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Ratification Status

States Parties to the Convention
as at 31 March 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
- 33 NICARAGUA
- 34 CYPRUS
- 35 ETHIOPIA
- 36 BOLIVIA
- 37 BRAZIL
- 38 BULGARIA
- 39 HUNGARY
- 40 ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN
- 41 BELGIUM
- 42 JORDAN
- 43 SLOVAKIA
- 44 REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA
- 45 TURKEY
- 46 MADAGASCAR

First regional centre for safeguarding ICH to open in Peru

On 22 February 2006, UNESCO and the Peruvian Government announced the creation of CRESPIAL to serve as a model for regional centres worldwide

Following a decision of the 33rd General Conference in October 2005, UNESCO Director-General Koïchiro Matsuura and Peruvian Minister of Foreign Affairs Oscar Maúrtua de Romaña met in Paris on 22 February 2006 to sign an agreement establishing CRESPIAL, the Regional Centre for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Latin America. The centre, which will be operational this summer, will be based in Cuzco, the ancient capital of the Inca Empire.

CRESPIAL's principal objectives are to promote the 2003 Convention and to coordinate ICH activities in Latin American countries. More specifically, the regional centre will establish information-exchange networks and bring together experts, institutions and NGOs, with an emphasis on community representation and involvement. CRESPIAL will also assist participating countries by organizing training and capacity-building activities. In its early phases, the centre will focus

on creating a network of regional institutions devoted to ICH safeguarding.

The Peruvian Government has earmarked an annual contribution of US \$500,000 for the centre's operations. The budget will be subsequently increased by contributions from future participating States. Latin American countries wishing to join CRESPIAL may do so by officially notifying UNESCO through the appropriate national channels. An initial meeting of interested countries will take place in Brazil this May (see *Calendar*).

The Cuzco Centre will serve as a model for similar initiatives in other regions of the world. The Governments of Algeria and the Republic of Korea have already expressed interest in creating UNESCO centres for safeguarding ICH in their respective regions.

For further information: www.crespial.org

Editorial

This second issue of the *Messenger* prominently features a chronological listing of those countries that have ratified the 2003 Convention as at 31 March 2006.

We are delighted to note that since the last issue, this roster has increased by 14, bringing the total number of States Parties to 46. These results have largely exceeded expectations. Moreover, geographically balanced representation has been achieved: 5 to 10 States from each of UNESCO's 6 electoral groups have ratified the Convention. Some 10 additional countries are expected to join the ranks of the 46 States Parties before the first General Assembly (27 - 29 June). Equally auspicious are the numerous measures that States Parties and other Member States are currently implementing in the spirit of the Convention, thus supporting cultural diversity and the creativity of communities and groups living within their borders.

This issue of the *Messenger* focuses primarily on Latin America and some of the region's most exemplary initiatives in favour of its living heritage: the creation of the regional UNESCO centre for ICH in Peru, Colombia's successful information campaign, and a pioneering project in the area of inventory-making currently underway in Venezuela.

Rieks Smeets
Intangible Heritage Section

Taquile and its Textile Art. Masterpiece proclaimed in 2005. Men, women and children of Taquile Island on Peru's Lake Titicaca perpetuate a weaving tradition dating back to pre-Hispanic times. The sale of garments contributes significantly to local economic development.



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Photos © Margi Kathakali and Kutiyattam School



The Kutiyattam Sanskrit Theatre. Masterpiece proclaimed in 2001. Renowned for its striking facial expressions and gestures, the Kutiyattam has survived as India's oldest living theatrical tradition. This blend of Sanskrit texts (left) and local customs is performed in Hindu temples in the southernmost Kerala province.

