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INTANGIBLE HERITAGE SECTION (ITH)
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FEBRUARY 2006 n° 1



The States Parties

AS AT 15 FEBRUARY 2006

- 1 ALGERIA
- 2 MAURITIUS
- 3 JAPAN
- 4 GABON
- 5 PANAMA
- 6 CHINA
- 7 CENTRAL AFRICAN
REPUBLIC
- 8 LATVIA
- 9 LITHUANIA
- 10 BELARUS
- 11 REPUBLIC OF KOREA
- 12 SEYCHELLES
- 13 SYRIAN ARAB
REPUBLIC
- 14 UNITED ARAB
EMIRATES
- 15 MALI
- 16 MONGOLIA
- 17 CROATIA
- 18 EGYPT
- 19 OMAN
- 20 DOMINICA
- 21 INDIA
- 22 VIET NAM
- 23 PERU
- 24 PAKISTAN
- 25 BHUTAN
- 26 NIGERIA
- 27 ICELAND
- 28 MEXICO
- 29 SENEGAL
- 30 ROMANIA
- 31 ESTONIA
- 32 LUXEMBOURG

The Intangible Heritage Convention

It's official! Ratified by 30 states in record time, the ICH Convention enters into force on 20 April 2006.

Friday, 20 January 2006 marked a milestone in UNESCO's long-standing campaign to protect the world's living heritage. On that day, the Permanent Delegate of Romania, H.E. Andrei Magheru deposited his country's instrument of acceptance to the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage with the Director-General of UNESCO, Koïchiro Matsuura. In doing so, Romania became the thirtieth State Party to the Convention. This event takes on special significance in light of Article 34 of the Convention, which stipulates that the Convention will enter into force three months after the deposit of the thirtieth instrument of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession. Accordingly, the Convention will take effect on 20 April 2006, just 30 months after its adoption by the 32nd session of UNESCO's General Conference in October 2003. In the words of the Director-General, the exceptionally rapid ratification of the Convention by 8 Asian, 6 European, 6 Arab, 6 African and 4 Latin American states bears witness to "the great interest in intangible heritage all over the world... and the widespread awareness of urgent need for its international protection given the threat posed by contemporary lifestyles and the process of globalization". And ratification moves forward: in late January, Estonia and Luxembourg deposited instruments, and some twenty other states are expected to follow suit before the end of 2007.

Editorial

The forthcoming entry into force of the ICH Convention provides a fitting occasion for launching *The Intangible Heritage Messenger*. But beyond marking this historic event, the overriding aim of this newsletter is to bridge the information gap with regard to the myriad activities – past, present and future – overseen by UNESCO's Intangible Heritage Section (ITH) worldwide. Conceived for ICH professionals as well as other interested parties, including colleagues within UNESCO and other UN agencies, national delegations, national commissions, NGOs, private partners and other actors from civil society, the *Messenger* will provide updates on the status of the Convention's ratification and implementation. The newsletter will also report on current fieldwork and research, best practices, action plans for Masterpieces, living human treasures, endangered languages, oral traditions, traditional music and dance and much more. Thanks to the regular columns – *Calendar* and *Living Heritage News* – readers can keep abreast of conferences, commemorations, publications, exhibitions and changes within ITH, such as the revamping of our website in 2006.

We hope that this newsletter becomes a useful tool for all those contributing directly or indirectly to safeguarding the world's living heritage, and we look forward to receiving your comments and suggestions.

Rieks Smeets
Intangible Heritage Section

The Mask Dance of the Drums from Drametse. Masterpiece proclaimed in 2005. Elaborately costumed male dancers and musicians representing pacific and wrathful deities perform this sacred mask dance twice a year in Bhutan's Drametse community.



© Inst. of Language and Cultural Studies, Bhutan

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The Oral and Graphic Expressions of the Wajãpi. Masterpiece proclaimed in 2003. Members of Brazil's Wajãpi community tell us about their vision of the world through geometric motifs applied to their bodies and objects using vegetable dyes.



