of translations. In terms of safeguarding music as intangible cultural heritage, the biennial Sharq Taronalari and the initiatives of Uzbekistan are playing a vital role.
**Inventory of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Indonesia**

Harry Waluyo (Secretary, Resources Development Body, Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Indonesia)

Indonesia, made up of tens of thousands of island and several hundred distinct ethnic groups, is home to various forms of intangible cultural heritage (ICH). Nonetheless, in this age of rapid political, social, and economic change, this heritage is at risk of being lost forever. In light of this, there have been a number of projects geared toward safeguarding Indonesian ICH. In fact, in 1976, there was an ambitious project undertaken to compile a complete inventory of ICH throughout the many islands. However, this project and its many successors experienced a number of problems, making it impossible to conduct a comprehensive ICH inventory. Two main reasons for why these projects did not come to fruition were 1) the distinct lack of community and individual involvement and 2) the ambitious scope of the project exceeding the technological capacity of the times.

Learning from the shortcomings of previous inventorying attempts, the Indonesian Ministry of Culture and Tourism teamed up with the UNESCO Office in Jakarta in 2009 to undergo a new inventorying project. In stark contrast to its predecessors, this new endeavor has been a striking success, and between the project’s 2009 commencement and July 2011, more than 1,700 elements have been inventoried with the help of academics, local governments, businesses, communities, and individuals. One of the secrets of this success is the *Practical Handbook for Inventory of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Indonesia*, a guide that sets standards and methods for inventorying heritage elements, so that a wide-scale inventory can be drawn up with the participation of various parties. Compiled by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism and the UNESCO Office in Jakarta, the Handbook is set up in distinct parts, each serving its own special purpose.

**BACKGROUND**

The initial segment of the *Handbook* is an overview covering background information about inventorying ICH. In addition to highlighting the different ICH inventorying projects of the past, there is also a section indicating the legal basis for the project as well as information that clearly states the scope of the project, the objectives, and the target groups for the Handbook. By specifically naming the different groups who are encouraged to participate and stating the beneficiaries of the project, the Handbook creates something more concrete, with participants knowing not only who else is collaborating but also who is benefiting and how. It is in this sense that a feeling for community and pride in national heritage can intensify and compel individuals and groups to participate even more.

**COMPARISON OF INVENTORYING ICH IN CHINA, JAPAN, AND KOREA**

The next part of the Handbook opens with a review of the August 2009 Symposium and Workshop on Inventorying for Safeguarding ICH that was held in Jakarta. Experts from China, Japan, and Korea presented papers regarding their experience with ICH inventorying in their respective countries. While the processes involved with inventorying differed somewhat from country to country, there were several significant commonalities among them, and some of these common characteristics are that the nations:

- have, or are preparing, standard ICH inventory formats,
- have ICH inventorying at the national level,
- involve communities and NGOs in ICH inventory work,
- use classifications or domains in inventorying ICH, and
- have experience with funding limitations in inventorying activities and with overcoming these limitations different ways.

**INVENTORYING ICH OF INDONESIA**

The third segment is the longest and most comprehensive in the Handbook. The first part reviews how to conduct the inventory, giving participants different options and instructions...
to complete an inventory form electronically or manually. There is also information about how to update inventoried ICH elements. In addition, the manner in which the collected data will be used is explained. For example, there are four categories of database users (UNESCO, government, researcher, and public), and each user has certain usage rights. UNESCO uses the data as documentation of inventoried ICH; the government, for guidance in policy making; researchers, as a source of knowledge; and the public, as a storehouse of ICH. Knowing how the data will be used helps ease any apprehension that may hinder voluntary involvement in inventorying.

The following part is a multipage example of the ICH inventory form, and it sheds light into why the most current inventorying project has made such great strides in such a short amount of time. There are seventeen individual data fields to be filled out, and they cover the essential aspects associated with an ICH element. Although it is a rather lengthy form, it is also clear and easy to understand. Most of all, the data fields standardise the manner, type, and amount of data collected, which helps facilitate widespread inventorying, as all those who are inventorying are collecting the same data attributes. Furthermore, with technological advancements in database and web software, the information of the key attributes can be easily inputted into a relational database onsite or off.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY AND ANNEX**

Including bibliographic references allows participants and readers to look up additional information about ICH safeguarding as well as ICH inventorying.

