An expert meeting for the 2011 Mongolia-ICHCAP Joint Cooperation Project of Safeguarding ICH by Utilising Information Technology was held on 19 October 2011 in Seoul, Republic of Korea, by ICHCAP in collaboration with the Foundation for the Protection of Natural and Cultural Heritage of Mongolia and the Mongolian Culture and Arts Committee.

Focused on building information systems for safeguarding intangible cultural heritage, one of the main functions of ICHCAP, the meeting was prepared to provide information for conducting various activities related to the joint cooperation project, including restoring and digitising superannuated and damaged analogue audio data held in the Institute of Language and Literature, establishing a Mongolian ICH portal website, and producing and distributing CD collections on the project outcome.

Opening the meeting, Dr Seong-Yong Park, Acting Director of ICHCAP, emphasised the progressive aspects of the ICH data Mongolia had documented during the 1950s, and he stressed the importance of reviving the value of ICH through restoring and digitising ICH-related data. Mr Urtnasan Norov, President of the Foundation, expressed gratitude on behalf of the Mongolian experts and explained the key characteristics of Mongolian culture that originate from the Mongolian traditional nomadic lifestyle.

During the first session, Mongolian experts from Mongolian National Public Radio and the Institute for Language and Literature presented the current conditions and environment for restoration and digitisation. In the second session, Korean experts from the National Research Institute for Cultural Heritage, National Archive of Korea, and Munhwa Broadcasting Cooperation (MBC) shared their experience on various digitising projects.

The meeting included visits to organisations and institutions related to restoration and digitisation, including the National Archives of Korea, MBC, the Korea Film Council, and the Folk Archives at the National Folk Museum, between 17 and 20 October. Based on the information exchanged during the meeting, Mongolian experts have started digitising ICH materials, and they will closely cooperate with ICHCAP in their efforts to safeguard ICH.

During a visit to MBC (Photo by ICHCAP)

Tonga Working towards Institutional Safeguarding for Living Heritage
Expert Seminar on the Establishment of a Safeguarding System for the ICH of Tonga

The week-long expert seminar on establishing an ICH safeguarding system in Tonga was held by ICHCAP at the National Research Institute for Cultural Heritage (NRICH) in Daejeon, Republic of Korea, on 11 October 2011.

Under the main theme of Strategy for the Establishment of a Safeguarding System for the ICH of Tonga, five Tongan government officials and experts, including Ms Pulupaki Ika, the Head of the Culture Division, Ministry of Education, Women's Affairs and Culture of Tonga, and Dr Siotame Havea, Principal of Siia’atoutai Theological College, visited the Republic of Korea. In addition to the Tongan participants, Korean ICH experts from the Cultural Heritage Administration and the NRICH took part in the seminar.

ICHCAP shared information about the current status of ICH safeguarding as well as transmission activities in Korea. In particular, the Tongan participants had an opportunity to hear about Korea’s sixty years of experience in the ICH field. It is expected that the Tongan participants will set up a project plan to establish an ICH safeguarding system that best suits the Tongan context.

On the second day of the seminar, the Tonga National Commission for UNESCO and ICHCAP signed a project agreement to establish an ICH safeguarding system in Tonga.

From 13 to 15 October, the participants visited cultural institutes, such as the Korea Cultural Heritage Foundation, the National Folk Museum of Korea and the NRICH. Also all the participants visited Anseong city and Gangneung city to meet ICH holders and practitioners of brassware making and traditional musical instrument making (yujijang and akgijang). The participants also went to the Gangneung Danoje Preservation Association, a centre dedicated to transmitting the activities and events associated with the Gangneung Dano Festival.

The seminar was designed as a personnel exchange programme in the ICH field, and the Tongan participants shared their views of ICH safeguarding and collected necessary information to establish an ICH safeguarding system in Tonga.

Participants with ICH practitioners (Photo by ICHCAP)
ICH Issues

How to Mobilise Experts into Collaborative Activities in ICH Safeguarding
Expert Network Meeting on ICH in the Asia-Pacific Region

ICHCAP organised an expert network meeting on ICH in the Asia-Pacific region targeting ICH experts in the Republic of Korea. The meeting was held on 4 November 2011 at the National Palace Museum in Seoul.

About twenty experts in the fields of ICH and international cooperation, including Distinguished Professor Dawnhee Yim (Dongguk University), participated in this meeting. It was a good opportunity to broaden understanding about the 2003 Convention and the Centre’s activities and to increase interest in ICH among the experts. In particular, Dr Seong-Yong Park, Acting Director, ICHCAP, presented on properly understanding the 2003 Convention and the implications between the Convention and local ICH safeguarding policies, and Mr Weonmo Park, Research & Information Section Chief, ICHCAP, provided an extensive review of the Centre’s activities by explaining how they relate to the Centre’s information and networking functions.

The presentations were followed by discussions, allowing participants to make comments and suggestions for the Centre’s efficient operation in its safeguarding activities. Some of these suggestions were to build an organised networking system among experienced and knowledgeable experts; to facilitate wide consultation with experts in the field organisation regarding the Centre’s activities, including ICH and international cooperation; to strengthen the connectivity between the 2003 Convention and local cultural heritage protection policies; to make a cultural map by expanding the functions of NGOs and communities; to develop tools for open communication; and to reinforce connectivity between the Centre and the international organisations of the region.

This meeting was organised to encourage ICH experts’ participation in the Centre’s activities and to expand the local expert networking pool in Korea. ICHCAP will continue to provide information-sharing opportunities for local and international ICH experts to discuss experience and know-how for safeguarding Asia-Pacific ICH.

Seong-Yong Park, Ph.D.
Acting Director

Director’s Note

The last quarter of 2011 was a significant period for ICHCAP. As the Centre has concluded its inauguration, we could finally come up with solid foundation to fulfil ICHCAP’s mandate in the ICH field. Meanwhile, joint projects for safeguarding ICH by using information technology were designed at the national and sub-regional levels, and we gained a foothold on implementing the projects.

A joint cooperative project to develop online tools as a way of making an ICH inventory in Central Asia, which was also the theme of the Central Asia Sub-regional Network Meeting last July, got started. Through the project, an effort to establish a basic management system for safeguarding and transmitting ICH in each country will be made by actively using information technology. Furthermore, ICHCAP has worked to build collaborative mechanisms among Member States, UNESCO Field Offices, relevant institutions and communities, and expert groups. In particular, working with UNESCO ICH Category 2 Centres in Japan and China as well as with the International Institute for Central Asian Studies in Samarkand will serve as model partnerships.

In addition to initiating the inventory-making project in 2011, ICHCAP joined up with Mongolia to implement a project on restoring and digitising valuable ICH audio recordings that are in danger due to an inadequate storage environment. The outcome of this pilot project will be the first of 2012. We expect that this project will be a cornerstone in setting up ICHCAP’s project directions and will enhance ICH visibility by producing project results that contribute to better public accessibility through an ICH website and an audio CD collection.