Focus on the Convention

Experts tackle inventory-making, a key obligation of States Parties

ARTICLE 12 – Inventories

1. *To ensure identification with a view to safeguarding, each State Party shall draw up, in a manner geared to its own situation, one or more inventories of the intangible cultural heritage present in its territory. These inventories shall be regularly updated.*

2. *When each State Party periodically submits its report to the Committee, in accordance with Article 29, it shall provide relevant information on such inventories.*

According to Article 12 of the Convention, each State Party is required to create and regularly update “in a manner geared to its own situation, one or more inventories of the intangible cultural heritage present in its territory”. This loose wording allows States Parties considerable leeway in preparing national inventories, although a closer examination of the Convention reveals some significant indications concerning the manner in which States might wish to elaborate inventories.

In an effort to provide responses to the many inventory-related questions submitted by States Parties, UNESCO organized an expert meeting in March 2005. On the basis of the meeting's report (available on ITH's website), the Intangible Heritage Section is preparing a detailed web page on inventorying, which will also describe different approaches adopted by pioneering countries.

It is worth recalling that ICH inventories, as required by the Convention, serve a very specific purpose: “to ensure identification with a view to safeguarding”. Since safeguarding refers to “measures ensuring viability”, it follows that such inventories should involve living practices and expressions and that information about their viability should be included.

One clearly formulated requirement is the involvement of communities and groups in the identification and safeguarding of their ICH. As defined in Article 2, ICH must be recognized by communities and groups as belonging to their cultural heritage. Similarly, Article 11 requires States Parties to identify and define the various elements of the ICH present in their territory, with the participation of communities, groups, and relevant NGOs. The March 2005 meeting reaffirmed the importance of community involvement. In a subsequent meeting, experts recommended adding the proviso that communities were to be involved “with their free, prior and informed consent”.

Existing national inventories and catalogues, generally produced by research institutions or ministerial agencies, vary considerably in content and approach. Some are organized by administrative divisions, while others classify heritage by communities or domains (e.g., music and dance, traditional ethnobotanical knowledge). As the Convention provides no indication as to the principles of ordering, States Parties are free to structure their inventories in the manner deemed best suited to their needs. The fact that States Parties are asked to create “one or more inventories” only enhances this flexibility.

The experts recognize that comprehensive inventories will be difficult to compile, particularly in countries characterized by great cultural and linguistic diversity. Inventories do not necessarily have to incorporate extensive documentation since they are intended to provide recognition and raise awareness, and they help to identify items in need of safeguarding. It was acknowledged that access to more extensive information may have to be restricted in order to respect intellectual property rights, or, as stipulated in the Convention, to respect customary practices governing access to ICH. The Intergovernmental Committee elected in late June 2006 will undoubtedly wish to make recommendations on this issue.

At two successive meetings, experts elaborated a questionnaire containing some 25 queries. This simple, easy-to-update tool can be used as a starting point for countries with no inventorying experience. It has been designed to present a maximum amount of information per item on a single page. An annotated version of this questionnaire will be available on ITH's website at the end of April 2006.

Case Study: Venezuela leading the way

An exciting experiment is taking place in Venezuela. Initiated in 2003, the “Censo del Patrimonio Cultural Venezolano” inventory project has already registered over 60,000 tangible and intangible heritage items from the entire country. By its targeted completion at the end of 2006, the inventory will comprise over 100,000 elements, and the results will be published in a series of 320 books, each one devoted to a specific administrative district. The data will also be available on CD-ROM and on the Internet.

Compiled from questionnaires, the inventory is broken down by type (objects, built heritage, individual creations, oral traditions and collective events). Each entry includes a short text and a photo. Conceived before the adoption of the ICH Convention, the Venezuelan inventory is essentially consistent with the spirit of the Convention in so far as it features heritage elements considered representative by the communities themselves. The Supreme Court of Venezuela recently decreed that all inventoried elements shall be protected by law. Priority will be given to cultural heritage under threat of disappearing.





