

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

Report of the Expert Meeting on
**IDENTIFICATION OF INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE
OF SUDAN**

Khartoum

Sharjah Hall

21 - 22 March 2006

INTRODUCTION

Africa's largest country, Sudan, hosts a rich and diverse cultural heritage. This richness, together with the multifaceted and diverse identity of the Sudanese population should be seen as a strength and driving force for the reconstruction of the country. Cultural heritage, in both its tangible and intangible forms, constitutes the foundation of this identity, an essential factor for reconciliation and a means to achieve sustainable peace. In the long term, the preservation and enhancement of cultural heritage will provide a solid basis for social stability, respect for human rights and sustainable development.

In accordance with Resolution 66 (Strengthening of cooperation with Sudan), adopted by the UNESCO General Conference at its 33rd session in October 2005, UNESCO is reinforcing its presence in the country with the establishment of a UNESCO Antenna, with staff in both Khartoum and Juba.

Within the framework of the Joint Assessment Mission (JAM), conducted by the United Nations and the World Bank, UNESCO helped to identify needs related to the revamping of the education system (literacy and basic education), the safeguarding of cultural and natural heritage, and the promotion of independent and pluralistic media. Based on this assessment, the UN Workplan for 2006 includes a UNESCO programme in the field of culture aimed at strengthening respect for cultural diversity. The objective of the programme is to increase the scientific knowledge base of Sudanese cultural diversity and to enhance participatory intercultural dialogue within Sudanese civil society, so as to address the issues of stereotypes, prejudice and discrimination. It is of utmost importance that the formal recognition of cultures and their integration into the national context be initiated as soon as possible. The promotion and protection of intangible cultural heritage can provide a solid platform for strengthening mutual understanding and respect among different communities thereby allowing the transmission of living traditions through formal and non-formal education. Consequently, this is one of the key areas of intervention in UNESCO's programme for Sudan.

The 2003 Convention

In October 2003, the General Conference of UNESCO adopted the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. This Convention is meant to safeguard the living heritage of humanity, thus contributing to human creativity and cultural diversity and to the well-being of the groups and communities who are the bearers of the practices and expressions that constitute this heritage. The 2003 Convention has the potential to develop into a counterpart of UNESCO's 1972 Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, better known as the World Heritage Convention, which deals primarily with elements of the world's man-made tangible ("cultural") and/or natural heritage of outstanding universal value.

The 2003 Convention will enter into force on 20 April 2006, three months after its ratification by the thirtieth States Party.

Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) according to the Convention

Article 2 of the 2003 Convention provides the following definition of intangible cultural heritage (ICH):

"the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills – as well as the instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces associated therewith – that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage. This intangible cultural heritage, transmitted from generation to generation, is constantly recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment, their interaction with nature and their history, and provides them with a sense of identity and continuity, thus promoting respect for cultural diversity and human creativity."

An explicitly non-exhaustive list of domains in which the ICH manifests itself was added to this definition:

- (a) *oral traditions and expressions, including language as a vehicle of the intangible cultural heritage;*
- (b) *performing arts;*
- (c) *social practices, rituals and festive events;*
- (d) *knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe;*
- (e) *traditional craftsmanship.*

It goes without saying that many elements of the ICH can be attributed to more than one of these domains.

The role of communities

Communities and groups of practitioners and tradition bearers are not only the principal beneficiaries of ICH safeguarding activities; they must also be main counterparts of States wishing to implement the 2003 Convention. Articles 11, 12 and 15 are especially relevant in this respect.

Article 11 of the Convention highlights, among the safeguarding measures, that States Parties must undertake the identification and definition of the various elements of the ICH present on their territory, "with the participation of communities, groups and relevant NGOs".

Article 12 stipulates that "To ensure identification with a view to safeguarding, each State Party shall draw up, in a manner geared to its own situation, one or more inventories of the intangible cultural heritage present in its territory." A reading of both articles 11 and 12 makes it clear that the Convention requires inventories to be drafted with the participation of the tradition bearers themselves.

Article 15 further stipulates that "each State Party shall endeavour to ensure the widest possible participation of communities, groups and, where appropriate, individuals that create, maintain and transmit such heritage, and to involve them actively in its management." Thus, the Convention explicitly expects States Parties to ensure the involvement of the groups and communities who are the holders and transmitters of the elements to be safeguarded. The important role of communities and groups of tradition bearers and practitioners concerning the identification of their ICH was also highlighted in the definition of ICH mentioned above.

