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

**TRAINING OF TRAINERS WORKSHOP FOR CAPACITY BUILDING**

**Opening Speech**

**Honourable Lazarus D.K. Dokora (MP)**

**Deputy Minister of Education, Sport, Arts and Culture**

* Principal Director, Ministry of Education, Sport, Arts and Culture**;**
* Director and Representative of UNESCO Harare Cluster Office, Professor Luc Rukingama**;**
* Mr Frank Proschan, Programme Specialist, Intangible Cultural Heritage Section, UNESCO Headquarters**;**
* Secretary General of the Zimbabwe National Commission for UNESCO, Mr. Josiah Mhlanga**;**
* The Chairperson, Oral Tradition Association of Zimbabwe and its members,
* Distinguished Workshop trainers and trainees
* Ladies and Gentlemen

It is with great honour and privilege that I officiate at this important training of trainers’ workshop on intangible cultural heritage for Anglophone Africa. May I from the onset express my heartfelt gratitude and appreciation to UNESCO for choosing Zimbabwe to host this workshop. I would like to take the opportunity to welcome all international participants to our beautiful country, Zimbabwe.

Zimbabwe has a rich cultural heritage. However, the heritage that is better known outside of our boundaries is mostly tangible heritage, for example Great Zimbabwe and the mighty Victoria Falls.

But Zimbabwe is much more than Great Zimbabwe - it is our oral traditions, performing arts, rituals, social practices, festive events, traditional craftsmanship; the living heritage of our people in their respective communities.

Furthermore, as indicated by the Director and Representative of UNESCO, Mbende Jerusarema Dance is now known throughout the country and in the world beyond. This is good. But Mbende Jerusarema is not the only intangible heritage of Zimbabwe, we have wonderful instruments for example Marimba and Mbira, beautiful dances such as muchongoyo and Giti, and rainmaking ceremonies such as Mukwerera and Hore, rituals such as Kutandabotso and Bira……..the list is inexhaustive.

It is for this reason that the 2003 Convention of Intangible Cultural Heritage is very important to Zimbabwe and to Africa as a whole. We therefore welcome and appreciate UNESCO’s efforts in strengthening the capacities of the States Parties so that they are better able to implement the Convention and accomplish its objectives.

Dear Participants,

The main goal of this workshop is to empower you so that you can be agents and facilitators in the implementation of this Convention throughout the continent.

At this workshop, UNESCO will be introducing training materials that it has developed on different aspects of the Convention. A lot of financial and human resources went into the preparation of these materials, and now they are being entrusted to your care and stewardship.

Over the course of the next five days, you will be privileged to receive training on the four most important areas necessary for the effective implementation of the Convention namely: ratification of the Convention; implementation of the Convention at national level; community-based intangible heritage inventorying; and preparation of nomination files. Knowledge is power and such specialised knowledge in a new and interesting Convention is more powerful.

The expectation by UNESCO and your respective governments, communities and Africa as a whole is that after this workshop you will be able to serve as trainers throughout the region in UNESCO’s global strategy for strengthening national capacities for the safeguarding and promotion of intangible cultural heritage. Over the coming years, that global strategy will permit countries and communities to benefit more fully and effectively from the mechanisms of international cooperation and assistance established by the Convention.

It will be important for you to seize this opportunity, especially when there is evident imbalance in terms of the representativeness of African elements on the Convention’s two lists as compared to other regions. I understand that at the 5th session of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage hosted in Nairobi, Kenya last year, not a single nomination was considered from Africa.

Furthermore, the uptake and participation of African countries in the international cooperation and assistance is very low. This is disheartening.

With such a rich intangible cultural heritage;

With goodwill from our governments who have ratified the Convention;

With vibrant communities that are continuously creating and recreating their living heritage;

With the existing expertise that Africa has, as shown by the profiles of participants present at this workshop;

With the commitment shown by UNESCO through its many awareness raising and capacity building workshops;

With all of the above, we have not been able to develop inventories, we have not been able to prepare nominations, we have not even been able to develop and submit project proposals to access available international assistance for the safeguarding of our heritage.

I would like to therefore stress the importance of this training workshop and would like to call upon each one of you to take it seriously and commit yourself to helping change the status of the implementation of the 2003 Convention in Africa for the benefit of Africa and the practicing communities.

Once again, let me take this opportunity to thank UNESCO, and in particular the Director Prof Rukingama, who although has just arrived is already committed to ensuring that Zimbabwe plays a critical role in international cooperation by our participation and through hosting the workshop.

With these few remarks, it is my honour and privilege to declare the Training of Trainers Workshop for capacity building on the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage officially opened.

I thank you.