In greeting 2012, we hope ICH Courier readers have happiness and prosperity throughout the year.
At Home and Abroad: How Civil Society’s Local Work Helps Global ICH Objectives

Rahul Goswami*

Why is it relevant for the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage (ICH) over the long term that non-government and community-based organisations apply what they do locally to needs globally? Already, several years before the UNESCO 2003 Convention on the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage is ten years old, our ICH community must address needs and concepts that it are still somewhat unfamiliar with.

These are, for example, national human development goals, pathways to sustainable development, cultural economics, education for sustainable development, a green economy, ecological literacy, cultural ecosystems, and fair livelihoods. This list is not an exhaustive one, for the needs of developing societies and societies that are making the transition to lower intensities of consumption are being redefined both economically and culturally. This is why the lessons learned locally in the field by NGOs and civil societies active in the ICH sector are a source of guidance globally.

Institutions in the Asia-Pacific region and elsewhere are finding that working together as a network will become the norm. Time and again, the single most important lesson that responsible fieldwork and sensitive programme assessments offers is that our ICH community must be able to respond and react to these new tasks.

In the Asia-Pacific region, we are faced with not one, but two simultaneous demands. We must further the work and mechanisms of the 2003 Convention. We must also link the recognition of the many forms of ICH learning and praxis with the importance of sustainable development. To do both will require accelerated and multidisciplinary learning and reflection. This is a tall order. The varied community of ICH practitioners and heirs, the scholars and academicians who study and document their lives and work, and the administrators and planners who strive to bring them the benefits of development will all be stretched to capacity.

For many NGOs whose work is directly in ICH or has an intangible cultural aspect, the evidence from partner organisations and from communities has become stronger over the last few years. The effects of climate change have come into the foreground; the focus on improving the environment in cities and rural districts is just as important; the poor are often the most vulnerable; working towards ‘green growth’ will be the new norm; and pursuing sustainable development using ICH tools and supporting traditional knowledge is emerging as a long-term programme.

Linking it all together has an economic dimension—over the last three decades, the struggle to reduce poverty in many countries of the Asia-Pacific region has taken precedence over many other concerns, including cultural concerns. There have been impressive gains alongside policy failures. However, over the last two years, we have heard our governments speak more frequently about turning towards a green economy as a way of protecting the human development gains of the last thirty years while ensuring decent standards of living and acceptable basic social services for citizens.

Against such a background are important questions for civil society active in safeguarding ICH: to what extent is the drive towards a green economy an advantage for a young Convention and how can we build reinforcing partnerships? The answers must come from a generous sharing of local experiences, provided by the growing community of ICH civil society groups and supported by academic and training networks that are already making an impact. The NGO Forum that was held before the commencement of the sixth session of the Intergovernmental Committee (6.COM) of the 2003 Convention in Bali, Indonesia, has shown the way forward and the sizable capabilities of this community.

There are ninety-seven NGOs, CBOs, and civil society groups accredited with the 2003 Convention. Before 6.COM in Bali began, there were thirty-four requests for accreditation to be considered. These represent just a small sample of the tremendous diversity of non-state actors in the ICH field worldwide. More important for us as the ICH community, these groups stand for enduring common cultural values, such as human rights, environmental protection, and cultural revitalisation, which are so important to the spirit of the 2003 Convention and to the work of UNESCO.

The transformation that can be wrought at home and abroad by our ICH community is great. It all begins with the recognition that the safeguarding we do locally is a resource to be shared globally.

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ICH and New Year’s Festival

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 New Year’s festivals in various countries. In these examples of festivals from Cambodia, Republic of Korea, Sri Lanka and Tajikistan, you can see the intersections of festivities and societies as well as their influence on public events in each community.

Cambodia  Celebrating Khmer New Year Festival

Sovath Bong, Ph.D. (President, Royal University of Fine Arts, Cambodia)

Cambodia is rich in both tangible and intangible cultural heritage. In terms of the tangible, scattered throughout the Kingdom are many prehistoric and historic sites—brick, laterite, and sandstone temples, irrigation systems, and other cultural elements. To date, two Cambodian archaeological sites have been registered as World Heritage Sites, the Angkor region in 1992 and the Preah Vihear temples in 2008. At the same time, the Kingdom also has many different forms of intangible cultural heritage, such as arts and crafts, traditional music and dance, traditional customs, and ritual practices. Of the many living heritage elements in Cambodia, UNESCO registered the Royal Ballet of Cambodia and the Khmer Shadow Theatre to the Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity in 2003 and 2005, respectively.

Under the theme of National Intangible Cultural Heritage, the Kingdom of Cambodia annually celebrates traditional ceremonies that have existed in Khmer society since ancient times. These traditions include the Khmer New Year, Phjum Ben, the Water Festival, and many others. Among these celebrations, the Khmer New Year is one of the most important national events, and it is considered a joyful occasion throughout the country.

As a tradition, the Khmer population celebrates the three-day Khmer New Year in April. Usually beginning between 12 and 14 April, the exact date to hold the ceremony is based on a calculation by the National Astrologist Committee. Religiously, the New Year marks the arrival of a new goddess, whose name is based on the day of arrival, to protect and serve the the world. Among the many important events of the traditional Khmer New Year, family and relatives reunite, and rituals and religious practices take place.

Khmer New Year, an Occasion for Family Reunions

For the Khmer people, the three-day New Year festival is an occasion to visit relatives living in different parts of the country. In traditional practice, they return to their birthplace or the area where they grew up to celebrate the Khmer New Year. Most family members or close relatives gather at the house of grandparents or parents for at least one of the three days of the New Year. This provides an opportunity for all the members of the family to reminisce over the years of happiness and hardships they experienced while growing up together as siblings and relatives in the family. During the reunion, religious rituals are held to bless everyone and to offer wishes of success for the coming year.

Khmer New Year as Rich Religious Rituals

In Cambodian society, the Khmer New Year Festival combines different forms of religious rituals and practices. The rituals are usually performed at three different locations: at a Buddhist pagoda, at an ancestral stupa, and at home. Generally, Khmer people gather and bring food, fruit, kitchen utensils, and other offerings to the Buddhist temple to pray for happiness and to dedicate these gifts to the spirits of their ancestors. The main activities at the Buddhist temple include listening to a Buddhist monk preach, roam baat (offering rice and other food to monks), building a sand-mountain, and washing the statues of Buddha.

Besides the religious practices at the Buddhist temple, the Khmer family always invites a Buddhist monk home for a blessing ceremony to chase away bad spirits or evil that may resided in the house and to bring familial happiness for the coming year. In addition, a Khmer family also invites Buddhist monk to pray at the family’s ancestral stupa to memorialise the merits and heritage of the ancestors for all the deeds they have done and the legacy they have left for the family. In Cambodian society, it is believed that the spirit of ancestors can also protect and bring happiness to the family.