Inventories

The Convention attaches great importance to the preparation of inventories; Article 12, stating that States Parties *shall* draw up one or more inventories, uses stronger language than the other articles dealing with the role of States Parties to the Convention. The Convention presents the preparation of one or more inventories as a safeguarding measure in itself and at the same time as a prerequisite for further safeguarding measures – see Article 2.3, which includes *identification* in the set of safeguarding measures, and Article 12, which stipulates that inventories have to be drawn up "*To ensure identification with a view to safeguarding*". The obligation to involve communities, groups and relevant NGOs has already been mentioned above.

THE MEETING

The present report summarizes the expert meeting on the identification of intangible cultural heritage of Sudan organized in Khartoum by UNESCO, in cooperation with the Sudanese National Commission for UNESCO, on 21 and 22 March 2006. The meeting was organized within the framework of the UNESCO programme for culture included in the UN workplan for 2006.

The aim of the meeting was to bring together relevant NGOs, representatives of local communities, practitioners and experts from Sudan, as well as international experts in the field of intangible cultural heritage (ICH), and to offer a place for information sharing as a first step to defining and inventorying the intangible cultural heritage of Sudan (Annex 1 - Agenda). The debates and the conclusions of the meeting contributed to the elaboration of a set of recommendations, which shall provide a framework for future activities on the safeguarding of ICH of Sudan.

The meeting was attended by 23 experts from Sudan, 4 international experts and numerous observers (Annex 2 – List of participants, Annex 3 – Brief Curriculum Vitae of experts). In accordance with protocol, the meeting was opened by H.E. Mr Ismil Ahmed Ismil, Secretary-General of the Sudanese National Commission for UNESCO, Professor Sayyid Hamid Hurreiz, Chairperson of the Steering Committee of the Workshop, Ms Oda Lehmann, UNESCO, Intangible Heritage Section, Ms Chiara Dezzi Bardeschi, UNESCO Antenna Liaison officer in Juba, H.E. Mr Mohammed Yusuf Abdulla, Minister of Culture and Sports, and H.E. Mr Ibrahim Hamid, Minister of General Education of the Government of Sudan (GOS).

The opening session was followed by four working sessions made up of presentations and discussions. The recommendations elaborated on the basis of the main themes of discussion during the working sessions reflect the content of the debates. These recommendations were presented during the closing ceremony and accepted by acclamation. Furthermore, given the great interest in this meeting demonstrated by the presence of a large number of ICH practitioners (traditional singers, contemporary dancers, etc.), individuals representing different regions (Nubia, Darfur, East Sudan, South Sudan and Nuba Mountains) and local communities (Bija, Nuba, Dinka, Shilluk tribes), it was decided to allow the general public to attend not only the official opening session, but also the working sessions.

A copy of all presentations is found in the annexes to this document.

OPENING OF THE MEETING

The meeting opened with a reading from the Holy Quran. The master of ceremony, Ms Hafiza Abd Elgadir, then gave the floor to the scheduled speakers:

Dr Ismil Ahmed Ismil, Secretary-General of the Sudanese National Commission for UNESCO, welcomed the participants and gave a short introduction of UNESCO's efforts in the field of the preservation of the intangible cultural heritage, with particular emphasis on the 2003 Convention. He mentioned the various experts meetings organized by UNESCO prior to the establishment of the Convention and its importance for all countries and in particular for Sudan. Then he referred to the existence, within the Convention, of two lists, the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity as well as the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding, and highlighted that the preservation of the intangible cultural heritage could also be an economic asset for sustainable development. Finally, he concluded by indicating that the Convention has already been ratified by several Arab and African countries and that this expert meeting should provide an opportunity for them to urge the Sudanese Government to ratify the Convention.

Professor Sayyid Hamid Hurreiz, Chairperson of the Steering Committee of the Workshop, welcomed all participants warmly on behalf of the Steering Committee of the workshop and highlighted the importance to come out with recommendations which could help Sudan to reinforce its efforts in protecting the intangible cultural heritage.

Ms Oda Lehmann, UNESCO, welcomed the participants on behalf of the Director-General. She spoke about the role and the potential of the intangible cultural heritage to increase respect for cultural diversity, crucial for peace and stability, as well as for sustainable development while considering its very fragile nature. She provided information on the 2003 Convention and highlighted the importance of inventory-making for the safeguarding of ICH and the importance of taking intangible cultural heritage into account when elaborating development policies. She stressed the importance of providing viable conditions for the existence and the transmission of the intangible cultural heritage and recalled the provisions of the Convention that highlight and support the invaluable role of the intangible cultural heritage as a factor in bringing human beings closer together, ensuring exchange and understanding among them and promoting intercultural dialogue.