In the annex there are two flow charts indicating the workflow of the entire inventorying process. The first chart outlines the procedures involved with manual ICH inventorying of elements, and the second, with online ICH inventorying. These charts are particularly helpful because they allow participants to see the entire multifaceted procedure, and they will be able to spearhead any problems in the process before issues arise.

The Practical Handbook for Inventory of ICH of Indonesia is a bilingual publication that has played a prominent role in allowing the Ministry of Culture and Tourism to embark on a widespread inventorying project that is thus far not only meeting, but exceeding expectations.
ntangible cultural heritage (ICH) is defined as living heritage, a kind of heritage with traditional and contemporary characteristics. Communities not only recognise it as a part of their cultural heritage, but also as an important element of their identity. Therefore, safeguarding ICH is also a means of safeguarding its bearers. While the process of becoming cognisant of this was a long one, this idea is now reflected more and more clearly in the ICH safeguarding policies of Viet Nam.

Viet Nam ratified the 2003 UNESCO Convention in 2005 and immediately started implementing it. The most impressive activity was amending the Law on Cultural Heritage to integrate UNESCO’s concepts of safeguarding ICH into a new law, although the old one had just been compiled in 2001. In the amended cultural heritage law, many of the new concepts in the definitions of living heritage and the various provisions on ICH owners, bearers and practitioners, as well as the recognition and enhancement policies applied to them, were learnt from Korea’s practical experience in the field.

The progressive and effective Korean policies for identifying living human treasures and establishing the Living Human Treasures System have helped promoted ICH safeguarding activities throughout the region. From 2007 to 2009, with support of the Intangible Cultural Heritage Centre for Asia and the Pacific (ICHCAP), the Department of Cultural Heritage of Viet Nam carried out a project on raising awareness and increasing capacity for ICH policy makers. The project created a favourable environment for Vietnamese officials to approach heritage by studying various Korean cultural institutions and different ways of working with communities to identify important cultural properties, build nomination files of master artists to be recognised and enhanced, and create sustainable safeguarding policies. Korean experts and the staff of the Department of Cultural Heritage implemented survey work on several ICH elements in Viet Nam, organised a training workshop for local cultural officials, and gave instruction when the cultural officials practiced inventorying and identifying the value of ICH and the bearers. After the survey and workshops, the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism issued a circular in June 2010 to regulate ICH inventory-making and the creation of scientific files for ICH elements to be inscribed onto the National Inventory. The circular is now being actively implemented in all provinces throughout the country. Towards the end of 2011, the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism is going to circulate two other pamphlets—one on awarding the State’s honourable titles to excellent master artists (Living Human Treasures, as titled by UNESCO) and the other on enhancing policies for ICH safeguarding activities that may hopefully be applied to other countries at the beginning of 2012.

The effective collaboration between the ICHCAP and the Department of Cultural Heritage has brought about practical lessons for both sides as well as for the region, in general. Two very important ideas we walk away with are that:

- safeguarding ICH means maintaining it in contemporary life and allowing people to play central role in deciding what their cultural heritage is, and
- in a developing society, ICH is a foundation and a powerful driving force, and safeguarding cultural diversity is a means to reach sustainable community development in Asia and the Pacific region.

Korean experts and the DCH implemented survey work on several ICH elements in Viet Nam. (Photo by ICHCAP)

Artist Ha Thi Cau (over 90 years old), the last practitioner of the traditional Xam singing in Viet Nam (Photo by Pham Cao Quy, 2010)

Korean experts at the training course on establishing LHT system for local policy makers and communities in Gia Lai, Viet Nam (Photo by Pham Cao Quy, 2008)
The Pacific Islands Museums Association (PIMA) is a regional, non-governmental organisation that assists museums, cultural centres, national trusts, cultural departments and ministries, cultural associations, and arts councils. PIMA acknowledges the richness of the Pacific’s ICH and has undertaken some successful initiatives to support ICH safeguarding.