As a symbol of familial and societal happiness, Cambodian youth, with the assistance of elders, enjoy variety of traditional games in villages, public areas, and Buddhist temples. There are many traditional folk games, and some of these games are played only during the Khmer New Year. Other activities include various forms of traditional dance.

The Khmer New Year is a treasured event in Cambodian society. Within the celebration, there are many religious rituals, customs, folk games, and dance, and it is an occasion for family reunions. The New Year celebration is a symbol reuniting the Cambodian people, ancestral spirits, and gods, and, most importantly, it is an expression of happiness in society. The New Year festival itself embraces many forms of intangible cultural heritage that are rarely seen on other occasions.
Republic of Korea Daeboreum Folk and Cultural Diversity
Jang-Sik Jang (Senior Curator, Children’s Museum, National Folk Museum of Korea)

One passageway can have different meanings due to the different mind-set of different persons. Likewise, a change in a viewpoint transforms an ordinary object into something symbolic. The reasoning is the same when a thing nothing more than a ‘movement’ lasts becomes a ‘flower’ and ‘significant’ once it is called by its name.

Anyone can see a full moon any month of the year. However, a difference in the perspective of viewing it can make it appear different. Similarly, every year, people from all over the world can see the first full moon, but ideas concerning it are culturally distinctive and related to the collective philosophy of a community. What Koreans think and intend, making themselves culturally distinctive with strong and obsessive affections toward the first full moon, is represented within a number of folk cultures related to the moon.

The Best among Twenty-Four Divisions of a Year, the Great Boreum
The waxing and waning of the moon is an important indicator for telling of time because these visible movements visually mark a beginning important indicator for telling of time because these waxing and waning of the moon is an important indicator for telling of time because these visible movements visually mark a beginning.

On this fact, ongoing folk customs for Daeboreum are closely tied to community rituals. People in the same region have common vocations related to regional characteristics, such as farming or fishing. Their interests and hopes are also similarly shaped. A fruitful harvest and a bountiful catch are hopes not only for an individual but also for the whole community, wishing to overcome the limitations of their mortal lives.

Cultural Diversity Stemming from the Diversity in Expressions of Desires
Rituals are shaped differently in each community, and the same ritual may differ from region to region. However, noting the differences is a way of marking their distinctiveness; it is not a matter of slating any as right or wrong. In terms of folk customs, those involved with Daeboreum shows the greatest variety.

During Daeboreum, farmers and other community members play musical instruments, and community rituals are performed. Sometimes jangseung (a stone guardian spirit) is hoisted. In dry-field farming areas, a daljip (moon house) made from straw is burnt when the full moon is high to predict the year’s harvest, depending on the direction the bonfire falls. In rice farming areas, straw collected from each family house is twisted to make a rope for Daeboreum juldonggi (tug-of-war), an event in which the counterparts may be decided by gender or by residence. There are many variations of juldonggi throughout Korea, and some of the most notable forms such as namuosaetssam (tree iron fighting) in Youngsan and dongchaessaum (dungeon fighting) in Andong have undergone significant development. The same is true for dodangdjul and gye guldonggi in Jisancheok. After juldonggi events are completed, the rope is burnt or cut and taken away, or sometimes it is tied around a standing stone or dangsan (a village shrine). The way of handling the rope is as varied as the regional customs involved with juldonggi.

Folk activities suggesting the performance or ban of certain deeds take place at designated moments. Desires are fulfilled by cracking nutshells and having a meal consisting of five grains, and taboos against drinking cold water or sweeping the yard bring good luck and help individuals achieve their desires for the whole year. Daeboreum is indeed a special day, and moderating behaviours is a way to wish for well-being throughout the year.

Symbolic Deeds to Dreams Transcending Reality
Daeboreum folk customs are the result of mental attitudes towards maximising fertility, as implied by the symbolism of the moon. Desires and dreams transcend reality when they are manifested in the Daeboreum folk customs. This is meaningful because, through Daeboreum’s artistic diversity and historical context, it has taken on a role as a shaper of mental history.

Focusing on rituals and games, Daeboreum folk customs are worth being compared to many other intangible elements that are being safeguarded under the concept of intangible cultural heritage. Folk culture is valuable because of its diversity, which makes things more beautiful. Its natural development over time is more desirable than imposing strict regulations to make each one peculiar. This is the reason for the special emphasis on diversity in Daeboreum folk customs.
In mid-April every year, Sri Lankans celebrate the Sinhala and Hindu New Year with distinctive rituals that fuse Hindu and Buddhist elements. With the introduction of Buddhism in the third century BCE, traditional Hindu New Year rituals were reinterpreted. While historians and sociologists believe these rituals were closely related to sun worship because they coincided with ancient myths about the sun moving from one celestial house to another—the major rituals today embody a sense of cultural heredity and tradition.

Before the dawn of the New Year, people whitewash or colour-wash their houses to renew a sense of freshness for the coming year, and they take extra care to ensure that their domestic environment is thoroughly cleaned. This idea of ushering in a cleaner sense of rejuvenation manifests itself through a ceremonial bath that takes place on the last day of the old year.

With the break of the New Year, marked by bell tolls from temples and the scents and sounds of firecrackers, the first fire of the year is lit and families boil milk in a new pot. The milk is allowed to boil over the side of the pot, and the liquid remaining in the pot is later used to make milk rice, which will be included in the family’s harvest feast to be taken at an auspicious time later in the day. Later during the New Year festivities, an elder or priest anoints the young with an herbal oil prepared from nuga leaves.

The theme of renewal and rejuvenation isn’t limited to the intrinsic symbolism of the customs associated with the holiday, as the annual practice of these traditional rituals also serves as a revival of living heritage as a form of transmission.

This same idea of revitalisation can also be extended in both a social and familial sense because the holiday provides an opportunity for scattered family members to reunite and reinforce family ties. At family gatherings, children and youngsters make an offering of betel, a medicinal vine, to parents and elders as a token of love and gratitude, and in return, the children are given heartfelt blessings of appreciation and adoration. Women and children often light firecrackers, beat traditional drums (rabana), and play folk games, such as gudu, pancha, damm, and others. Men, on the other hand, participate in competitive folk games that include climbing greased tree trunks, swimming in rivers, and participating in a tug of war.

For small children, the festival provides an additional layer of novel experiences and excitement as they have an opportunity to have an extended stay with their relatives. The spirit merriment is not limited to the family; housewives prepare traditional sweets, such as kokis, a dish made from rice flour and coconut milk, and they serve these sweets to visitors and neighbours. The sharing of the sweets has a long history, dating back to the days of ancient Sri Lankan kings.

Another important social aspect of the New Year is that rivals get together and let their bygones be bygones, and with amends made, they step forward with a new harmonious life.

The New Year is also a time for believers to reaffirm and strengthen their faith. Buddhists undertake observances such as offering flowers, lighting lamps at temples, and give alms to priests. Hindus conduct a religious ritual called a pooja, an offering of decorative cereals and fruits to their deities to mark a new venture for the future. These religious practices strengthen the minds of believers, enabling them to face problems and hardships with a sense of balance throughout the year.

