



The Tangible Value of the Intangible Cultural Heritage

Cécile Duvelle
Chief, UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage Section

- UNESCO founded on 16 November 1946
- Mandate: International cooperation in the fields of Education, Science, Culture and Communication
- Functions:
 - Laboratory of ideas
 - Standard setter
 - Clearing house
 - International cooperation
 - Capacity-building
- Millennium Development Goals

The Culture Sector

Functions and Programmes:

- Core functions:
 - Advocacy
 - Normative
 - Clearing house
 - Capacity building
 - International cooperation
- Programmes:
 - World Heritage
 - Intangible Heritage
 - Museums and cultural objects
 - Cultural policies
 - Cultural industries

Priorities 2008-2009:

- Priority 1:
Promoting cultural diversity through the safeguarding of heritage in its various dimensions and the enhancement of cultural expressions
- Priority 2:
Promoting social cohesion, by fostering pluralism, dialogue of cultures and the establishment of a culture of peace

Conventions and cultural diversity

- 1952: Universal Copyright Convention
- 1954: Convention for the Protection of Cultural Properties in the Event of Armed Conflict
- 1970: Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property
- 1972: Convention on the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage
- 2001: Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage
- **2003: Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage**
- 2005: Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions

ICH: Two lines of action

- Normative action:
 - Recommendation on the Safeguarding of Traditional Culture and Folklore (1989)
 - Steps towards a new normative instrument, preferably a Convention (1997, 2001)
- Programmes:
 - Proclamation of Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity (1997-2005)
 - Living Human Treasures (1993-)
 - Endangered languages (1995-)
 - Traditional Music (1962-2005)
 - Participation Programme

The ICH Convention (2003)

- Bolivia's proposal 1973
- Mexico City Declaration 1982
- Our Creative Diversity 1996
- Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity 2001
- Adopted: October 2003
- Open for ratification since November 2003
- Ratified by 30 States: 20 January 2006
- Entered into force: 20 April 2006
- Ratified already by 112 States (May 2009)



Definition of ICH

Expressions and practices, knowledge and skills that

- are recognised by communities, groups, and in some cases individuals, as forming part of their cultural heritage
- are living, transmitted from generation to generation and constantly recreated
- are crucial for the sense of identity and continuity of communities and groups
- are in conformity with human rights (+ sustainable development)
- (belong to one or more of the relevant domains)

The definition also includes objects and spaces that are associated with manifestations of ICH

Intangible Heritage Domains

- Oral traditions and expressions
- Performing arts
- Social practices, rituals and festive events
- Knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe
- Traditional craftsmanship

**The Traditional Music of Morin Khuur
Mongolia**



Objectives

- Safeguarding ICH: ensuring its viability (continued enactment and transmission) within communities and groups
- Awareness-raising
- Sharing and celebrating
- Dialogue, respect for cultural diversity
- International cooperation and assistance

Role of States Parties



The Garifuna Language,
Dance and Music, Nicaragua

- Take necessary measures to ensure safeguarding (= ensure the viability of ICH)
- Identify and define elements of intangible heritage, with participation of communities, groups and NGO's

Safeguarding measures

- **Inventory making**
- **Adopt a general safeguarding policy**
 - to promote the function of ITH
 - to integrate safeguarding into planning programmes
- **Establish competent safeguarding bodies**
- **Foster studies and research methodologies**
- **Adopt legal, technical, administrative and financial measures:**
 - training institutions for intangible heritage management and transmission
 - ensure access to intangible cultural heritage with respect to customary practices
 - establish documentation institutions

Education, awareness-raising and capacity building

1. ensure recognition of and respect for intangible heritage
2. inform the public of dangers threatening intangible cultural heritage
3. promote education for protection of natural spaces and places of memory



Gbofe of Afoukaha: the Music of the Transverse trumpets and the cultural space of the Tagbana Community, Côte d'Ivoire

International Safeguarding

- General Assembly of States Parties
- Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage
- Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity
- List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding
- Programmes, projects and activities reflecting the principles and objectives of the Convention
- Fund for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage
- International assistance and cooperation

Main features of the Convention

- Introduces a list system for visibility and safeguarding; other main focus on programmes and projects
- Deals with heritage representative for communities (not of outstanding universal value)
- Emphasis on living heritage, enacted by people, often collectively, mostly transmitted orally
- Attention for processes/conditions rather than products
- Role of communities/groups
- Contribution to promotion of creativity and diversity, to well-being (of communities and groups and societies at large) and peaceful development

The value of intangible heritage

- Focus on processes of transmission of knowledge and skills rather than on products;
- Social and economic value vs. commercial value;
- Different protection measures than those used for tangible cultural heritage (objects, monuments, sites)
- Collective intellectual property rights? Or direct recognition of the cultural/identity value, e.g. through inventorying ICH?
- Economic value:
 - Direct value
 - Indirect value
 - Cost of non-intervention
 - Cost of restitution
 - Cost revitalization
 - Cost of formal education

Direct economic value

- Value of the products resulting from ICH:
 - For own consumption
 - For consumption by others
 - With commercial use
- Examples: traditional medicines, tourists attending a festivity, trade of crafts

Indirect economic value

- The value of the knowledge and skills
- The value of the transmission of knowledge and skills
- Revenues obtained by other sectors thanks to ICH manifestations
- Social value and conflict prevention

Examples: production capacity or water management, costs of formal education, hotels and tourist industry, social cohesion

Cost of non-intervention

Effect on indirect and direct economic value (on knowledge and products)

- Economic damage
 - Cost of education
 - Cost of revitalization, if felt necessary by community
 - Cost of restitution
- Social damage
 - Dialogue and mutual understanding threatened
 - Respect
 - Origin of conflict

But:

- is it always necessary to intervene?
- Is customary access respected?

CIA?

- Should a Cultural Impact Assessment (CIA) be included in development policies?
- What kind of indicators should be used?
- What should be the role of the international community, in particular the UN, the World Bank and the IMF?

UNESCO INTANGIBLE HERITAGE SECTION

**1, rue Miollis
75732 Paris Cedex 15
France**

**Tel: 00 33 (0) 1456 84519
Fax: 00 33 (0) 1456 85752**

c.duvelle@unesco.org

www.unesco.org/culture/ich