14 and 15 November 2019, UNESCO Headquarters
7 place Fontenoy, 75007, Paris

Project: Promoting African Traditional Sports and Games (TSG)
Concept note

Side event to the General Conference

Heritage and diplomacy through the safeguarding and promotion of African traditional sports and games (TSG)

14-15 November 2019, UNESCO Headquarters

40th Session of the General Conference (12-27 November 2019)

Context:

Seizing the opportunity offered by the 40th Session of the General Conference to challenge the promotion and safeguarding of intangible heritage through a dual diplomatic and scientific approach, within the framework of the project on safeguarding and promotion of TSG and building on the progress achieved since its revamp in 2016, the Permanent Delegation of Madagascar in cooperation with the Africa Group of UNESCO, and the Permanent Delegation of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to UNESCO, with the support of the Secretariat, could consider organizing a political, scientific and cultural side-event to the General Conference at UNESCO Headquarters on 14 and 15 November 2019.

These two events, as detailed below, would be organized in a cross-sectoral approach between SHS, CLT and PAX, and would, inter alia, contribute to the achievement of the Priority Africa at UNESCO and the Flagship Programme 5. This event would raise awareness among Members States of the need to safeguard TSG and promote multiple identities of African countries through these cultural practices.

Description of the event:

This will be a two stage-event:

I. 14 November 2019, 14h-15h, Room IV: a round table addressing the issues of safeguarding and promoting intangible heritage in a political, institutional and scientific perspective. The "Heritage and Diplomacy Round Table" could then include three themes:

   Theme 1: Integration and Regional Cooperation;
   Theme 2: Promotion of peace and intercultural dialogue;
   Theme 3: Inclusion of communities.

Given the key role of youth, at the heart of the transmission and continuity of TSG and that young people are educated to the core values of traditional sports and games, it should be considered to integrate the youth component into the above themes. Therefore, can it may be suggested to question the role of youth as a part of change in the promotion of peace and intercultural dialogue by TSG in African States and beyond. It may also be considered to question the role of TSG in educating young people to values, in particular to promote inclusion, peace and dialogue between communities.
The round table could be organized as follows:

- Proposal 1: 30 mn presentation by the panelists (10 mn by theme), followed by 30 minutes of debate with the audience;

- Proposal 2: theme 1 (presentation 10 mn and Q / R 10 mn), theme 2 (presentation 10 mn and Q / R 10 mn) and theme 3 (presentation 10 mn and Q / R 10 mn).

- Proposal 3: A presentation of the state of play and perspectives of traditional games and sports in Africa. Reminder of the activities of the Sectors regarding TSG (SHS and Culture). Follow-up of the discussion on TSG at the Conference of African Ministers on the implementation of the Kazan Plan of Action in Africa. Questions answers

**Scale of the event:**

Round table: expected 200 participant, Room IV, (ENG/FR)

**Provisional list of panelists:**

**Opening:**

- DG or her Representative
- HE Ambassador of Gabon to UNESCO, Chairperson of the Africa Group of UNESCO
- HE Ambassador of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to UNESCO
- HE Ambassador of Madagascar to UNESCO

**Moderator: (5 min intro)**

**Panelists:**

- Prof. Pere Lavega, President of the International Association of Traditional Sports and Games Association entrusted with the development of the Policy Guidelines on TSG ;
- Prof. Pierre Parlebas, Professor Emeritus, Former Dean of Social and Human Sciences University
- Young speaker (to be determined)
- High-Level representative from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia ;
- High-Level representative from the Republic of Madagascar ;
- Représentative of Sénégal ONC (Youth OG 2021)
- High-Level representative from the Republic of Kazakhstan (WTSG2021);
- Secretariat of the 2003 Convention ;
- Secretariat of the SHS sector

**II. 14 and 15 November 2019, Foyer:** a temporary exhibition presenting kakemonos, two TSG per African country (Photograph of the TSG and explanation ENG / FR);

Members States of the UNESCO Africa Group are encouraged to promote their TSG during the two-days event (14-15 November 2019).
- Each TSG is presented in a **text format along with photo illustrations**. The text shall include (non-exhaustive content): the general presentation of the TSG, its role in society, the past and current practice of the TSG, etc.