PIMA was established in 1994 as a regional forum where heritage professionals could exchange their views and work towards improving the quality of service provided to the public. It is the first and only regional, multilingual, multicultural, non-profit organisation that assists museums, cultural centres, and people to preserve Pacific heritage.

PIMA develops community participation in heritage management and brings together over forty-five museums and cultural centres in the Pacific to develop their capacity to identify research, manage, interpret, and nurture cultural and natural heritage. PIMA advocates the development of regional cultural resource management policies and practices, facilitates training, and provides a forum to exchange ideas and skills. It provides and encourages regional and global linkages to support heritage safeguarding.

In this article, PIMA highlights a case study on initiatives that PIMA fully supported in Vanuatu as one of its ICH safeguarding activities.

The Malampa Regional Sand Drawing Festival, held in Sesivi, West Ambrym, from 11 to 15 May 2008, was a significant cultural event not only for Vanuatu, but for the whole world. Sponsored by UNESCO/Japan Funds-in-Trust for intangible heritage, the festival demonstrated that this unique ni-Vanuatu tradition is still alive and may indeed be undergoing a revival of interest, given the convergence of around 400 participants.

Aesthetically, the sand drawings are very beautiful, and it was a privilege to witness the great skill and knowledge of the practitioners from all over Vanuatu’s islands, as they ritually drew complex designs on the flat black volcanic sands and recited the stories and songs to go with them. However, it is necessary to realize that sand drawings are much more than just pretty geometric patterns or pictures. They are a complex artistic ritual where art, story, and traditional knowledge are interwoven to form a language of memory, place, and community. Sand drawings uniquely express the deep ni-Vanuatu connection to and understanding of the land, conveying a sense of community, identity, and interaction with nature and history that has evolved out of the spirit of the land and the hearts and minds of the people.

To keep this cultural knowledge alive, it is not enough to preserve the outward forms of sand drawings, but rather to continue to regenerate their deeper significance—the stories, rituals, and the symbolic meanings that express the richness of ni-Vanuatu culture and community relations.

Much of the success of the festival was in seeing innovative sand drawings evolve, such as the depictions of Air Vanuatu and the Statue of Liberty, right alongside older traditional forms such as the laplap form from Pentecost. Of particular importance is that so many young people took part in the festival, witnessing and learning from the custodians of this living cultural heritage. For without this intergenerational transmission of knowledge, the future of unique cultural expressions such as sand drawing would indeed be under threat.

While there are plans to incorporate sand drawing as part of the national school curriculum in Vanuatu, to convey a true sense of the richness and breadth of cultural context, festivals such as the one in Ambrym are essential. Locals, participants, and visitors are enriched by the opportunity to make new friends, exchange information and artistic inspiration, renew family connections, and learn new customs, dances, art forms, stories, and music—experiences no classroom can convey.

In this age of intolerance, global conflict, and the stifling of creative diversity by huge multinational corporations and powerful political interests, the need to raise awareness of cultural heritage’s value is crucial to bring people closer together in mutual respect and understanding. We need to do everything we can to promote and encourage the rich cultural diversity of humanity, and the continued practice of the arts and culture of Vanuatu gives life to a language that may otherwise be forgotten or undervalued in the headlong rush toward ‘modern life’ and the age of the mobile phone.
Understanding ICH

Safeguarding Measures under the 2003 UNESCO Convention

Our modern age is defined by better technology that allows individuals from disparate cultures to interact with one another effortlessly. While this newfound ability to instantly communicate globally has helped usher in a realisation of a true global village, it also exposes a threat to traditional heritage, especially intangible cultural heritage (ICH). To help ensure the continued viability of ICH, a number of safeguarding measures have been developed. Usually initiated by concerned communities and groups, actions to safeguard ICH are also undergone by government ministries, local authorities, NGOs, and researchers. Regardless of the individuals or organisations that promote safeguarding, it is an understood imperative that actions be developed with the widest possible participation of communities, groups, or individuals directly affected by or involved with the ICH element. In addition, safeguarding efforts should desirably encourage the continued practice and transmission of the ICH element being safeguarded. However, resources required for safeguarding may be limited, so it is necessary to prioritise threats and risks while establishing safeguarding measures. Article 2.3 of the 2003 UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage includes a number of possible safeguarding measures that can be implemented.