Photos: © Fernando Mercado



Above and right, *The Carnival of Barranquilla. Masterpiece proclaimed in 2003. A veritable melting pot of indigenous, African and European traditions, Colombia's most popular annual carnival dazzles spectators with its parading groups of masqueraded musicians, dancers and actors.*

Below, *Promotional poster for the Clestrinye Carnival.*



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The Ahellil of Gourara. Masterpiece proclaimed in 2005. The Zenetes of Gourara in southwest Algeria, are the keepers of the Ahellil, a rich poetic repertory performed by large groups of musicians, singers and dancers at various collective ceremonies.



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In the Field – Colombia

UNESCO and Colombian authorities implemented a 3-year campaign to spark interest in the Colombia's astounding living heritage

With over 700 annual traditional festivities and carnivals and some 67 languages and dialects that have resisted population displacement, armed conflict and environmental degradation, Colombia's intangible cultural heritage ranks as one of the richest in Latin America. This tremendous diversity is hardly surprising considering Colombia's varied population, encompassing more than 83 indigenous groups and numerous communities of African descent.

Mindful of ICH's essential role in the promotion of creativity, tolerance and peace, UNESCO's Intangible Heritage Section decided to take concrete steps towards helping Colombia to safeguard its precious living heritage. With funds generously provided by the Japanese Government, a fervent supporter of the Section's activities since the early 1990s, UNESCO and the Colombian Government launched a nationwide campaign in 2002 to alert communities, civil society and scientific and governmental institutions about the importance of safeguarding Colombia's intangible heritage.

Working on several fronts, the project achieved the following results:

- ◆ Establishing the Intangible Heritage Committee (2004), an advisory body to Colombia's Ministry of Culture for the formulation of policies and the elaboration of criteria for inscription on national lists.
- ◆ Broadcasting three TV spots on national and regional channels, 40 messages on some 200 regional commercial and community radio stations. An advertising campaign in major newspapers. A communication strategy based on the theme "Show Who You Are", raised awareness, especially among Colombian youth, on the importance of maintaining Colombia's cultural diversity.
- ◆ Organizing five regional seminars to encourage communities, cultural agents, indigenous groups, and education and communication professionals to actively engage in safeguarding measures.
- ◆ Organizing the First National Encounter for ICH in Medellín (September 2005), which led to the establishment of national networks and encouraged political decision-makers to support the ratification of the Convention.
- ◆ Publishing an educational brochure and a guide featuring a methodology for compiling Colombia's first ICH inventory (RIPIC). Designing a database compatible with existing national systems, which facilitated the testing of inventory pilot projects (e.g., traditional music and dance in the Gran Magdalena region).

- ◆ Developing a website for disseminating institutional awareness-raising messages, and other relevant information (links, bibliographical references, information on inventories).

The project's principal objectives – to involve the general public and shareholders in safeguarding actions and to raise support for ICH protection among policy-makers and elected officials – were largely achieved. Thanks to the fruitful collaboration between UNESCO and the Colombian Government, the safeguarding of Colombia's intangible cultural heritage is now an issue of national interest and a political priority. Colombia is finalizing the ratification process for the 2003 Convention.

For further information: www.patrimonioinmaterial.info

PROJECT PROFILE

PROJECT NAME Public Awareness Campaign on the Importance of Safeguarding Colombia's Oral and Intangible Heritage

CONTRIBUTOR UNESCO/Japan Funds-in-Trust for the Preservation and Promotion of the Intangible Cultural Heritage

BUDGET US \$136,860

TIME FRAME 2002–2005

ACTIVITIES Awareness raising, capacity building, inventory-making, promoting national ICH legislation

LOCATION Throughout Colombia

CONTACT Intangible Heritage Section, UNESCO, Paris

- ◆ César Moreno-Triana, c.moreno-triana@unesco.org
- ◆ Reiko Yoshida, r.yoshida@unesco.org

PUBLISHER Intangible Heritage Section (ITH)
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 Estelle Blaschke, Fernando Brugman,
Richard Lo Giudice, César Moreno-Triana,
Ariana Morris, Reiko Yoshida

GRAPHIC DESIGN Jean-Luc Thierry

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CALENDAR

28 MARCH Award ceremony: UNESCO certificate honouring the Cultural Space of the Gongs (2005 Masterpiece). Pleiku City, Viet Nam.

