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2003 Convention

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Birth of the Convention's emblem, the symbol of intangible cultural heritage

Intangible Cultural Heritage now has its own emblem. The General Assembly of the States Parties to the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, meeting at UNESCO headquarters from 16 to 19 June 2008, selected an emblem from among 1297 proposals submitted by artists from 101 Member States of UNESCO.

Designed by Croatian artist Dragutin Dado Kovačević (see the interview on page 4), the new emblem was considered the entry that best reflected the purposes and spirit of the Convention, which seeks to safeguard living heritage, ensure it is respected and raise awareness of its importance.

Launched in October 2007, and running until 17 March 2008, the emblem design competition was open to all, including graphic professionals, artists and practitioners of intangible cultural heritage. A subsidiary body to oversee the competition was elected by the Committee and was composed of representatives of



The Emblem of the 2003 Convention, designed by Dragutin Dado Kovačević

France (with Mr Chérif Khaznadar as Chairperson), Brazil (with Mr Antonio Ricarte as Rapporteur), Algeria, Bulgaria, India and Nigeria as members. The body examined the proposed designs in several stages
(cont'd on page 4)

Editorial

Recent months have seen a number of landmarks in the life of the 2003 Convention: the second session of the General Assembly adopted the Operational Directives; Lesotho's ratification made it the 100th State Party; the Intangible Heritage Fund received its first voluntary contribution; the Convention acquired an emblem; and the Intangible Cultural Heritage section saw the departure of its chief, Riëks Smeets. At the closing ceremony of the General Assembly session, a number of delegations rose to acknowledge the efforts of the Secretariat and particularly the contributions of Riëks as the Convention's first Secretary. In accepting those thanks, I added my voice to those recognizing Riëks' devotion and commitment to the task of bringing the Convention into full operation.

At present, the Secretariat is examining the first 75 requests for accreditation received from NGOs, and putting a software system into place to assist in processing the hundreds of nominations, proposals and requests for assistance that have begun to arrive. Within the States Parties, officials are working with communities to develop nominations for the Representative List and the Urgent

Safeguarding List, to be evaluated by the Committee when it meets in 2009. UNESCO's safeguarding work continues, assisted by the regular programme budget, as well as by generous contributions from an ever-growing number of States.

The *Messenger* is also evolving. A Kiswahili edition—prepared by the Kenyan Government with support by the UNESCO Office in Nairobi—will soon join the French, English, Spanish, Arabic and Russian editions. With a slower pace of Committee and General Assembly meetings in the future (there have been eight in less than 24 months!), the *Messenger* and the intangible heritage website will be able to feature more news about safeguarding activities in the field and, as the Committee begins to identify exemplary programmes, projects and activities, to share information about good safeguarding practices. Please let us know how the *Messenger* and the website can best serve your needs, and keep us informed of activities worth featuring in this newsletter.

Françoise Rivière, Chief a.i. of the Intangible Cultural Heritage Section

(Left) Election of the new Committee members.
 (Middle) The General Assembly in plenary session.
 (Right) The Assembly's Chairperson, Mr Chérif Khaznadar, its Rapporteur, Mr Francisco Javier López Morales, and the Assistant Director-General for Culture, Ms Françoise Rivière, bid farewell to Mr Rieks Smeets.



Photos: © UNESCO



Second ordinary session of the General Assembly (16-19 June 2008)

On 19 June 2008, a new chapter opened for the Convention with the adoption by the General Assembly of the Operational Directives for the implementation of the Convention. The Directives (available on our website) lay out, inter alia, the criteria, procedures and timetables for inscribing intangible heritage on the lists of the Convention; for granting international assistance; and for selecting programmes, projects and activities in safeguarding. They also outline the reporting requirements of States Parties and deal with the participation of non-governmental organizations, communities, experts, and other actors in the implementation of the Convention. The Directives were prepared by the Committee in a series of four meetings held between November 2006 and February 2008. The Assembly, led by its newly elected Chairperson, Mr Chérif Khaznadar from France, carefully reviewed the draft directives proposed by the Committee.

Like the Committee, the Assembly recognized the importance of the participation of diverse actors (such as communities, groups, individuals, experts, centres of expertise and research institutes) in the implementation of the Convention. The Assembly specified that cases of extreme urgency might be brought to the Committee's attention by the State Party or the communities concerned, by other States Parties, or by an advisory organization; but only the relevant State Party could initiate a request for inscription on the Urgent Safeguarding List. The Assembly also emphasized that the Directives are a work-in-progress, and that based upon experience acquired in the near future, the Committee and the Assembly may enhance and complete them in the coming years.