Transmission

When practitioners or other ICH bearers formally or informally pass on practices, skills, knowledge or ideas to others, especially younger generations within the community, they are ensuring a continuation of traditional ways, but while this is a form of transmission, it is not necessarily a safeguarding measure. However, if this continuity is diminished or impaired in some way, then implementing safeguarding measures may be needed to enhance the transmission process. Introducing a more formal mode of transmission in schools is one such method. Teaching children who are from the community where the ICH has traditionally been practiced can help ensure that the practice does not die out. This can be put into practical effect, for example, by simply teaching traditional songs, but other types of curricula may be required for raising general ICH awareness among different communities.

Revitalisation

To revitalise ICH means to strengthen the ICH and expressions that are seriously threatened. Under the Convention, the element should have some degree of demonstrable vitality within the concerned community or group; otherwise the element ceases to be ICH and the Convention does not apply. According to the Convention, revitalisation by restoring and strengthening weak or endangered ICH is a fundamental safeguarding measure. However, the resurrection of extinct elements is a form of revival and is outside the scope of the Convention.

Identify, Define, Inventory, Document, and Research

Naming an ICH element and briefly describing its context to distinguish it from others is, as outlined in the Convention, identification. An ICH definition differs in that it provides a fuller description of the element as a snapshot at a specific point in time. Identifying and defining ICH should both be done with direct participation of the concerned communities, groups, or individuals.

Following the process of ICH identification and defining is inventorying, the systematic collection and presentation of an ICH element. An inventory can be disseminated through any number of media from a simple paper list to a sophisticated multimedia database. Inventorying should only be executed with the consent of the affected communities or groups. States Parties may choose to organise their ICH inventories in any manner that seems most appropriate to them. The goals of these inventories can be manifold, but the two most important aims are to contribute to safeguarding and increasing awareness. Contributing to safeguarding, as a requirement of the Convention, suggests that the state of the inventoried elements’ viability be indicated.

Subsequent to making an inventory is the documentation process. Documenting consists of recording the current state and varieties of an ICH element and collecting documents that relate to it. Recording can be done through transcription or audio-visual taping or both.

To understand an ICH element or groups of elements better, research is required. The course of researching an ICH element is undertaken though a holistic exploration of the element. In addition to examining the element’s forms and social, cultural, and economic functions, research includes an investigation into the modes of transmission, artistic and aesthetic features, and history as well as the dynamics involved in the creation and re-creation of the element.

Preservation and Protection

ICH preservation, according to the convention, does not imply the practice of the element cannot transform over time, but rather that the communities and bearers maintain continuity in the practice as time passes. Deliberate measures often undertaken by official bodies to defend ICH elements from the threat of discontinued practice fall under the category of protection. This danger of discontinuation can be either perceived or actual.

Awareness-Raising, Promotion, and Enhancement

Encouraging concerned parties to recognise the value of ICH, respect the element, and, if possible, take measures to ensure its viability is awareness-raising. Two tools for raising awareness are promotion and enhancement. These means aim at increasing the value attached to an element, both inside and outside the concerned communities. Promotion takes the form of piquing the public’s interest in the various aspects of ICH while enhancement promotes the status and function of ICH.

*This article refers to the UNESCO Convention (2003), Operational Directives (2010), documents for the Training of Trainers Programmes, and UNESCO’s intangible cultural heritage website: www.unesco.org/culture/ich/.

Editorial Advisory Board of the ICH Courier Launched

In September 2011, the Editorial Advisory Board was launched to ensure the quality and reliability of the newsletter contents. The Board Members were selected by considering regional balance among the five sub-regions in the Asia–Pacific region. They serve active roles as the Advisory Board by providing the ICH Courier with comments on yearly and quarterly plans of the newsletter; comments on and monitoring of articles, structure, and layout; ideas on the newsletter; and recommendations of experts. The Editorial Advisory Board Members will perform their duty until December 2012.