- Each presentation of TSG will be printed as a panel (height 140cm X width 80cm), which will include the photography and a white band at the bottom of the panel where the legend will be inscribed in the form of a cartel.

- Each country may submit two TSG to be presented on **two panels**.

- Each participating country is invited to provide the files (**text 15 to 20 word format lines + HD photos**) to the organizers for printing. In order to guarantee the quality of the photographies that will be printed on a large format, it is necessary the photo in actual size, with a definition greater than 600 pixels per inch (Dots Per Inch).

- **Organizers will take care of the printing for the exhibition.**

  In addition, looped screening of TSG videos from all participating countries will be provided to give more visibility. For this purpose, each participating country is asked to provide a video of up to **two minutes** of traditional sports, games and /or dances high definition. The preferred format is a video in HD and MP4 format to be displayed on the screens.

**Relevance of the event :**

Already recognized as intangible heritage by the 2003 Convention, TSG contribute to the promotion and safeguarding of intangible heritage, intercultural dialogue, the development of regional integration and the consolidation of peace through the rapprochement of communities and the dissemination of core civic values such as sustainability, inclusion, mutual respect, etc.

These two events, as detailed below, would be organized in a cross-sectoral approach between SHS, CLT and PAX, and would, **inter alia**, contribute to the achievement of the Priority Africa at UNESCO and the Flagship Programme 5. This event would raise awareness among Members States of the need to safeguard TSG and promote multiple identities of African countries through these cultural practices.

Inter-Korean reconciliation through the inscription of the Korean Traditional Fight (Ssirum) on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity on the basis of a joint request by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Republic of Korea, promotes the recognition of TSG as instruments for peacebuilding and intercultural dialogue. TSG also contribute to regional integration, as evidenced by the regional cooperation fostered by TSG dissemination and practice as historically emphasized by the Project on TSG along the Silk Roads, for example.

The importance of sport as an "important instrument" for sustainable development and its "growing contribution to development and peace through tolerance and respect" has been recognized worldwide by the United Nations (UN) in September 2015 in the **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**. At the regional level, sport is considered as a real lever for development and a vehicle for peace that can contribute to the achievement of the African Union’s 2063 Agenda.
These traditional games and sports are part of the history and identity of the African people. Their safeguarding is therefore essential for Africa to preserve its traditional values.

Madagascar organized the first Regional Conference of African Ministers on the implementation in Africa of the Kazan Action Plan on Physical Education and Sport. The issue of traditional games and sports addressed as a tool that can contribute to the implementation of quality physical education. A TSG program exists within UNESCO and a Group of Friends of UNESCO TSG has been established, but so far, few African countries have joined.

This project aims to raise the awareness of UNESCO African Member States and the international community of the importance of valorization and safeguarding of these traditional games and sports and to make known the richness of the intangible cultural heritage in Africa through TSG. These games embody real socio-cultural and educational issues but are generally only practiced informally. However, these TSG are true cultural richness, accessible to all social strata and can contribute to local development.

**Role of UNESCO and outcomes:**

UNESCO would thus confirm its leading position at the international and regional levels in safeguarding and promoting TSG, as well as its role as a forum for exchange in this area through the organization of collective consultations and expert meetings on TSG. The Organization's leadership in this area is evidenced by the popularity and political plebiscite of Member States and NGOs to promote the recognition and safeguarding of this heritage, in particular through the commitment of the high public authorities composing the Group of Friends of the UNESCO TSG.

African States would also find the opportunity to promote this intangible heritage, part of multiple identities before the international community, to consider a global awareness and global commitment to the preservation of this heritage, and to support applications made by States Parties to the 2003 Convention to inscribe TSG on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

Africa has a multi-ethnic population that is the recipient of an authentic cultural heritage. Modern sport is known and practiced, but Africa also has a range of traditional games and sports. These traditional games and sports are part of the history and identity of the African people. Their safeguarding is therefore essential for Africa to preserve its traditional values.