Photos: © Conselho das Aldeias Wajãpi-Apiña



From Masterpiece to Representative List

Honouring 90 masterpieces, the Proclamation programme concludes with the Convention's entry into force

Since its inception, the programme of the Proclamation of Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity has designated a total of 90 cultural spaces or forms of traditional and popular expressions from 69 countries. The first and second proclamations took place in 2001 and 2003 respectively. As the ICH Convention states that no further proclamation will be made after the instrument's entry into force (Article 31.3), the third proclamation made public on 25 November 2005 is the last in the framework of this popular programme, generously funded by the Japanese Government. Upon request by the concerned State(s) Party(ies), the Intergovernmental Committee will incorporate the masterpieces into the future Representative List. At present, some 30 masterpieces are located in the territory of one or more of the ratifying states. As expressed by the Director-General in November 2005, "The considerable experience accumulated in the course of these six years of the Proclamation, in terms of the methodology for the identification and selection of the masterpieces and the concrete lessons learned from the safeguard plans currently in operation, is an irreplaceable template that will prove to be priceless for us when it comes to implementing the Convention".

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Focus on the Convention

General Assembly: the sovereign body

The Convention's decision-making organ, the General Assembly of States Parties, will ordinarily be convened in Paris every two years. Its inaugural meeting is scheduled for 27 - 29 June 2006. In accordance with procedure, those States Parties that will have deposited their instrument of ratification with the Director-General three months before this first meeting can fully participate in this General Assembly.

Intergovernmental Committee: implementation and monitoring

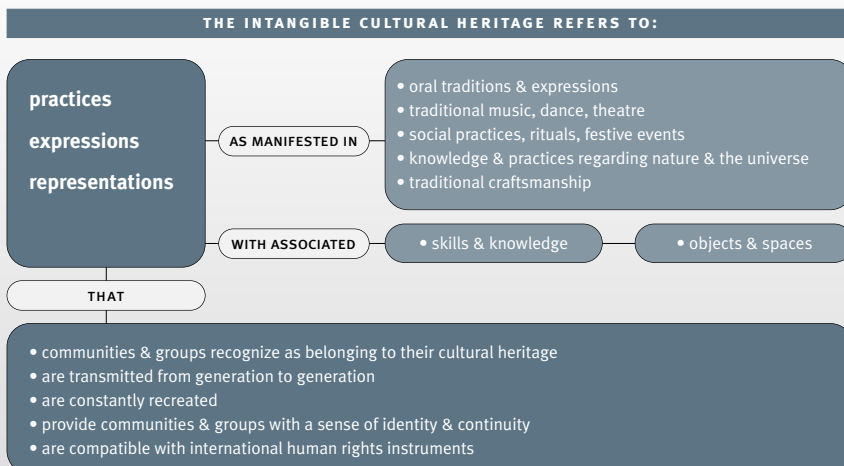
A geographically balanced Intergovernmental Committee will be responsible for promoting the Convention and implementing the decisions of the General Assembly. Initially comprising 18 States Parties, this operational organ will be elected at the June 2006 meeting of the General Assembly and convene for the first time in late September 2006. The number of members will be increased to 24 after the Convention's fiftieth ratification.

Lists and the Fund: visibility and resources

Articles 16 and 17 of the Convention provide for the creation of two lists. The Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, the counterpart of the renowned World Heritage List, will ensure visibility for ICH around the globe, while the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding will set the priorities for action. A Fund for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage will be financed by contributions from States Parties and outside sources.

Defining the intangible

The intricate definition in Article 2 of the Convention demonstrates that intangible heritage defies easy explanation. This diagram is designed to provide some clarity.





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Traditional Ethiopian Music and Dance.

Above left, cantor-dancers at a religious celebration playing the tsenatsel while holding cruciform prayer sticks (maqwameya).