Member’s Name of the Editorial Advisory Board

- Dr Sudha Gopalakrishnan (South-West Asia)
- Mr Alisher Ikramov (Central Asia)
- Prof. Roger L. Janelli (East Asia)
- Mr Gaura Mancacaritadipura (South-East Asia)
- Ms Akatsuki Takahashi (Pacific)

(in alphabetical order)
ICH News Briefs

[Central Asia] Regional Meeting of Central Asian National Commissions for UNESCO

The regional meeting of the Central Asian National Commissions for UNESCO was held in Astana, Republic of Kazakhstan, on 5 and 6 September 2011. The meeting was organised by the Kazakhstan National Commission for UNESCO in collaboration with the UNESCO Cluster Office in Almaty.

In the spirit of promoting mutual support, the meeting mainly focused on strengthening cooperation among National Commissions for UNESCO with the intent of increasing cooperation efficiency, sharing best practices, and improving cooperation among national authorities and UNESCO field offices.

More than a hundred participants from National Commissions; UNESCO ASPNet; and UNESCO Clubs, Centres, and Associations were in attendance to discuss UNESCO-related issues such as tangible and intangible culture. In particular, during the breakout session for the cultural sector, participants actively discussed issues on the Silk Road, focusing on an integrated approach to safeguard tangible and intangible cultural heritage.

Following the meeting, a recommendation was adopted to promote UNESCO initiatives in the region.

[Japan] Opening Ceremony of the International Research Centre for Intangible Cultural Heritage in the Asia-Pacific

The International Research Centre for Intangible Cultural Heritage in the Asia-Pacific (IRCI), a UNESCO Category 2 Centre, was established on 3 October 2011 in Sakai, Osaka, Japan. The Governing Board Meeting was held with attendees from representatives of relevant Japanese organisations, UNESCO and its category 2 centres in the Republic of Korea and China.

The IRCI also held an opening ceremony with invited participants from the Agency for Cultural Affairs in Japan and category 2 centres in the ROK and China. The event commenced with an opening memorial reception and an inaugural symposium. The inaugural symposium was under the subject of Promotion and Transmission of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Danger, and the panel of experts was made up of Sam-Ang Sam, ethnomusicologist from Cambodia; Natan Itonga, Cultural Officer from the Culture Center and Museum, Kiribati; and Yamaji Kozo, folklorist from Japan. At the reception, ICHCAP presented a replica of the Sacred Bell of King Seongdeok the Great to the IRCI as a symbol of friendship, and both centres pledged to complement each other while making efforts to safeguard intangible cultural heritage in Asia and the Pacific region.

Following the meeting, a recommendation was adopted to promote UNESCO initiatives in the region.

[NGO] International Forum for the UNESCO-Accredited NGOs of ICH

The Korea Cultural Heritage Foundation, with the support of the Cultural Heritage Administration of Korea, organised and hosted an international forum on 13 and 14 October 2011 at the Korea House in Seoul.

This forum marks the first time UNESCO-Accredited NGOs in Asia gathered to discuss their roles as advisory NGOs for furthering cooperation in the ICH safeguarding field. It consisted of three sessions under the general theme, The Importance of UNESCO-Accredited NGOs of ICH, and their Roles and Cooperation Measures to Construct Network. The three session themes were 1) The UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of ICH and the Role of NGOs, 2) Introduction of Asian UNESCO-Accredited NGOs’ Activities for the Safeguarding of ICH, and 3) NGOs’ Prospects and Cooperation Measures for the Safeguarding of ICH.

There were about thirty participants—UNESCO-Accredited NGOs from China, India, Mongolia, Viet Nam, and the Republic of Korea; the UNESCO Office in Bangkok; cultural heritage experts and scholars and government officials from the Republic of Korea.

Over two days, the forum provided a platform to discuss ways to share experiences and knowledge, and the participants talked at length about their roles and responsibilities as well as the widely diverse environments in which they work and the challenges they expect to face in the years ahead.