Ms Chiara Dezzi Bardeschi, UNESCO, welcomed the participants on behalf of the Assistant Director-General for Culture and the head of the UNESCO Antenna in Khartoum, and introduced the present meeting by recalling the background and the framework of UNESCO intervention in Sudan: the decision taken by the General Conference in October 2005 to reinforce assistance to Sudan, the opening of the UNESCO Antenna in Sudan, the Joint Needs Assessment (JAM) and the UNESCO programme for culture included in the UN Workplan for 2006 under the Governance and Rule of Law cluster. The speaker referred to the rich and diverse cultural heritage of Sudan, highlighting its role as a cornerstone of the country's identity, thus an essential factor for reconciliation, the promotion of mutual understanding, dialogue and respect among communities and a strong component of peace building, social stability and respect for human rights. She presented the objectives of the meeting as an important step to devise methodologies and draw-up inventories on ICH, to promote synergies in joint projects, on the basis of a proactive cooperation between international, national, regional and local partners to ensure the safeguarding and preservation of the cultural heritage of Sudan. She then concluded by recalling Articles 2.3, 11 and 12 of the 2003 Convention.

Mr Muhammad Yusif Abdulla, Federal Minister of Culture and Sports, underlined the role of culture for society, with a particular accent on the role of cultural heritage. He explained that the State is concerned with culture at the local level in the context of the general policies of the State and should manage the cultural diversity under the umbrella of peace. He also highlighted the importance of culture for the development of the national economy, through revenues generated by tourism and the tangible and intangible cultural heritage. Moreover he explained that the State has to make local

cultures known worldwide. He thanked UNESCO for its efforts in this field, inviting the experts to propose recommendations that would promote the State's efforts to manage the cultural processes in Sudan and the ratification of the 2003 Convention.

Mr Ibrahim Hamid, Minister of General Education, Chairperson of the UNESCO National Commission, stressed the role of the tangible and intangible cultural heritage, which plays a key role in promoting humanitarian values. He added that Sudan supports UNESCO's efforts in the field of culture. He called on UNESCO to continue its efforts in Sudan, which should use heritage as an economic resource to eradicate poverty, improve manpower development, and promote national unity.

Session One: THE 2003 CONVENTION FOR THE SAFEGUARDING OF THE INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE AND THE IMPORTANCE OF INVENTORY-MAKING

Chairperson: **Professor Ali Osman**

Presentation of the 2003 UNESCO Convention and Importance of Inventory-making

Ms Oda Lehmann
UNESCO, Division of Cultural Heritage

Ms Oda Lehmann, representing UNESCO's Intangible Heritage Section, presented a chronology of ICH activities by UNESCO beginning in 1970. She mentioned the 1972 Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, the 1973 request by Bolivia to UNESCO to address non-material heritage, the 1989 Recommendation on the Safeguarding of Traditional Culture and Folklore and the regional meetings organized in the 1990s to study the impact of the 1989 Recommendation and to advise UNESCO on further activities, culminating in a final meeting at the Smithsonian Institution (Washington DC) in 1999. She explained that this process was concluded with the adoption by the 32nd General Conference of UNESCO of the *2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage*, which, at the date of the meeting, had already been ratified by 33 Member States.

Ms Lehmann also gave an overview of UNESCO activities in the field of ICH and highlighted the importance of inventory-making for the safeguarding of ICH. She explained that an important goal of inventorying ICH is to maintain the country's cultural diversity to contribute through the implementation of safeguarding mechanisms to social inclusion and the improvement of living conditions of tradition bearers in a context of "homogenization". As a set of operational directives will have to be prepared in the near future for the implementation of the Convention, it is necessary to begin collecting and analyzing best practices.

She also stressed that the main objective of the meeting was to exchange experiences and ideas with a view to drafting the final recommendations.

Discussion

During the ensuing discussion, several issues were raised, including the importance of the ratification of the Convention and national legislation; the relation between tangible and intangible heritage; the need to establish a national strategy for heritage preservation, taking into account ICH; and protection of ICH and refugees.

Mr Mushaha Kasset, a participant, thanked UNESCO for this Convention which is "a gift of God" and expressed the wish for its ratification by Sudan, underlining that ICH is a cornerstone of Sudanese identity. He furthermore insisted on the importance of the law for cultural heritage protection and the need to review it. He reminded that before the conflict, Sudan had two major charters on intangible as well as tangible cultural heritage and this could provide the Government with the necessary tools to review the relevant laws and facilitate the ratification of the 2003 Convention.

Another participant, Mr Abdallah Bey, former Minister of Foreign Affairs underlined the intrinsic relation between intangible and tangible heritage, but regretted that relevant legislation is not forthcoming. He also asked UNESCO why so few countries ratified the Convention. Answering this specific question, Ms Lehmann explained that the ratification of the 2003 Convention has been exceptionally rapid and the entry into force of this standard-setting instrument on 20 April 2006, will have taken place only two-and-a half years after its adoption by the General Conference at its 32nd

session. This shows the great interest in the intangible heritage throughout the world and the urgent need felt for its international protection, given the various threats to it.