The Assembly asked the Committee to continue its work in preparing additional directives concerning the visibility of the Convention, the use of its emblem and the possible means to increase the resources of the Intangible Heritage Fund, among other issues. It then enthusiastically approved the Operational Directives by acclamation. Before the end of the year, the Directives will be published together with other essential documents, in the six working languages of UNESCO, in a volume of Basic Texts.

The Committee's biennial report to the General Assembly was presented by the Chairperson of the Committee, Mr Faruk Loğoğlu from Turkey. After expressing its thanks for the work accomplished by the Committee, and particularly acknowledging the contributions of the four chairpersons who guided the Committee's sessions in the past two years, the General Assembly unanimously approved the report and requested that the Director-General bring it to the attention of the General Conference of UNESCO.

In addition to the Directives, the Assembly approved the plan for the use of the Fund's resources and the Convention's budget for the period from July 2008 to June 2010. Approximately 2.5 million USD will be available in that time, with more than three-fourths devoted to international safeguarding assistance. The remainder will support the work of the Committee. The Assembly decided that the contribution of States Parties to the Intangible Heritage Fund should be 1 per cent of each State Party's contribution to the regular budget of UNESCO. This percentage applies for an indefinite period of time, unless the Assembly decides otherwise in the future.

The Assembly's final item of business was to determine the distribution of seats on the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage and to renew half of its members. Guided by the principle of equitable geographic representation enshrined in the Convention, the Assembly distributed the seats to reflect the 93 States Parties at the time, and elected twelve new members of the Committee: Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Italy, Jordan, Kenya, Niger, Oman, Paraguay, Republic of Korea, Venezuela and Zimbabwe.

New composition of the Intergovernmental Committee

COMMITTEE MEMBERS	TERMS OF OFFICE
GROUP I	
Cyprus*	2008 - 2012
Italy*	2008 - 2012
Turkey	2006 - 2010
GROUP II	
Belarus	2006 - 2010
Croatia*	2008 - 2012
Estonia	2006 - 2010
Hungary	2006 - 2010
GROUP III	
Cuba*	2008 - 2012
Mexico	2006 - 2010
Paraguay*	2008 - 2012
Peru	2006 - 2010
Venezuela* (Bolivarian Republic of)	2008 - 2012
GROUP IV	
India	2006 - 2010
Republic of Korea*	2008 - 2012
Viet Nam	2006 - 2010
GROUP V (a)	
Central African Republic	2006 - 2010
Gabon	2006 - 2010
Kenya*	2008 - 2012
Mali	2006 - 2010
Niger*	2008 - 2012
Zimbabwe*	2008 - 2012
GROUP V (b)	
Jordan*	2008 - 2012
Oman*	2008 - 2012
United Arab Emirates	2006 - 2010

* New Committee members



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(Upper left) *The Mbende Jerusarema Dance (Zimbabwe)*
 (Above) *The Canto a tenore, Sardinian Pastoral Songs (Italy)*
 (Left) *The Cultural Space of the Bedu in Petra and Wadi Rum (Jordan)*
 (Next page) *The Gangneung Danoje Festival (Rep. of Korea)*
 will soon be incorporated into the Representative List.

A new bureau for the General Assembly

For its 2nd session, the Assembly elected the following members of the bureau:

- Chairperson: Mr Chérif Khaznadar (France)
- Rapporteur: Mr Francisco Javier López Morales (Mexico)
- Vice-Chairpersons: Representatives from Algeria, Bulgaria, India and Senegal

Accreditation of NGOs

An essential element for the effective implementation of the Convention was established by the General Assembly: Operational Directives governing the criteria, modalities and procedure for the accreditation of NGOs that may act in an advisory capacity to the Committee. NGOs that meet these criteria may submit a request for accreditation by the General Assembly to the Secretariat of the Convention.

NGOs wishing their request to be considered by the Committee are invited to submit their application using form ICH-09 (see information box on the right) and to return it to the Intangible Heritage Section with the information requested. More than 75 organizations submitted their requests before the first deadline of 1 September 2008 and these requests will be considered by the Committee at its Istanbul session, in November this year, with due attention paid to the principle of equitable geographical representation.

Pending the accreditation of NGOs in 2010, the General Assembly has exceptionally authorized the Committee to call on the advisory services of any NGO with recognized competence in the various fields of the intangible cultural heritage that is recommended by the Committee for accreditation. This transitional procedure will apply until the General Assembly next session scheduled for June 2010.