[Brunei Darussalam] Ratification of the Convention for the Safeguarding of the ICH

Culture of Brunei is quite diverse, deriving from its historical links with the Hindu empire and modern-day Indonesia and...
Malaysia. The nation’s Malay Islamic Monarchy has developed from Brunei merging Malay culture with the teachings of Islam, and therefore it represents both its monarchy and the people of Brunei.

Brunei is richly endowed with intangible cultural heritage that the government and the people have worked tirelessly to maintain. The nation’s Arts and Handicraft Centre, for example, is a living testimony to the preservation and the proliferation of the arts and crafts for which Brunei was once renowned, including boat making, silversmithing, bronze tooling, weaving and basketry. Visitors will also find Malay weaponry, wood carvings, traditional games, traditional musical instruments, silat (the traditional art of self-defence), and decorative items for women as Brunei’s most unique cultural offerings.

Brunei is expected to meet its obligations to safeguard intangible cultural heritage and, therefore, benefit from the opportunities and mechanisms of international cooperation created under the Convention.

[Source: UNESCO Office in Jakarta]

[ROK] Special Exhibition of Important ICH of Korea at UNESCO Headquarters

The Special Exhibition of Important Intangible Cultural Heritage, hosted by the Cultural Heritage Administration of Korea and the Permanent Delegation of the Republic of Korea to UNESCO and supervised by the Korea Cultural Heritage Foundation, was held from 19 to 28 September 2011 at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris, France. This exhibition was also planned to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Cultural Heritage Administration of Korea. The opening ceremony was held at Miro Hall, with participants from the host organisations and UNESCO. Celebrating the opening of the exhibition, there was a performance of Gayageum Byeongchang, a choral arrangement accompanied by a Korean twelve-string zither. Following the opening ceremony, the ICH holder of Mokjogajang (wood sculpting), Intangible Cultural Properties No. 108, impressed the audience by carving a Korean camellia in the shape of man and woman smiling. Under the theme of *Dreaming with Nature*, this exhibition included eighty-nine pieces made by ICH practitioners, such as holders, apprentices, and graduates. Above this, Korean traditional crafts were on display through various programs, showing the artistic value of Korean traditional crafts.

[Indonesia] Regional Seminar on Safeguarding ICH and Diversity of Cultural Expressions

The Department of Cultural Values, Arts and Film of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Indonesia held the ‘Regional Seminar on Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage, and Diversity of Cultural Expressions’ in Jakarta on 4 and 5 October 2011. Expert speakers from China, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, and Viet Nam made presentations to an audience of over 100 delegates, including government officials, NGOs, members of ICH communities, and the media. The seminar was organised into four different but topically related sessions: 1) Safeguarding ICH, based on the UNESCO 2003 Convention; 2) Protection and Promotion of Diversity of Cultural Expressions, based on the UNESCO 2005 Convention; 3) Intellectual Property Rights Related to Cultural Heritage; and 4) Information on the 6th Meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee for Safeguarding ICH that will be held in Bali between 22 and 29 November 2011.

[Thailand] 2011 Intangible Cultural Heritage and Museums Field School

In order to build capacity for ICH safeguarding in community-based cultural research, every year since 2009, the Sirindhorn Anthropology Centre in Thailand has offered a two-week intensive training program.

This year’s Field School was held from 8 to 21 August 2011, and it had a total of nine trainers and twenty-one participants from eight countries in the region. Lecture topics included Debates and Critiques of the 2003 ICH Convention; New Museology and Ecomuseums; and Anthropological Frameworks and Methods for Inventorying, Researching, Documenting, Promoting, Transmitting, and Revitalising Intangible Culture.

A key component of the Field School is the working group practicum, which affords participants the opportunity to work with local communities to apply their newly gained concepts and tools for safeguarding intangible culture. This year’s field practicum focused on the audiovisual documentation of intangible heritage, and each of the four groups worked in close collaboration with their assigned communities to produce a short film featuring one element of intangible cultural heritage.

The films produced as part of the 2011 Field School can be viewed at the ICH and Museums website: http://www.sac.or.th/ databases/fieldschool/ [Source: Sirindhorn Anthropology Centre]