Professor Idris Salem pointed out that culture is first of all immaterial because it is “created” following a mental process. Ideas, knowledge and know-how lead to artefacts and “mentifacts”: both of which are the product of human beings.

Several participants highlighted the need for establishing a national strategy for heritage preservation, in particular ICH. Mr Busrah from Darfur asked how to protect the culture of Darfur communities and the IDPs and suggested the creation of a research centre.

Pointing out the need for a national strategy, Ms Rafaa Ashamalla Ghobrial underlined the financial aspect of implementing measures to safeguard ICH in Sudan, given its variety in the country, starting from ICH at risk of disappearance. She then asked how ICH could be safeguarded, if decision-makers and the communities do not acknowledge the importance of ICH. Mr Carlo Arigo underlined the need for UNESCO's assistance in providing guidelines to implement the principles of the 2003 Convention, at the national level in the context of government strategy.

Several participants highlighted the need to document ICH countrywide, with particular reference to states directly affected by the conflict, and whose ICH is endangered and for which no documentation has been collected, such as South Sudan, Darfur, etc.

Professor Thaban, who teaches literature at the University of Juba, invited UNESCO not to focus exclusively on Khartoum and the northern regions of Sudan at the expense of the other parts of the country. He especially highlighted regions like South Sudan and other states with abundant and important ICH.

Mr Abdallah Bey, former Minister of Foreign Affairs, again took the floor to ask how an inventory of Sudan's estimated 450 linguistic groups could be carried out. Much of Africa's ICH is endangered, and an appropriate strategy must therefore be elaborated.

Ms Mefid Al-Melek, women's movement, noted that Sudanese heritage will lose its authenticity and that modern technology and the influences of other countries constitute genuine threats to Sudan's ICH.

Mr Nicolas Dextreit, Director of the French Cultural Centre spoke of the centre of photography in Kalaph and the centre for films in Ondurman he visited some time ago. Both centres have more than 10,000 filmographic documents, but both centres need to be modernized and their staff trained. The French Government has been requested to assist, and Mr Dextreit would be very pleased to initiate a joint project with UNESCO. Ms Dezzi Bardeschi thanked him and welcomed this proposal, highlighting the need to coordinate efforts and to develop joint activities to assess the conditions of existing documentation, as well as to preserve such materials.

Several participants stressed the need to transfer data collected between 1960 and 1980, on appropriate modern support taking advantage of advancement of technology. This would ensure the preservation of this valuable information while making it available to the public.

Ms Dezzi Bardeschi suggested gathering available information in the preliminary collection phase, before going into the field. This means that the already collected material could be identified and possibly transferred in an appropriate and easy-to-consult format. Much information is to be found in other countries, and it is important to promote cooperation at international level, in order to collect copies of such material for Sudanese institutions. For this purpose, a coordinating “centralized” body/board is essential for dealing with these issues.

The chairperson concluded the session by insisting, in light of the discussions on the importance of Sudan's ICH and its risk of disappearance, and the need to urge the Government, through establishing the appropriate recommendations, to ratify the 2003 Convention as soon as possible.

Session Two: PRESENTATION OF ONGOING AND FORTHCOMING ACTIVITIES IN SUDAN FOR INVENTORY-MAKING

Chairperson: Ms Chiara Dezzi Bardeschi

Al Sagia: a Masterpiece of Technological and Socio-economic Development

Professor Sayyid H. Hurreiz

Institute of African and Asian Studies, University of Khartoum

followed by

Al Sagia (waterwheel in the eyes of a Nubian)

Professor Ali Osman

University of Khartoum

Both presentations stressed certain aspects of *al sagia* in Sudan by highlighting its history, position and role as a major component of intangible cultural heritage in Sudan. They focused on *al sagia* as an integrated technical, socio-economic and cultural system based on oral and intangible heritage that enhances human values. The geographical situation of *al sagia* is mainly the riverine parts of the northern and central Sudan, especially within Nubian and the Arabized Nubian communities. The Arabic word “sagia” “waterwheel”, or, in literary translation, “that which supplies water” or “irrigation”, does not only refer to the machine but means also the farm or plantation irrigated with such a machine.

As a technical system *al sagia* functions on the basic principles of mechanical engineering. Made of wood and ropes, driven by oxen, it was manufactured, operated, repaired and maintained by local expertise based on indigenous technical knowledge. Manufacturing, operating, financing, managing, servicing and repairing a *sagia* was a communal affair and each user had a specific role to play. The nature of its communal labour required the creation of social groups. In this way, the *sagia* acted as the basis of a closely inter-woven socio-economic group. This was often coupled with common identity and cultural heritage. Therefore, the introduction of the *sagia* brought a system of social stratification within a community and a hierarchical system.