While the New Year is full of rituals relating to individual and societal rejuvenation, there is also a feeling of rebirth through the environment because the season is full of blossoming flowers, trees full of ripe fruits, and the atmosphere full of cuckoo bird (Asian Koel) melodies. The feeling of environmental enjoyment is reinforced among Sri Lankans because their granaries are teeming with the results of their latest harvest, a tangible representation of their hard work.

In summary, the New Year festival has become an integral part of life for Sri Lankan Buddhists and Hindus, providing an environment to revive their lives and practice their long-standing traditions and rituals.
Navruz (Nowruz) is not just about the first day of spring, but it is also not just a celebration of the New Year marked by indulging in a feast; it has a much wider historical and cultural context with deep doctrinal significance.

Navruz dates back millennia, so its origins are not known for certain, and this is one reason great historical writers and thinkers, such as Abu Rayhan Beruni and Omar Khayyam, resorted to the language of legend when explaining the birth of the Navruz celebration.

In Iranian tradition, the establishment of Navruz is attributed to Jamshid, the legendary king of seven continents and an epic hero. It is said that Jamshid taught all people how to build homes and cities, to mine gold and ore, and to make arms and vessels. Therefore, his rein symbolises the beginning of human civilisation.

The history embedded in the Navruz celebration is a source and foundation for culture in general. While it reflects the cultural tradition of the people who created it as well as their religious and ethical norms and their historiosophical ideals, Navruz does not limit itself to the shell of its own tradition nor does it rest on values that others may find alien. The unifying principle of Navruz is not a pagan religion or esoteric sect, not a race or ethnus, not geography or kinship—it is culture that is called upon to re-establish former spiritual ties of humanity.

According to Beruni, ancient Iranians called Navruz the Day of Hope, a symbolic image filled with deep culturological meaning and significance. Cultural archetypes of the Navruz are spiritual constants of the past and present, but they also have significance for the future. Two cultural elements of the festival acquire a new dimension and meaning when they are viewed in the context of the modern world.

According to traditional Navruz beliefs, benevolent angels descending from the sky will not visit houses that have not been cleaned or that have no accord and peace in them. Extending the limits of the family home to a global scale, the custom of pre-holiday house cleaning can be viewed as a prototype of today’s ecological imperative demanding the prevention of environmental pollution.

Furthermore, in terms of ethical imperatives and of Navruz culture, the notion of ecology can be deepened to include the context of not only the ecological environment but also a socio-cultural one. This approach broadens the environmental theme to include the protection of culture, and thus illustrates that the destruction of the former (nature) often leads to the degradation of the latter (culture).

This neo-ecological imperative actually finds its way in the collective conscience of the world community. The Basic documents of the United Nations—from the Millennium Declaration to numerous UNESCO recommendations—contain an urgent appeal for dialogue at all levels of human interaction. There is additional emphasis on strengthening cross-cultural understanding and education in the spirit of religious tolerance as well as encouraging spiritual development that rejects ethno-cultural prejudices and ideological stereotypes. The ecology of culture serves as the main link in the strategy for a transitioning from a culture of response to a culture of prevention, the very approach that is being implemented by the United Nations.

Unfortunately, based on modern international practice, understanding the plurality of cultures and civilisations as a positive factor in global development is alien to the world as a whole. As UN documents often state, the perception of diversity as a threat prevents many of us from seeing the universal values that unite us all into a historical whole and global civilisation.

For the people who celebrate Navruz as a new beginning, the New Year is not just a sign of nature’s renewal, but a time of change and hope. Let us hope that coordinated international efforts can bestow some of the living joys of Navruz on our global community, to everyone longing for great spiritual satisfaction in our troubled times.
Marriage in a Bhutanese context is a social event that encompasses a number of Buddhist rituals; it does not end simply with exchanging vows and rings and kissing the bride. The centuries-old traditions in Bhutanese marriage ceremonies are much richer and involved; however, in spite of this, these traditions have been disappearing over the years. In ancient times, a couple was not considered married until a formal marriage ceremony occurred and an eminent lama (Buddhist priest) blessed the couple. For this reason, the ceremony was considered an indispensable event for a couple to begin a new life together. However, before the wedding ceremonies could take place, it was imperative to have a lama set an astrological date for the ceremony. Only after the date was set could the couple send formal invitations to family members, friends, and colleagues.

On the wedding day, the ceremony began at the crack of dawn. The couple dressed in their best traditional attire, offered prayers to Kencho Sum (Tribe Gem deity), and lit a butter lamp as a representative token for a happy and prosperous life. After the initial rituals were completed, the couple took part in the two most significant ceremonies: a purification ceremony and a vow renewal ceremony, where the husband and wife exchanged scarves received from a shrine and took ambrosia to symbolise their loyalty to one another. The rituals were also conducted to sanctify the couple and ward off all tribulations from the couple’s lives.

In addition to the Buddhists rituals, a traditional marriage ceremony included an offering of ceremonial scarves, a feast for all the well-wishers, and performances of traditional dances. Usually, the celebratory events lasted for days.

The marriage ceremony has long been an important part of Bhutanese intangible cultural heritage; however, it still remains to be recognised and appreciated. In fact, the marriage culture has been dying as the scenario of marriages taking place in Bhutan has completely changed. Today, Bhutanese youth are oblivious to their traditional heritage, and thus, they consider themselves married as soon as they start to live together, regardless of whether an actual wedding ceremony has taken place.

The idea of marriage in Bhutan has shifted drastically over the years. Caught in the web of modernisation, not many Bhutanese want to have a marriage ceremony today, and for those who do, it is often an amalgamation of foreign culture with religious rites being replaced with dance party music and English songs, and traditional Bhutanese wines and dishes with Champaign, cakes, and exotic cuisines. Suffice to say, this unique intangible cultural heritage of Bhutan has fallen victim to the effects of
modernisation. However, the recent royal wedding has rekindled the dying culture of Bhutanese marriage ceremonies, allowing them to gain momentum once again, as many young couples have started to imitate the royal couple.

The royal wedding not only marked a milestone in Bhutanese history but also showcased the distinctiveness of Bhutanese culture and showed the importance of safeguarding culture in this time of rapid modernisation. It was a cultural treat for the people who witnessed their king wed Ashi (Queen) Jetsun Pema in a traditional Bhutanese manner on 13 to 15 October 2011. The three-day ceremony conveyed a strong message: a marriage ceremony is as important as any other cultural heritage, and it is the responsibility of every Bhutanese to keep the culture vibrant.

The royal wedding epitomised a traditional Bhutanese wedding ceremony—it was at once simple, yet held a sense of grandiosity. Essentially, everything was kept entirely traditional, as was demonstrated by the preparations, songs, dances, mask dances, costumes, and cuisines. Beginning right from the morning tea, all the guests were served traditional Bhutanese cuisine served in bangchungs (traditional Bhutanese dishware made of bamboo) and dapa (plates made of wood). Folk dances were also performed to entertain the guests, thereby revitalising Bhutanese cultural heritage.

