**CONVENTION FOR THE SAFEGUARDING OF THE INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE**

**TRAINING OF TRAINERS WORKSHOP FOR CAPACITY BUILDING**

**Welcome Remarks**

**Prof Luc Rukingama**

**Director and Representative, UNESCO Harare**

**24 January 2011**

* Master of Ceremonies;
* The Honourable Lazarus Dokora, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Education, Sport, Arts and Culture**;**
* The Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education, Sport, Arts and Culture**;**
* Principal Director, Ministry of Education, Sport, Arts and Culture;
* Secretary General of the Zimbabwe National Commission for UNESCO, Mr. Josiah Mhlanga**;**
* Mr Frank Proschan, Programme Specialist, Intangible Cultural Heritage Section, UNESCO Headquarters**;**
* The Chairperson, Oral Tradition Association of Zimbabwe and its members,
* Participants;
* Ladies and Gentlemen

On behalf of UNESCO I am very honoured to welcome you to this Training of Trainers Workshop on ***Intangible Cultural Heritage for Anglophone Africa***. This training workshop is a very important step for carrying forward UNESCO’s strategy of strengthening national capacities for the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage, and we have a very distinguished list of participants.

Let me begin by thanking the Government of Zimbabwe, and in particular the Deputy Minister of Education, Hon Dokora, for his presence which is evidence of the strong cooperation existing between UNESCO and the Government of Zimbabwe in the implementation of its programmes in education, science, culture and communication.

In its programme on culture, UNESCO’s work for some decades focussed on the protection and conservation of tangible heritage, in particular monuments, objects and cultural sites. Today, responding to the needs of its Member States, intangible heritage has become an exciting and important component of cultural heritage with communities and cultural groups taking centre stage in the protection of cultural heritage.

As UNESCO, we strongly believe that intangible cultural heritage is the mainspring of cultural diversity. The importance of intangible cultural heritage lies in its intrinsic values which, when shared among and between communities, encourages mutual respect and in so doing promotes social cohesion, intercultural dialogue and sustainable development.

UNESCO is also aware that intangible cultural heritage is sometimes fragile and endangered by factors such as globalization, urbanization, migration, cultural homogenization, as well as a lack of understanding and appreciation by those who have responsibility for safeguarding it. This is why, over the last 15 years, UNESCO has focussed its efforts on creating awareness on the importance of intangible cultural heritage and building capacity for its safeguarding.

UNESCO’s global strategy for safeguarding intangible cultural heritage began with the experimental programme for the Proclamation of the Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity. Many of you present at this workshop actively participated in one way or the other in the Masterpieces Programme which resulted in one or more of the cultural expressions of your respective countries being recognised as Masterpieces.

In 2003, the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage was adopted by the General Conference. The experience gained in the Masterpieces programme was profoundly important in helping to shape the legally binding instrument that is the 2003 Convention. The Convention came into effect in 2006, and now numbers 133 States Parties, including the majority of the African countries.

UNESCO has put in place a framework to facilitate and promote participation of its member states in the various programmes of the Convention. Although a lot of progress has been made, participation by some regions, particularly the Africa region, is lower than desired.

For example, a number of the countries in Anglophone Africa have one or two elements on the Representative List that were formerly proclaimed Masterpieces. Although the ultimate objective should not be just to have elements on the List, listing is an important indicator of the extent to which intangible heritage is being promoted and safeguarded. For example, I already knew about Mbende Jerusalema Dance before I came to Zimbabwe because of it increased visibility as a result of its inscription on the Representative List.

On its part, UNESCO is intensifying its efforts to support its Member States to create an appropriate environment for this to happen. In this regard, strengthening the national capacities of States Parties for safeguarding intangible cultural heritage is its priority for 2010-2011 and beyond. My colleague, Mr Proschan will provide you with a more comprehensive summary of what UNESCO has planned to do as well as the importance and objectives of this particular training of trainers’ workshop.

The success of this workshop and its subsequent follow-up will greatly enhance the effectiveness of your respective countries in participating in the various programmes of this Convention. I would therefore like to request that you apply yourself diligently, for the duration of the workshop, so that you can use the skills and knowledge you will gain to mobilize your respective communities, civil society and governments in support of the various actions for the safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage of Africa.

I wish you a productive training workshop.

Thank you.