It was also stressed that the introduction of the *sagia* led to a well-established and strict system of time management closely related to the organization of communal labour. According to this system, the day is divided into two work shifts. Furthermore, the year is composed of Coptic months, which have been used in this region for centuries and which constitute a fundamental component of traditional Sudanese culture. All members of the concerned community, mainly a farming community, are directly or indirectly affected by this time management, which also establishes a clear hierarchy among members of this community.

The *sagia* was also a source of inspiration for traditional performing arts and literary folk genres (folk songs, proverbs, folk dances, traditional popular narratives) and enhanced popular beliefs, religious and human values. But more specifically, *al sagia* created an atmosphere conducive to enhancing human values.

The presentations were concluded with a proposal to draft an action plan for promoting and preservation *al sagia* as a major component of intangible cultural heritage in Sudan.

Fashoda as Cultural Space

Ms Asia Mahgoub el Hindi

Sudanese Folklife Research and Documentation Centre

Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports

Ms Mahgoub el Hindi began her presentation by highlighting that Fashoda – the traditional capital of the Shilluk Kingdom¹ - is considered the holy land of the Shilluk, one of the Nilotic tribes of Southern Sudan. She then explained that the Shilluk and their kingdom were one of the major groups making up the population of the Upper Nile State, namely the Nuweer, the Dinka, the Shilluk, the Anwak, the Morilly and Bron. Their society is based on small communities, which are linked politically, with one common chief ruling over small regions. After giving a detailed description of history and the traditions of Shilluk and the establishment of Fashoda, Ms Mahgoub el-Hindi underlined the importance of Fashoda as a focal point in the indigenous political system of the Shilluk and therefore as a cultural space. Given the intensive traditional cultural activities performed in this domain, closely related to the belief system i.e. the belief in the ancestors and their powers as mediators between God and humankind, Fashoda, as a sacred place, incorporates many features standing as symbols of the divine kingdom of the Shilluk tribe. It is also recognized as the place where the traditional documents and traditional artefacts of the Shilluk kingdom are preserved. In addition to the cult surround the king, their belief system emphasizes one supreme god above other deities. On the more immediate level, the cult is centred on ancestral spirits, which are both revered and feared; hence they need to be honoured through frequent ceremonies.

Today, Fashoda is considered the Shilluk parliament where the advisory councils (Loko) of Shilluk are usually held.

The Coronation of the Reth of the Shilluk

Mr Joshua Ojwok Yor

Sudanese Folklife Research and Documentation Centre

Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports

In his presentation, Mr Ojwok Yor described a more detailed aspect of the Shilluk tradition, namely the rituals and ceremonies that take place during the enthronisation process of the Reth (King) of the Shilluk. He described in particular the coronation of Kwongo Dak Podiet and the efforts of the Institute of African and Asian Studies (IAAS) and the Sudanese Folklife Research and Documentation Center to document and to preserve, in particular through a documentary film, the rituals and ceremonies performed.

The Maseed and the Sheikh – An Intangible Cultural Heritage

Professor Idris Salem

Department of Anthropology

University of Khartoum

The case discussed by Professor Salem in his paper furnishes an example of the significance of the “maseed” an indigenous religious institution representing many facets of social life in Muslim Northern Sudan. He addressed its history going back to Sufi Islam and explained its importance to achieve a level of peaceful co-existence with other people, nature, and above all, God.

¹ The shilluk are a major Nilotic ethnic group of southern Sudan, living on the west bank of the Nile. They are the third largest minority ethnic group of South Sudan, after the Dinka and the Nuer.

Al Masid: Al-Zariba as a Case Study

Mr Farah Eisa Mohamed

Institute of African and Asian Studies

University of Khartoum

As a follow-up to the presentation of Professor Salem, Mr Mohamed explained the importance of Al-Zariba as a cultural space, the different roles and functions played by Al-Zariba as a religious institution that attracts the attention of many people from both inside and outside the area in which Al-Zariba Masid is located. He introduced some definitions for certain words closely related to the subject and presented the geographical context -- the Northern Kordofan State, North-East of Al-Obeid the capital of the State -- and the historical context. He focused in particular on the educational aspect, such as the contribution of Al-Zariba Masid to eradicate illiteracy, and the social and cultural functions of Al-Zariba. He concluded by showing a short videotape edited from data collected by the IAAS team since 1993.

Preserving and Accessing Knowledge in the Digital Age: The Sudan Open Archive

Dr Daniel Large

Director of RVI Sudan digital library project

(presented on his behalf by Ms Oda Lehmann)

In his presentation, Dr Large introduced a new project: the Sudan Open Archive. This new digital archive aims to preserve and provide public access to a comprehensive range of historical and contemporary knowledge about Sudan, including that relating to intangible heritage. He highlighted the potential for appropriate digital technology to assist with the preservation of intangible heritage in Sudan and also to stimulate thinking on how digital methodologies might be used to preserve, organize and access aspects of Sudan's intangible heritage.