The royal wedding portrayed the beauty and elegance of Bhutanese culture to the outside world, and it was an eye opener for Bhutan, showing how culture could be kept alive, even in the midst of modernisation. The rituals conducted, the feast served, and the folk dances performed worked in tandem to show the possibility of cultural continuity in today’s world.

The royal wedding ceremony in its plain grandness was an example that came down from the throne to help safeguard an intangible cultural heritage of Bhutan. Having envisioned that Bhutanese culture needs to be preserved, it was a simple gesture from His Majesty. The modus operandi he chose to preserve culture was by being a role model. Because such initiatives and measures were barely taken by anyone earlier, the intangible cultural heritage of Bhutan was seriously threatened and close to non-existent. However, now that the first step has been taken, part of the dying culture is sure to be reinvigorated.
Inventory–Making Efforts

Experiences of the Republic of Korea on Inventory Making

Min-sun Song (Head of the Research Division of ICH, National Research Institute of Cultural Heritage)

Since Korea has undergone the fierce contemporary history through the Japanese colonial era and the Korean War, the Korean government enacted the Cultural Heritage Protection Act in 1962 for safeguarding and transmitting Korean cultural heritage. In this act, the term intangible cultural heritage (ICH) was officially coined as a legal concept, and provisions were prepared to designate and safeguard ICH at the national level. Thus, the Korean legal system for safeguarding ICH was established forty years before the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003).

In May 1962, the Cultural Heritage Administration (CHA) of Korea organised the Intangible Cultural Heritage Committee (ICHC) to set up the details for designating Important Intangible Cultural Heritage inventories. Thus, CHA legislated provisions to (i) collect ICH and folklore materials from every province of Korea, (ii) research designation systems and safeguarding examples of cultural heritage overseas, and (iii) report the list of ICH to be designated in every province. In addition, sectional experts were appointed to conduct a basic ICH survey and to inventory each element. Accordingly, the first research regarding the conditions of ICH in Korea had begun by July 1962. The Korean government selected the recommended elements to be designated and safeguarded, and notified local governments of the elements so that complementary documents could be received. Based on the research results, the ICHC decided to designate seven elements, including the Royal Ancestral Rites Music of the Jongmyo Shrine, as Important ICH of Korea. In December 1964, the first batch of designated Important ICH of Korea was reported in the official gazette of the Korean government.

In 1970, the Cultural Heritage Protection Act was revised to promote the designation of local cultural heritage certificated by ordinances of local governments. Designations of local ICH thereafter contributed to ICH safeguarding based on the distinct characteristics of the area. Thus, after the first designation of Haenyeo Norae (Songs of female divers) in Jeju Island in August 1971, local governments began to designate local ICH.

Currently, there are 114 elements (126 including subdivision elements) nationally designated as Important ICH while there are 414 elements locally designated as Important ICH. The table below indicates the sectional ICH designated by national or local governments.

The Procedure of Inventorying Intangible Cultural Heritage

Important ICH of Korea formulates the foundation of transmission through the methods of designating elements and certifying skill holders; the procedures of each method are similar. The procedure of designation begins with the authority of the CHA administrator and the recommendation of local governments or non-governmental organisations. The relevant experts determine the validity of the element and the value of its identification, and then they decide whether there is a need for a field study on the element. Sometimes, nationwide investigations into the present condition of ICH and additional academic research studies are conducted to ensure representativeness of the element. Based on the investigation, research, and study results, the ICHC determines the necessity for a field study for the recommended element. Afterward, more than two field studies are conducted by related experts and members of the ICHC. Since the ICHC ensured the element’s representativeness after extensive investigation, CHA reports the designation notice in the Korean government’s official gazette and gathers public opinion for thirty days. Thereafter, the ICHC carries out the deliberation of national designation for the consented element. Once the designation of the element is approved by the ICHC, CHA finally reports the designated element in the official gazette, and notifies the situation to the local governments concerned. Hereby, the national designated element of ICH is born.

The graph on the following page demonstrates the development of national designated ICH by year, it can be seen that most elements were designated during periods of political, social, and economic change. Since the first Important ICH was designated in 1964, 79 per cent of the elements were designated within the first twenty-five years. It is assumed that ICH designation is a measure to secure and maintain traditional Korean cultures while coping with sudden changes.

Designated ICH elements are safeguarded by the means of support for transmission activities and documentation (video and

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Music</th>
<th>Dance</th>
<th>Drama</th>
<th>Games and Rituals</th>
<th>Martial Arts</th>
<th>Handicraft Skills</th>
<th>Food</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National Designation</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>126</td>
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<tr>
<td>Local Designation</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>414</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The New Beginning of Inventorying Intangible Cultural Heritage

The Korean government has recognised the UNESCO 2003 Convention as an opportunity to re-examine ICH transmitting and safeguarding systems based on the Cultural Heritage Protection Act. Thus, new legislation for ICH safeguarding is in progress to apply the Convention domestically; a public hearing has been held to garner new opinions of the skill holders, transmitters, and communities concerned. Besides the inventory of Important ICH, a new national ICH inventory is being prepared to ensure the visibility and viability of safeguarding and transmission. This new inventory is an online ICH encyclopaedia called ICHPEDIA (http://www.ichpedia.org) and managed by collective intelligence.

The Republic of Korea has conducted comprehensive ICH research. Two examples of this research are the 1964 research on the present condition of ICH in Korea for the designation of Important ICH and the 1969 Korean folklore research. These research projects became the academic and institutional foundation for safeguarding and transmitting ICH. A number of researchers from the research division of ICH in the National Research Institute of Cultural Heritage (NRICH) have participated in these projects as executive researchers. In accordance with experience and results of this research, the NRICH is undertaking a project called the Research of ICH Basic Resources in Korea. This project will be aimed at the ICH that is currently safeguarded and transmitted in Korea, and the results will be the academic foundation for making a national ICH inventory.

The article 1 of Cultural Heritage Protection Act (10 January 1962, Act no.961) indicates the definition of Intangible Cultural Heritage. Compared with the range of UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003), ICH of the Act as well as folklore materials would be comprised into the range of the ICH inventory.

ICH, Korean government has appropriated the budget of (i) support fund for transmission (ii) special support fund (iii) support fund for funeral and hospitalisation (iv) support fund for performance and exhibition (v) support fund for craft purchase (vi) support fund for transmitting resources (budget for material, equipment, and textbook purchase).

Korean Folklore Overall Research was conducted into the regional and classified research, the regional research was conducted from 1969 to 1987, and the classified research was conducted from 1982 to 2002.

The article 1 of Cultural Heritage Protection Act (enforcement in 10 September 1970) (Act no. 2233, revised in 10 August 1970) Article 54. (b) (Designation of Local Cultural Heritage) (i) Mayor of Seoul, Busan and governors of each province can designate local ICH, the Cultural Heritage shall be located in the territories, and be recognised its value for the education of safeguarding local ICH. (ii) The designation procedure, management, safeguarding and transmission, and public release of Local ICH as well as the establishment of consultative body will be legitimated by ordinances of local governments.

