



Safeguarding Cambodia's Intangible Cultural Heritage: National workshop on preparing nomination files to the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage Lists, Phnom Penh, 21 – 25 October 2013

UNESCO continues to assist Cambodia in safeguarding its intangible cultural heritage by organizing a national workshop on the preparation of nomination files to the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage Lists in Phnom Penh from 21 to 25 October 2013.



©UNESCO, Sar Sokny – Khmer silk weaving, 2006



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The Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, adopted by the UNESCO General Assembly in 2003 and ratified by Cambodia in 2006, provides an excellent framework for intangible cultural heritage practitioners, artists, communities and related institutions to safeguard all aspects of Cambodia's living heritage. However, national capacities to safeguard this heritage need to be strengthened.

The forthcoming training workshop, which the UNESCO Phnom Penh Office is organizing in partnership with the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts, will provide training in how to prepare nomination files for the Urgent Safeguarding List and Representative List, as well as proposals for the Register of Best Practices and requests for international assistance. The training strategy will provide the participants with the knowledge of preparing good nomination files by understanding how they will later be examined and evaluated. The expert trainers will lead participants through the technical assessment carried out by the Secretariat of the 2003 Convention of sample nominations, and then engage the participants themselves in analyzing them for completeness.

The workshop is the last of three capacity-building workshops funded under the UNESCO-Japanese Funds-in-Trust Cooperation to safeguard the manifestations of Cambodia's intangible – or living – cultural heritage. The first training workshop on the implementation of the 2003 Convention at the national level, held in Phnom Penh in August 2012, provided an overview of the objectives and key safeguarding concepts of the 2003 Convention as well as the national obligations of State Parties and the mechanisms for international cooperation. This was followed by a training workshop on community-based inventorying (CBI) of intangible cultural heritage, which was held in Siem Reap in February 2013. The second workshop which included a two-day field-based practicum, taught the participants the essential features of inventorying, basic understandings of research planning and design, elaboration of a community-appropriate inventory template, and technical skills in identifying, documentation and inventorying ICH.

Also funded by the donor Government of Japan under this capacity-building programme in Cambodia is the ongoing training on transmission of the Sbek Thom (Shadow Puppet) traditions to the younger generation.

The project in Cambodia falls within the global and regional capacity-building programme for safeguarding the intangible cultural heritage. In the Asia-Pacific region, the training covers thirteen countries apart from Cambodia (Bhutan, Cambodia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Lao PDR, Mongolia, Nepal, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Sri Lanka, Tajikistan, Timor Leste and Uzbekistan) funded by the Governments of Japan, Republic of Korea and Norway through UNESCO.

It is expected that around 30 participants from concerned government agencies, members of the academe, ICH practitioners and community members will take part in the training workshop on preparing nomination files to the ICH lists.

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