The current version of the archive is the foundation of a broader project. It currently contains documents mostly about the history of aid and development in Sudan. However, its collections are expected to expand. In particular, the archive will include a wide variety of multi-media sources, such as languages and oral history, songs, music, film footage and photographs. The aim is to produce a rich archive that not only preserves this heritage but also enables a wide range of people to benefit from diverse sources. Dr Large underlined the potential for appropriate digital technology to assist with the preservation of intangible heritage in Sudan. He also drew attention to the use of digital methodologies for preserving, organizing and accessing aspects of Sudan's intangible heritage as a related aspect of inventory-making.

Discussion

The chairperson thanked all experts for their interesting contributions in various fields related to the theme of the second session. While indicating that each country will choose its own measures to protect its ICH and to establish a specific operational framework, she invited the participants to begin by establishing a list, or a database, on institutions and NGOs already working on ICH and inventory-making, since substantial data seems to have already been collected and preserved in cultural institutions and media archives. She also suggested considering relevant research institutions and NGOs outside Sudan, in particular on ICH in danger or no longer in existence due to conflict.

A participant asked what had already been done in Sudan and suggested establishing a kind of networking of institutions in order to foster cooperation and the exchange of files, information and experiences. He pointed out the special attention to be paid to the regions emerging from war, such as

Southern Sudan. He emphasized the need to preserve all knowledge and practices and asked if UNESCO could regard Sudan as a special case in this regard.

Another participant indicated that this would be a long-term project, because different actors are already working on inventories of ICH, such as the University of Khartoum, the Ministry of Culture, private institutions, local institutions, civil society, etc. The chairperson expressed the need to record existing data in Sudan and then, as a second step, to complement it with new data.

Professor Osman proposed organizing a series of workshops and meetings on specific topics to gain a better understanding of what has already been done for ICH, while at the same time establishing networks between the various actors.

The question of “religion” in the context of the 2003 Convention was also raised. For example, it was noted that religious music is an important issue in Sudan, transmitting knowledge to the following generations, yet there exists no structure in Sudan for the study of traditions within religions.

The question of communities and their involvement in inventory-making was also raised during this session. The chairperson asked which definition of the community was proposed by the Sudanese experts with reference to inventory-making (language, ethnic, geographical location?). She then pointed out that, according to the 2003 Convention, the process of inventory-making should start with and by the communities.

Responding to a question concerning the ICH of minorities and their representation in inventories, the chairperson replied that, according to the 2003 Convention, there should be no hierarchy among communities.

The debate moved on to examine possible ways of involving communities. Multiple-choice questionnaires could be distributed countrywide, and particularly to institutions and schools in various provinces, to be compiled by the communities.

The debate turned to the issues of coordination among the actors involved in inventory-making and the support of states governments, municipalities, local institutions, civil society, etc.

Session Three: LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY OF SUDAN: PRESENT SITUATION, NEEDS AND FUTURE ACTIVITIES

Chairperson: Dr Mom Kou Nhial Arou

Endangered Languages and their Cultural Heritage

Professor Al Amin Abu Manga, Director
Institute of African and Asian Studies
University of Khartoum

Mr Abu Manga began his address by highlighting the linguistic richness and diversity of Sudan as well as the instable situation of languages. More than 100 languages are spoken in Sudan, but they are unequally distributed within the country. Today, Arabic is the country's major spoken language, but a large number of languages (approximately 150) are also present on the territory. They belong to three out of the four language families of Africa (according to Greenberg's classification). Today, the following can be noted concerning Sudan's linguistic diversity and the threats of disappearance for a wide variety of languages:

- high rate of language shift to Arabic among the non-Arab ethnic groups,
- increase of Khartoum “dialect” of Arabic due to displacement and migration from war zones to Central Sudan,
- nine neighbouring countries with shared ethnic and linguistic characteristics in the border areas.

Ethno-linguistic Groups in Sudan (with special reference to the Blue Nile Region)

Mr Kamal Jah Allah
International University of Africa
Mr Abd Al Rahim Mugaddam
University of Khartoum

Mr Mugaddam's presentation focused on the language situation in the Blue Nile Region, which has witnessed massive migration movements throughout history. In addition to the local African population, various Arab and African groups came to this area, which today comprises four provinces hosting some 40 different ethnic groups belonging to four major categories. Today, the Arabic language plays a crucial role in the socio-political and socio-economic life, but a considerable number of other languages continue to be spoken in the region. They can be divided into three groups. After giving a brief summary of the language history of Sudan with particular reference to the Blue Nile region, Mr Mugaddam spoke about various measures taken to protect linguistic diversity in Sudan. He indicated that a “Language survey of Sudan” was initiated by the Institute of African and Asian Studies of the University of Khartoum and that several Sudanese NGOs developed orthographies for sixty different languages.