APRIL *(dates to be announced)*

Sub-Regional Meeting: Launching of the Action Plan for the Safeguarding of Garifuna Language, Dance and Music in Belize, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua (2001 Masterpiece). Belmopan, Belize.

18 APRIL Award ceremony: Sheik Zayed Prize (UAE) honouring two masterpieces proclaimed in 2005. UNESCO, Paris.

◆ 20 APRIL **Entry into force of the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.**

20–21 APRIL Expert meeting: “The Impacts of the Proclamation of Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity”. UNESCO, Paris.

LATE APRIL *The UNESCO Courier* (online magazine): Special issue devoted to Intangible Cultural Heritage.
Information: www.unesco.org/courier

5-6 MAY Conference: “The Politics of Intangible Cultural Heritage”. Weatherhead Center for International Affairs, Harvard University, Cambridge, USA.

16-19 MAY *(dates to be confirmed)*
Meeting: Centre for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage in Latin America (CRESPAL). Brasilia, Brazil.

27–29 JUNE First session of the General Assembly of the States Parties to the ICH Convention. UNESCO, Paris.

SEPTEMBER *(dates and location to be determined by the General Assembly)*
First meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of ICH.

For further information, contact: ich@unesco.org

LIVING HERITAGE NEWS

ACCU-UNESCO meeting focuses on community involvement and ICH

An interdisciplinary group of 20 experts from 18 countries met in Tokyo (Japan) from 13 to 15 March 2006 to discuss community involvement in safeguarding ICH. The meeting was co-organized by UNESCO’s Intangible Heritage Section and the Asia/Pacific Cultural Centre for UNESCO (ACCU). This initiative is the most recent in a series of thematic expert meetings organized by the Section on core themes such as inventory-making (March 2005), selection criteria (Dec. 2005) and documentation and archiving (Jan. 2006).

On the basis of Articles 2.1, 11, 12, 13 and 15 of the Convention, the discussions focused on three topics: the definition and identification of communities and groups; community involvement in inventorying intangible cultural heritage; and community involvement in preparing nominations to the Representative List. A special session was devoted to international cooperation.

After much lively debate, the participants adopted definitions (*see below*) for consideration by the future Intergovernmental Committee. They also formulated recommendations to assist States Parties in drawing up ICH inventories with the involvement of communities and groups. Guidelines were also elaborated for nominating ICH to the Representative List. More specifically, the experts suggested that the ICH proposed for nomination be taken from a national inventory or inventories as referred to in Article 12 of the Convention, and be included in a national tentative (representative) list. Recognizing the importance of international cooperation in the field of intangible heritage, the experts also called upon ACCU to strengthen its cooperation with institutions and experts in the Asia/Pacific region and beyond. The full text of the recommendation adopted at this meeting can be consulted on ITH’s website.

DEFINITIONS PROPOSED BY THE ACCU-UNESCO EXPERTS

- 1. COMMUNITIES** are networks of people whose sense of identity or connectedness emerges from a shared historical relationship that is rooted in the practice and transmission of, or engagement with, their intangible cultural heritage.
- 2. GROUPS** comprise people within or across communities who share characteristics such as skills, experience and special knowledge, and thus perform specific roles in the present and future practice, re-creation and/or transmission of their intangible cultural heritage as, for example, cultural custodians, practitioners or apprentices.
- 3. INDIVIDUALS** are those within or across communities who have distinct skills, knowledge, experience or other characteristics, and thus perform specific roles in the present and future practice, re-creation and/or transmission of their intangible cultural heritage as, for example, cultural custodians, practitioners and, where appropriate, apprentices.

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The Kankurang. Masterpiece proclaimed in 2005. Painted with vegetable dyes, clothed in leaves and wearing a mask, the Kankurang is a protective spirit who conducts the initiatory rites of the Mandinka communities of Senegal and Gambia.