

**Address
by
the Hon. Mr Sun Jiazheng**

Minister of Culture of the People's Republic of China

**Opening Ceremony of the
First Extraordinary Session of the Intergovernmental Committee
for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage**

Honourable Mr Zhang Xinsheng, Chairman of the Executive Board of UNESCO,
Honourable Ms Françoise Rivière, Assistant Director-General for Culture, UNESCO,
Honourable Mr Seiichi Kondo, Chairman of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding
of the Intangible Cultural Heritage and Ambassador of Japan to UNESCO,
Honourable Mr Jiang Jufeng, Governor of Sichuan Province,
Dear delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

It is my great honour and pleasure on behalf of the Ministry of Culture of the People's Republic of China to welcome all our domestic and international delegates to the First Extraordinary Session of the UNESCO Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage today.

It is known to all that in the last few years, UNESCO has made many outstanding efforts in the field of culture. Among these, the adoption of the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage is of paramount importance to encourage and assist State Parties to protect the common heritage of humanity in the context of globalization. As a unified multi-ethnic country, China takes pride in the enormous intangible cultural heritage created by her various ethnic groups during the long course of history. Today we are shouldered with even heavier historical responsibilities to safeguard this heritage as our spiritual homeland to protect our national memory and to ensure the maintenance and continuity of our spiritual vein and national genes of culture. This is also a common challenge confronting many other countries in the world.

We are glad to see that delegates from 24 Intergovernmental Committee States Members will gather under the same roof and discuss the important strategy of intangible cultural heritage protection in the coming few days. China stands ready to host this extraordinary session and to facilitate the work of the Committee, towards the realization of its working goals for the future. I believe that with our concerted efforts, this session will surely achieve gratifying results and lay a solid basis for the Committee to complete the implementing procedures of the Convention by the end of this year as expected. Last but not least, I wish all our delegates enjoy both work and life during your stay in China.

Thank you!