In order to promote the transmitting activities of Important ICH, Korean government has appropriated the budget of (i) support fund for transmission (ii) special support fund (iii) support fund for funeral and hospitalisation (iv) support fund for performance and exhibition (v) support fund for craft purchase (vi) support fund for transmitting resources (budget for material, equipment, and textbook purchase).
Publishing a Guidebook on the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Mongolia  
2010 Korea-Mongolia Joint Cooperation Project

The Korea-Mongolia joint project, Establishing a Safeguarding System for the Intangible Cultural Heritage in Mongolia, was a series of activities among concerned officials from Korea and Mongolia.

The first phase in 2008, under the title Introducing the UNESCO Living Human Treasures System (LHTS) in Mongolia, laid the foundation for constituting a favourable legislative environment for Mongolian ICH. This covered legal documentation to use while framing documents in Mongolia, and it elaborated on the initial documents concerning ICH safeguarding.

In 2009, the second phase, Establishing a Safeguarding System for the ICH in Mongolia, within the implementation framework, involved conducting surveys for identifying the ICH bearers in different regions of Mongolia. In addition, a symposium and a workshop on implementing the UNESCO programme were held. Moreover, a recommendation for safeguarding and promoting the ICH training module as well as a tentative list of the ICH bearers in Mongolia were completed. The 2008 ministerial approval of the documents was a successful outcome of the first phase. In this context, the initial text for an ICH reference book was prepared.

In 2010, to ensure and strengthen capacity building for effective ICH safeguarding, the third phase aimed to promote greater public awareness and reinforce connections among concerned parties, including ICH bearing communities, youth, researchers, and decision-making officials. An additional aim was to involve these concerned parties in orchestrated activities for safeguarding Mongolian ICH through the publication of a Mongolian ICH reference book in both Mongolian and English. The 272-page book titled Intangible Cultural Heritage of the Mongols included ICH-related photos to complement the text. This reference book includes five chapters, one for each of the five ICH domains: 1) mother language, oral traditions, and expressions; 2) performing arts and games; 3) traditional craftsmanship; 4) traditional knowledge and practices; and 5) social practices, rituals, and festive events. Along with being a comprehensive volume on Mongolian ICH, the reference book is expected to become a tool for disseminating the concept and aspects of ICH and the major safeguarding activities and measures taken at the international, regional, and national levels.

To launch the publication, ICHCAP and the UNESCO-accredited Foundation for the Protection of Natural and Cultural Heritage organised a book opening ceremony that was held on 8 December 2010 at the State Philharmonic in Ulaanbaatar. ICH bearers and representatives from UNESCO, UNESCO ASPNet schools, ICH NGOs and associations, research and academic institutes, and museums attended the event. Several high officials and celebrities took to the stage and applauded the publication of the book and expressed their appreciation for the book.

In addition, ICHCAP organised a photo exhibition of the ICH elements inscribed on the UNESCO Representative and Urgent Safeguarding Lists in collaboration with UNESCO. Entitled Living Heritage: Exploring the Intangible, the exhibition was held at the Mongolian National Modern Art Gallery; it was the seventh showing of the traveling photo exhibition and the first held outside Korea.

Within 2010, dissemination of the book to various entities, including all levels of schools and institutes, was completed. The publication of the Mongolian and English versions of the reference book on Mongolian ICH will be useful. This book is expected that as it will serve as a concrete model for further series of research publications and materials on ICH elements for the region. There is no doubt for this book to be a major impetus for increased awareness for the general public, including the youth, students, bearers, and practitioners of the intangible cultural heritage of Mongolia. It is important to continue with the project activities and to take them in new directions, especially now that we have created a solid foundation for safeguarding Mongolian ICH.

After the ceremony, ICHCAP and the Foundation organised a seminar to evaluate the Korea-Mongolia joint project and to conduct pilot research about restoring and digitising superannuated and damaged ICH-related data in Mongolia. Through their collaborative efforts, ICHCAP and Mongolia have taken steps to further the Centre’s mission in information building and sharing.

ICHCAP Inside
Safeguarding Pioneers

Central Asia Crafts Support Association’s Resource Center in Kyrgyzstan
Kyrgyz Craft Heritage Safeguarding: Issues and Activities

Dinara Chochunbaeva (Artist, Handicraft Expert, Director of the Public Foundation CACSARC-kg)

Traditional crafts have long been a part of the traditional nomadic culture of the Kyrgyz people, who have historically lived in close connection with nature. For the Kyrgyz people, the natural world was once seen as an inexhaustible source of raw materials and inspiration for the creation of handicrafts.

In ancient times, Kyrgyz masters created handicraft products to complement their nomadic lifestyle by using resources familiar to nomadic households. While many of these resources were related to the cattle-breeding activities of the community (wool, leather, horns, and skins), a lot of materials also came from nature (trees, shrubs, clay, and plants).

The Kyrgyz sense of ornamentation has traditionally reflected the creators’ aesthetic perception of nature and social environment as well as their cosmological views of the universe. However, many of the motifs in the ornamental designs served not only decorative functions but also sacred ones as well; this can be seen in the symbols for protection adorning headwear, clothing, and dowry items. However, there are very few artisans who can ‘read’ the ornaments today, with many using synthetic materials, ignoring natural resources. Furthermore, many artisans, not knowing the range of Kyrgyz ornamentation, simply copy the motifs of other work without understanding the larger meaning of them.

Custodians of traditional knowledge generally belong to older generations, and they can be still found in traditional communities. However, their numbers are limited, and they will eventually leave this world, taking their precious experience and knowledge with them because the custodians’ information is not recorded anywhere.

Kyrgyz society needs to learn more about its traditional culture. Scientists, ethnographers, craftsmen, art critics, and other specialists related to arts, culture, and the development of handicrafts need materials concerning cultural heritage. The same is also true of students, who need to know about their heritage as a way of helping to foster cultural diversity and sustainable development into the future.

Programmes in secondary public schools should be updated to incorporate subjects based on projects such as Kyrgyz Ornaments, Traditional Relationships with the Environment, and others. Teachers, however, need to be trained first. Specialised educational institutions, such as arts and crafts colleges as well as the Academy of Arts, need to improve their programs on traditional skills and knowledge of craft technologies and ornaments.

Due to the development of tourism in the region, craftsmanship is becoming a good business for many Kyrgyz families. Competitiveness of handicraft products depends directly on the level of traditional knowledge and skills of artisans. Many artisans are suffering from the lack of knowledge on craft technologies and existing ornamental motifs and description of the motifs’ symbols. Therefore, beginners in crafts production should be trained, and there should be training manuals published.

The public foundation CACSARC-kg (Central Asia Crafts Support Association’s Resource Center in Kyrgyzstan) implemented many projects related to safeguarding Kyrgyz traditional crafts. During last two years, the foundation provided over a hundred trainings courses on traditional craft skills and knowledge for craftsmen and students all over the country.