Above right, Keeping rhythm with wooden claves, women perform traditional songs at a gathering of Addis Ababa's Harari community.

In the Field – Ethiopia

A four-year project to record living music and dance traditions marks the first step towards a comprehensive national ICH inventory

With over 80 living languages and ancient cultures nourished by African and Middle Eastern influences, Ethiopia is a land of astounding diversity. Forged over a long history of isolation and exchange resulting from Ethiopia's unique geographical and political context, this diversity is abundantly reflected in the country's music and dances. Indeed, the music of Ethiopia has emerged from Christian-Orthodox, Judeo-Ethiopian and Muslim traditions as well as African polyphonic and instrumental expressions. Although predominantly vocal, Ethiopian music features a variety of instruments, some of which reputedly date from Old Testament times. Among the most widespread are *baganna* and *krar* lyres, the *masenqo* fiddle, the *kabaro* drums and the *washint* flute.

Thanks to the generosity of the Government of Norway, a major contributor to ICH-related projects over the last two years, UNESCO recently launched a four-year project to collect and inventory music and dance traditions throughout Ethiopia. As a first step in the compilation of a more comprehensive national inventory encompassing all aspects of Ethiopia's ICH, the project will build local capacities and document living practices and traditions. In order to guarantee the continuation of the work beyond 2009 by Ethiopian specialists, courses in ethnomusicology will be organized at the University of Addis Ababa and the Yared Music School using specifically designed curriculum materials in English and Amharic. Training in inventorying music and dance will begin in 2006 with "The Musical Landscape of Addis Ababa", a survey of the various Ethiopian traditions found in the capital. Students will then join European specialists already in the field to study traditions and practices in different regions. Activities include conducting research among the Maale people of southern Ethiopia and organizing training in the use of equipment for multi-track polyphonic recording for the staff of the South Omo Museum and Research Center in the town of Jinka.

Numerous centres and museums around the country will receive training and equipment adapted to their particular needs.

By the project's completion in 2009, UNESCO will have trained a generation of Ethiopians to carry on the national ICH inventory by including other domains while also raising awareness of the importance of ICH among local and national authorities thus contributing directly to the long-term safeguarding of Ethiopia's living heritage. Moreover, with Ethiopia's ratification of the ICH Convention expected in the near future, this project will enable the country to successfully fulfil its future obligations as a State Party.

The Patum of Berga.

Masterpiece proclaimed in 2005. Once a year, crowds pack the streets of Berga in Spain's Catalonia region to participate in the spectacle of allegorical creatures perpetuating a religious celebration dating from medieval times.



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PROJECT PROFILE

- PROJECT NAME** Ethiopia: Traditional music, dance and instruments
- CONTRIBUTOR** Norwegian Government through the UNESCO-Norway Funds-in-Trust Cooperation in the Field of Culture
- BUDGET** US \$345,388
- TIME FRAME** 2005–2009
- ACTIVITIES** capacity building in field recording, inventory-making, archiving, training in ethnomusicology
- LOCATION** throughout Ethiopia
- CONTACT** UNESCO Office Addis Ababa
Ms. Fumiko Ohinata
f.ohinata@unesco.org

PUBLISHER Intangible Heritage Section (ITH)
Culture Sector, UNESCO
1 rue Miollis
75732 Paris Cedex 15 France
email: ich@unesco.org
fax: +33 (0)1 45 68 57 52

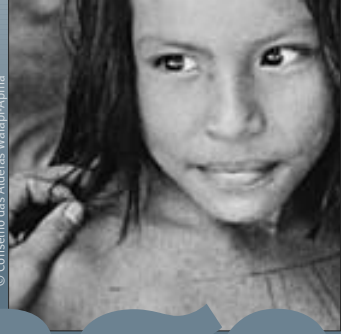
CHIEF EDITOR Rieks Smeets
EDITORIAL STAFF Fernando Brugman, Richard Lo Giudice,
David Stehl, Reiko Yoshida
GRAPHIC DESIGN Jean-Luc Thierry
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CALENDAR