Forms for nominations, proposals and requests

	FORM
Nomination for Inscription on the Urgent Safeguarding List	ICH-01
Nomination for Inscription on the Representative List	ICH-02
Proposal of a Programme, Project or Activity to be Selected and Promoted as Best Reflecting the Principles and Objectives of the Convention	ICH-03
Request for International Assistance from the Intangible Heritage Fund	ICH-04
Request for Preparatory Assistance for Elaborating a Nomination for Inscription on the Urgent Safeguarding List	ICH-05
Request for Preparatory Assistance for Elaborating a Proposal of a Programme, Project or Activity to be Selected as Best Reflecting the Principles and Objectives of the Convention	ICH-06
Cession of Rights and Register of documentation	ICH-07
Request by a Non-Governmental Organization to be Accredited to Provide Advisory Services to the Committee	ICH-09

All forms and deadlines are available at
<http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/en/forms/>

For further information about the forms:

- ICH-01, ICH-02, ICH-03, ICH-07: ICH-nominations@unesco.org
- ICH-04, ICH-05, ICH-06: ICH-assistance@unesco.org
- ICH-09: ICH-NGO@unesco.org
- General inquiries: ICH@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 Françoise Rivière

EDITORIAL STAFF Fernando Brugman, Regina Coar,
Richard Lo Giudice, César Moreno-Triana,
Fleur Perrier, Frank Proschan, David Stehl

GRAPHIC DESIGN Jean-Luc Thierry

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Living heritage

(cont'd from page 1)

before meeting on 13 June 2008 to select finalists and prepare its recommendations to the Committee. In order to permit the General Assembly to select the emblem, thus ensuring the broadest possible participation by States Parties, the Committee convened its third extraordinary session on 16 June 2008 to receive the recommendations of the subsidiary body. The Committee then submitted the proposals of seven finalists to the General Assembly, which selected the design by Mr Kovačević on 19 June 2008. The submissions of Petra Sutilla of Slovenia and Michelangelo Camardo of Italy were selected as first and second runner-up, respectively. The winning artist will receive US\$15,000 in prize money.

The General Assembly also decided to allow limited use of the emblem exclusively by the Assembly, Committee and Secretariat, until such time as it will have adopted operational directives authorizing broader use.

Interview with Dragutin Dado Kovačević, designer of the new UNESCO emblem for the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage

You have just won the competition for the design of an emblem for the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Heritage, which brought together nearly 1,300 candidates from some one hundred countries. What was your reaction to this news?

Although candidates taking part in a competition expect results, I was very surprised. Two days earlier, I had received an e-mail informing me that I was selected as one of the seven best candidates. For a moment, I thought that my friends who knew about my application had “placed a mine” before me, as we say in our country, in other words, that they were teasing me. But when I began receiving congratulations from all sides, I understood that it was true. And I must admit it is exciting.

Is this the most important international recognition you have had for your work?

In fact, I have not participated in many international competitions. For a long time, it was difficult to obtain this type of information in our country (it is different today, with increased access for all to the Internet). And I am past the age of running about in all directions. Let’s just say that I would regard as an international success my participation in “New T-shirt design” in 1994 and in “T-shirt Design 2” in 1998, published by Graphis (Switzerland).

You recently also received an award in Turkey.

Yes, I was awarded the third prize at the Mediterranean festival “Caricaturque”, one month ago, in Alanya. It was on the theme of tourism in the Mediterranean.

You are a follower of minimalist aesthetics, as may be seen in the emblem you submitted for the UNESCO competition. How did the idea of this emblem arise?

I read about the competition first in the newspapers and then on the Internet. So I started thinking, with my sketchpad at hand. I knew no more about the intangible heritage than the average person. I did some enquiries without doing extensive research, however, because there is a tendency to place too much emphasis on detail when analysis is too thorough. In general, I do not like to know too much about the topic that I am covering.

From the outset, I knew it had to be abstract. The representational does not tally with the intangible. I therefore started with the basic figures of triangle, square and circle, and came up with the idea of a comic strip bubble that would circle all three figures, encapsulating the story. The drawing started and ended with a hand movement. Thus, without any interruption – once again, using a minimalist method – the triangle becomes a square, the square becomes a circle and the circle takes the form of the bubble.

However, I had to remove the “stem” from the bubble that designates the character who is speaking because this form was becoming repetitive, as it was also present within the sign, in the triangle.

Indeed, your emblem does not recall a comic strip bubble.

Yes, now it recalls the @ sign. This resemblance is unintentional, it is coincidental. But I didn’t seek to play it down, because it highlights the link between traditional – characterized by the hand movement, and modern – symbolized by the at-sign, which ties in with our theme: heritage in the age of modernity.



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