Linguistic Diversity of Sudan: Present Situation and Future Activities

Ms Elizabeth Newport
SIL Sudan

SIL international is an organization that studies, documents and assists in developing the world's lesser-known languages. Studying these languages results in practical help for local people and contributes to the broader knowledge of linguistics, anthropology, and ethnomusicology. SIL publishes its researches and widely distributes it to libraries, universities, governments, and international agencies. SIL facilitates language surveys and language development in order to prevent the extinction of language and culture.

SIL researches and develops computer software to assist language research. In addition, the non-Roman script initiative provides guidance, information, research, and development to facilitate the use of non-Roman scripts in linguistic study, translation, literacy, and publishing.

SIL focuses on community-based programs for lesser-known language communities. It assists in training local people to take on increasing responsibility for sustainable literacy programmes in their own communities and languages. They work with local speakers to adapt or to translate literature for publication on specific topics such as nutrition and health. SIL places a priority on training local people and integrates language and literacy skills into community development.

SIL international has worked in Sudan since 1976 and began establishing mother tongue education in schools. By 1986, 1000 teachers had been trained and 27000 books and booklets in regional languages published. In 1988, SIL had to move from Juba to Khartoum, but continued its activities. It established a comprehensive workshop programme for all Sudanese and focuses increasingly on women. In 2004, SIL signed a new agreement with the Southern Sudanese Ministry of Technology for establishing mother tongue education in primary schools. SIL also carries out workshops in Khartoum and in Juba on writing in mother tongue in order to train people to become trainers themselves.

Discussion

Mr Uya Alfred expressed his deep appreciation on the work of SIL-Sudan for preserving languages. He indicated that most of the Sudanese know their mother tongue but are unable to write it. He fully agrees that languages must be preserved and taught in primary schools. Therefore, specific structures for teaching should be established in schools and universities.

Professor Khalifa was in agreement with Mr Uya Alfred that writing and reading his own language, as well as teaching it through its spoken form, is of utmost importance for the survival of such languages. Furthermore, those languages also provide support for traditions that may be lost once the language that serves as support has disappeared.

Professor Hurreiz added that the language situation in Sudan is indeed a very complex one. There are about 136 languages in Sudan, almost all of which are considered “national languages”. This could be viewed as a reaction to recent events in the country as well as a counterbalance to Arabic, Sudan's only official language. He suggested that scholars show politicians the way by preserving and maintaining local languages.

Professor Idris Salem highlighted the need to emphasize social languages, which involves focusing on the social conditions of people speaking endangered languages. At present, there is very little known on this subject. Several studies have been undertaken on this topic in Ethiopia. He also expressed his agreement with Mr Uya Alfred regarding the teaching of languages in primary schools and research institutions.

Professor Osman noted that in the 1960s, the main threats to languages were illiteracy, population movements and politics. Today, the use of cassettes and other modern technological supports makes it possible to widely disseminate music and languages. This has had an immense effect on illiteracy: many Nubians communicate nowadays through movies. Furthermore, he insisted on the need to update the data on national languages and to reinforce capacities to speak, write, read and teach. He added that the efforts of SIL-Sudan in South Sudan have been very efficient, and he raised questions about the situation in the Nubian area.

As a teacher, Mr Arigo, chairperson for displaced people in the Northern states, was very concerned about the issue of languages. Through his experience, he has noted that religion has a strong effect on the use of languages. He asked if UNESCO protects this kind of language and suggested that new data be compiled on this specific topic.

Professor Abu Manga remarked that it is not practical to define all languages of Sudan as national ones. Languages should be preserved as a support for cultural heritage and traditions and be documented as such, in particular by taking into account the traditional home regions of those languages.

Ms Newport concluded this third session by reminding that Sudan has too many languages and also reminded the importance of teaching mother tongue in primary schools. Primary school teachers very often come from communities. Therefore, there is a real need for communities to provide instruction for teachers to teach their own languages (grassroots help).