From 2009 to 2011, the project Beauty in Harmony with Nature: Kyrgyz Traditional Craft Technologies and Ornament, was implemented by a team of trained professionals involved with CACSARC-kg. Previous to this project, there had never been a proper study of traditional craft technologies or the types and uses of natural raw materials and the methods of their extraction. In addition, the project allowed the teaching of the history and symbolism of Kyrgyz ornaments as well as ways to create and use them.

Within the scope of the project, field research was conducted to identify and organise information related to traditional Kyrgyz skills and knowledge. As a result of the project, a database was created to promote Kyrgyz handicraft heritage domestically and abroad.

There is an existing need urging us to safeguard Kyrgyz handicraft heritage for present and future generations of Kyrgyz people and generally for humanity. Communities all over the world should learn not only to value their common traditional culture but also to feel a sense of responsibility for safeguarding it for future generations.
The sixth session of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of Intangible Heritage was concluded in Bali, Indonesia. During the week-long meeting, eleven items were inscribed to the List of Intangible Heritage in Need of Urgent safeguarding, nineteen were inscribed on the Representative List, including one multinational element from Mali and Burkina Faso, and five Best Safeguarding Practices were selected.

Following this meeting, the current tally of intangible cultural heritage elements inscribed on the lists is as follows: 27 items from 10 countries for the Urgent Safeguarding List, 232 items from 70 countries for the Representative List, and 8 practices for the Best Safeguarding Practices.

From the Asia-Pacific region, six elements from China, Mongolia, Indonesia, Islamic Republic of Iran, and Viet Nam for the Urgent Safeguarding List and seven elements from China, Japan, Korea, and Turkey for the Representative List were inscribed. For each list, 55 per cent and 37 per cent, respectively, of the inscribed elements hailed from the region. Of particular note, Viet Nam was acknowledged for preparing excellent nomination files for the element Xoan singing of Phi Tho Province, and Committee members requested Viet Nam to share its experience and procedures in nominating the element.

The Committee established a Consultative Body, consisting of six independent experts and six accredited NGOs, to examine nominations for possible inscription on the 2012 Representative List. This body shall consist of members from Spain (Group I), Croatia (Group II), the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela (Group III), the Islamic Republic of Iran (Group IV), Burkina Faso (Group V-a), and Morocco (Group V-b).

Based on discussions of the open-ended Intergovernmental meeting, it was suggested to entrust the Consultative Body with examining nominations to the Representative List as a way of ensuring independent consultative opinions and consistency. After heated discussions, the Committee decided to recommend that the General Assembly revise the Operational Directives. According to these revisions, the maximum ceiling of files for nominations and proposals to be treated will be determined annually. For the 2012 cycle, the Committee decided to evaluate a maximum of sixty files for nominations to ICH Lists, proposals to the Best Practices, and requests for international assistance greater than US$25,000.

During the session, having adopted a model agreement between UNESCO and Category 2 Centres regarding the use of the Convention emblem, Category 2 Centres entering into the agreement will be authorised to use the emblem on its documents, web pages, and publications.

Items on the Urgent Safeguarding List
- Yodkwa, the Erawan Nave people’s ritual for the maintenance of social and cosmic order (Brazil)
- Heathen Vinkan storytelling (China)
- Saman dance (Indonesia)
- Traditional skills of building and sailing Iranian Lend boats in the Persian Gulf (Islamic Republic of Iran)
- Nazgali, Iranian dramatic storytelling (Islamic Republic of Iran)
- Secret society of the Kôredugaw, the rite of wisdom in Mali
- The Moorish Epic T Heydinn (Mauritania)
- Folk-long song performance technique of Limbe performances - circular breathing (Mongolia)
- Eshova, Harâkî but sung prayers of Perus’ Huchippaire people
- Al Sadu, traditional weaving skills in the United Arab Emirates
- Xoan singing of Phi Tho Province (Viet Nam)

Items on the Representative List
- Leuven age set ritual repertoire (Belgium)
- Chinese shadow puppetry (China)
- Traditional knowledge of the jaguar shamans of Yanupari (Colombia)
- Becarac singing and playing from Eastern Croatia (Croatia)
- Njimeo Kolo, silent circle dance of the Dalmatian Islands (Croatia)
- Tsatrista poetic duelling (Cyprus)
- Ride of the Kings in the south-east of the Czech Republic
- Equitation in the French tradition (France)
- Mitu no Hana Taze, ritual of transplanting rice in Mitu, Hiroshima (Japan)
- Sada Shin Nob, sacred dancing at Sada shrine, Shimane (Japan)
- Cultural practices and expressions linked to the balafon of the Senoufo communities of Mali and Burkina Faso
- Marach, string music, song and trumpet (Mexico)
- Pilgrimage to the sanctuary of the Lord of Oyuplurt (Peru)
- Fado, urban popular song of Portugal
- Juljaj, tightrope walking (Republic of Korea)
- Taekkyeon, a traditional Korean martial art (Republic of Korea)
- Weaving of Mossi (fine ramie) in the Hansan region (Republic of Korea)
- Festivity of La Mare de Dieu de la Salut of Algemesí (Spain)
- Ceremonial Keskek tradition (Turkey)

Five Bests Safeguarding Practices
- A programme of cultivating ludodiversity: safeguarding traditional games in Flanders (Belgium)
- Call for projects of the National Programme of Intangible Heritage (Brazil)
- Fandangós Living Museum (Brazil)
- Tâncáz method: a Hungarian model for the transmission of intangible cultural heritage (Hungary)
- Revitalization of the traditional craftsmanship of lime-making in Morón de la Frontera, Seville, Andalusia (Spain)
ICH News Briefs

[ICHCAP-Laos] Expert Meeting on Building an ICH an Information System in Laos

The expert meeting on ICH Identification and Documentation to Build an ICH Information System in Laos was held from 19 to 22 December 2011 in Vientiane and Luang Prabang. The meeting was co-organised by ICHCAP and the National Heritage Department, Ministry of Information and Culture of the Lao PDR. As part of the activities for the joint project on building an information system in Laos, the meeting aimed to provide stakeholders and experts in the field of cultural heritage with a venue for discussing necessary measures.

On the first day, officials from the central and local governments and experts from Laos and the Republic of Korea exchanged their views and knowledge on an building an information system for ICH safeguarding. After the initial sessions, the major issues involved with implementing a joint project were covered during the remaining days.

The meeting helped in ensuring that concerned parties were aware of the different facets of the project and policies and technical measures needed for building an information system.

[Palau] Ratification to the 2003 Convention

Officially becoming an independent state in May 1994 and being under five hundred square kilometers makes the Republic of Palau one of the youngest and smallest independent countries in the world. In spite of its recognised age and its diminutive size, Palau is home to a unique culture based on matrilineal practices that are incorporated in Palauan traditions, particularly in funeral and marriage rites. The culture is also infused with a rich musical heritage. However, as is often the case in our modern times, much of the traditional heritage is in danger of disappearing.