- 7-8 FEBRUARY Meeting: "New perspectives on cultural diversity: the role of communities". Havana, Cuba.
- 9 FEBRUARY ICH information meeting for Permanent Delegates and Observers to UNESCO. UNESCO, Paris.
- 15-17 FEBRUARY Workshop: "Learning from recent experiences and beginning to identify best practices in safeguarding ICH in Viet Nam". Hanoi, Viet Nam.
- 9-23 FEBRUARY Photo exhibit: *Voices of the Andes*. UNESCO, Paris.
Publication: *Voix des Andes*, UNESCO Publishing, Paris, 2006, 80 pp.
ISBN 92-3-204025-5
(in French only), 8 euros.
- 22 FEBRUARY Signature of an agreement between UNESCO and the Government of Peru concerning the creation of CRESPIAL, a category II regional centre in Cuzco (Peru) for the safeguarding of ICH in Latin America.
- 13-15 MARCH Expert Meeting: "Community involvement in safeguarding ICH". Tokyo, Japan.
- 18 APRIL Award ceremony: Sheik Zayed Prize (UAE) honouring two masterpieces proclaimed in 2005. UNESCO, Paris.
- 19-21 APRIL (provisional date) Expert meeting: "The impact of the Proclamation of Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity". UNESCO, Paris.
- 27-29 JUNE First session of the General Assembly of the States Parties to the ICH Convention. UNESCO, Paris.
- LATE SEPTEMBER First meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of ICH. Location to be announced.

For further information, contact: ich@unesco.org

LIVING HERITAGE NEWS

ITH's worldwide action in favour of the Convention (2003-2006)

Since the Convention's adoption in October 2003, ITH has been tirelessly pursuing two fundamental objectives: encouraging states to ratify the Convention and preparing for its future implementation. In addition to disseminating the information kit, a "Frequently Asked Questions" leaflet and collecting ICH data worldwide, ITH organized seven regional information meetings for the benefit of future States Parties. Moreover, a series of nine expert meetings, each devoted to a specific theme, generated fertile exchanges that will be instrumental in the drafting of the preliminary operational directives by the Intergovernmental Committee. Three of these expert meetings laid the groundwork for the forthcoming thematic manuals that will feature guidelines on safeguarding specific ICH domains. During the last biennium, ITH staff members were invited to speak about the Convention at over 25 events, including the international forum "Transmitting ICH: Youth, education and development" in Riga, Latvia (May 2005). ITH also created the exhibition *The Living Heritage* (July 2005), on view in the UN Pavilion at the World Exposition in Aichi, Japan.

REGIONAL INFORMATION MEETINGS

- West Africa – Dakar (Senegal), June 2004
- Latin America – Paraty (Brazil), June 2004
- Asia – New Delhi (India), September 2004
- Eastern and southern Africa – Nairobi (Kenya), November 2004
- Europe and North America – Kazan (Russia), December 2004
- Arab States – Algiers (Algeria), January 2005
- Caribbean – Roseau (Dominica), February 2005

THEMATIC EXPERT MEETINGS

- Gender and intangible cultural heritage – Paris, December 2003
- Safeguarding traditional music – Paris, December 2003
- Museums and intangible cultural heritage – Oud-Poelgeest (Netherlands), April 2004
- Social practices, rituals and festive events (manual preparation) – Paris, July 2004
- Inventory-making – Paris, March 2005
- Music, dance and theatre traditions (manual preparation) – Paris, November 2005
- Selection criteria – Paris, December 2005
- Documenting and archiving – Paris, January 2006
- Oral traditions and expressions (manual preparation) – Paris, January 2006



The Cultural Space of Sosso-Bala in Nyagassola. Masterpiece proclaimed in 2001. The Sosso-Bala is a sacred xylophone (balafon) played by the patriarchs of Guinea's Mandingue community on solemn occasions to accompany ancient epic poems.