On 2 November 2011, taking steps to safeguard Palauan heritage against further deterioration, the government of Palau deposited its instrument of ratification of the 2003 UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. According to the terms outlined in Article 34 of the Convention, it will enter into force three months following the date that the instrument of ratification was deposited—that is to say, 2 February 2012.

[Source: UNESCO]

[Timor-Leste] Capacity-Building Workshop on the Ratification of the Convention

UNESCO is committed to assisting the government of Timor-Leste in enhancing the government's capacity to safeguard its intangible cultural heritage. Being a non-Member State to the 2003 Convention, for the next two years, Timor-Leste will receive a series of capacity-building workshops that will be organised by UNESCO. The first workshop held in Dili on 14 and 15 November 2011 focused on ratifying the 2003 Convention. These workshops aim to build up national capacity, both in government institutions and in civil society, so that Timor-Leste will have a sustainable framework for safeguarding intangible heritage and implementing the Convention on a long-term basis. This project will cover the core concepts of the Convention and provide participants with a thorough understanding of their obligations at the national level. It will also help them attain substantial knowledge of the mechanisms of international cooperation established by the Convention.

To this end, the workshops will have the following three priorities: implementing the Convention at the national level, inventorying community-based intangible cultural heritage, and preparing nominations for the Urgent Safeguarding List. The training materials have been developed to emphasise interactivity and active learning. To reinforce learning, simulations and role-playing activities have also been included within the training materials.

[Source: UNESCO Office in Jakarta]

[NGO] Forum on NGOs Accredited to the 2003 Convention

NGOs accredited to the 2003 Convention held an NGO forum on 22 November in Bali, Indonesia, on the occasion of the sixth session of the Intergovernmental Committee to the Convention. With the aim of sharing information and promoting collaboration among NGOs in the ICH field, the forum was attended by around seventy NGO and CBO representatives. The agenda dealt with the latest developments in the ICH field and included group activities and capacity-building exercises. Topics also delved into NGO and CBO involvement in implementing the Convention as well as NGO interventions as observers during intergovernmental committee meetings.

The forum resulted in an NGO Statement that addressed the following major issues: support for examining nominations to the Representative List by the Consultative Body; exclusion of International Assistance and matters of Article 18, which proposes a possible ceiling for files to be examined; and consideration in making the roles of communities and NGOs explicit in periodic reports on implementing the Convention. During the capacity-building session, the Korea Cultural Heritage Foundation and the International Organization of Folk Arts delivered presentations on the roles and activities of NGOs, the effects of ICH safeguarding, and international cooperation.

[Source: Korea Cultural Heritage Foundation / UNESCO]

[Central Asia] 9th Session of the General Assembly of IICAS

The ninth session of the General Assembly of the International Institute for Central Asian Studies (IICAS, Category 2 UNESCO Institute) was held on 15 December 2011 at the premises of the UNESCO Office in Tashkent, Uzbekistan. In attendance were representatives from Azerbaijan,
Iran, Kazakhstan, the Republic of Korea, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Turkey, Uzbekistan, ICHCAP and the UNESCO Office in Tashkent.

The agenda included a wide range of issues covering institutional arrangements and determining the Institute’s the activities for the coming years. IICAS Director, Mr Shahin Mustafayev, presented a comprehensive report implementing an academic pro-gramme and the Institute’s budget for 2010 to 2011. The participants expressed deep satisfaction with IICAS activities, highlighting financial transparency of the report and the willingness of members to expand cooperation with IICAS. The participants also discussed and adopted the academic programme and the IICAS budget for the next two years. On the proposal of the Academic Council, the General Assembly has extended Mr Mustafayev’s tenure as Director for more two years. ICHCAP was adopted as an associated Member of IICAS.

[Source: IICAS]

[Nepal] Symposium on Documenting Music Heritage

A symposium under the title Documenting Music Heritage: Challenges and Future Directions for Nepal was held in Lalitpur, Nepal, on 28 November, immediately following the International Folk Music Film Festival Nepal 2011. The half-day symposium organised by UNESCO aimed to discuss the existing challenges and the future of documenting Nepal’s rich musical heritage. International senior ethnomusicologists, Nepalese experts in safeguarding the folk musical tradition, culture experts, emerging talents in traditional music, and relevant government representatives took part in the meeting.

The symposium demonstrated that the lack of policy, institutional framework, and understanding in the use of recording and archiving musical heritage has caused Nepal to lose much of its rich historical musical heritage. However, since the early 1950s, when Dharmaraj Thapa, a Nepalese folksinger, campaigned for a musical awakening throughout the country, foreign ethnomusicologists and visiting musicians have made substantial efforts to record the music. Field trips, photographic documentation, surveys, and research on Gurung, Gaine (singers’ community), Newars, Damai (traditional tailors), and others have been carried out representing various Nepalese musical traditions. Scholars, researchers, and practitioners called for the government’s urgent attention for the appropriate management, knowledge sharing, and suitable dissemination of this very delicate heritage for use in wider research, in proper transmission to the youth, and in the preparation of the much-needed mechanisms and programmes for the heritage’s protection and preservation.

[Source: UNESCO Kathmandu Office]

[Indonesia] Indonesian Ministry for Education and Culture Convenes Culture Dialogue

The portfolio of the former Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Indonesia has been divided into two new ministries—namely, the Ministry for Education and Culture and the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy. Mohamad Nuh, the Minister for Education and Culture, along with the Deputy Minister for Culture and the Deputy Minister for Education recently convened a meeting of more than one hundred officials, NGOs, and experts who work in the culture field. Under the theme of Cultural Dialogue, the meeting was intended to gather input for formulating a blueprint for Indonesian culture. The blueprint proposes to draft a broad definition of the framework of culture and its values and roles in Indonesian society. It is also intended to outline safeguarding efforts for the future. The concepts are depicted as a house of culture. Many prominent officials and experts spoke during this dialogue, and their input was noted. The Ministry plans to hold more forums in other parts of Indonesia as a way of gathering suggestions and ideas from a broader spectrum of cultural stakeholders. Such meetings are needed mechanisms and programmes for Intangible Cultural Heritage in the Asia-Pacific Region under the auspices of UNESCO (ICHCAP).

[Source: IICAS]

[ROK] 2011 IMACO International Conference

The International Mask Arts and Culture Organization (IMACO) joined forces with the Indonesian Ministry of Culture and Tourism and the Singaraja city government to hold the 2011 IMACO International Conference in Singaraja, Bali. With the sponsorship of UNESCO, ASEAN, and the Korean government, the conference provided a venue for relevant artists and organisations to share and exchange information on masks that originate from different cultures.

Attended by more than a hundred participants from over twenty countries, the conference consisted of academic symposium sessions, a network forum, and an exhibition on masks. It aimed to raise awareness of the importance of safeguarding mask culture throughout the world.