Session Four: DEFINING COMMUNITIES: ORAL TRADITIONS AND EXPRESSIONS, TRADITIONAL MUSIC, DANCE AND THEATRE, SOCIAL PRACTICES, RITUALS AND FESTIVE EVENTS, TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGES AND CRAFTSMANSHIP

Chairperson: Ms Oda Lehmann

Craftsmanship: a Heritage of Cultural Syncretism and National Unity

Dr Yusuf Hasan Madani

Institute of African and Asian Studies

University of Khartoum

In his presentation, Dr Madani focused on craftsmanship and craftspeople, who have always been essential members of society throughout the world, and the history of crafts which is as old as the history of humankind. The study of craft and craftsmanship is always thought of as part of the concern of researchers in material culture. Dr Madani intended to show that studying crafts and craftsmanship as ideas, knowledge, customs, beliefs and songs as well as their modes of transmission can help our understanding of the process of cultural syncretism and contribute to solving problems related to national unity. To better illustrate the fact that material and immaterial culture are not in opposition but rather integral parts of a single complementary body, he presented two examples: craft bed-making and the boat-building in Sudan. To conclude his presentation, Dr Madani underlined that his intention is to clearly show how the culture of a certain group is formed through contact with other cultures, through assimilation of know-how and knowledge as well as the mode of transmission of such knowledge to younger generations. He highlighted that exchanges with other cultures and transmission of cultural expressions ensure that culture remains dynamic and evolving.

Safeguarding and Revitalization of Traditional Craftsmanship in Sudan

Dr Abd Magid Abdal Rahman

Nilean University

Khartoum

Taking the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage as his starting point, Dr Rahman presented the pivotal role of traditional craftsmanship by virtue of its diversity and intercultural nature for the societies of Sudan. He demonstrated that traditional craftsmanship is deeply rooted and functional in past and present-day Sudanese life. Although the main occupations are farming and animal husbandry in addition to limited activity in service sectors, the majority of the population earns its livelihood through traditional crafts as a part time activity. He also added that this traditional knowledge is threatened today by modern technology, medias, population movements etc. Therefore, Dr Rahman proposed to safeguard and revitalize the Sudanese craftsmanship on different levels and through various means. Measures on the State level should be taken, and surveys and research should be encouraged to identify, classify, document, record and collect samples. Furthermore, steps should be undertaken to revitalize Sudan's craftsmanship through specific measures such as the design of curricula in formal and non-formal education for developing techniques, training artisans, making equipment available and establishing a council specifically designed for Sudanese craftsmanship.

***Intangible Heritage and the Impact of Development
Endangered Cultures: a Case Study – Merowe Dam***

Dr Mohammad al-Mahadi Bushra
Dongola/University of Khartoum

Dr Bushra spoke about the Merowe Dam under construction and the evacuation of the population of the concerned area, and on the impact and consequences of such a project, in this case on cultural heritage. Most of the attention has been focused on the tangible cultural heritage, in particular through archaeological studies of the area already underway in 2002.

Dr Bushra presented the Dam Implementation Unit (DIU), which devotes particular attention to the intangible cultural heritage. A committee of prominent scholars from different disciplines has been formed in 2003 and has already collected documentation of the intangible heritage as well as oral traditions in the area affected by the Dam, through recording performances and collecting oral traditions. The Unit managed to document a considerable part of the intangible heritage of the concerned area, but many elements could be lost forever. Dr Bushra recommended some safeguarding measures to be implemented before moving of the local populations to other places by giving priority to performing arts, language and oral history.

Supporting Communities in the Process of Safeguarding their Intangible Heritage

Ms Metje Postma
Visual Anthropologist, Ethnographic filmmaker
Anthropology Department
Leiden University, Netherlands

Ms Postma illustrated very clearly that the recording of cultural expressions like dance, music, ritual performance and oral traditions and history as well as material techniques and social skills, in their context, can contribute to the process of redefining cultural identity of a community in a post-war society and to re-establish the social fabric of that society. Visual cultural records can be used in education to raise awareness of the cultural richness of the diversity of cultures of Sudan. They can also serve as a source of inspiration for artists to reshape the image of the society. The more knowledge communities have of each others cultures, the more they can learn to respect each other. Ethnographic filmmaking can offer methods and techniques to train members of local communities to document their own cultural traditions, and in doing so, enable them to identify those traditions they cherish most.

Ms Postma underlined the necessity for specific training in ethnographic filming and the use of a camera to perform anthropological research. She concluded her presentation by focusing on the importance of capacity-building to enable local communities to document their ICH. She underlined in particular that visual representation is always connected to a code of ethics and that the consent of the concerned population is always needed before using the filmed materiel for any purpose.

***Al-Kujur
The Role of the African God-man in the Nuba Mountains, Community of Central Sudan***

Mr Mohamed Harun Kafi Abu Ras
Peace Council, Khartoum

Mr Kafi presented some important features of Nuba culture and traditions with a focus on the Kujur as an important figure in the Nuba society and a spiritual leader. A Kujur is considered to be a religious person through whom the society perceives God. All Nuba tribes have a Kujur whose power is granted by God and through whom the secrets of nature are revealed. However, from one tribe to another each Kujur differs in his ritual performance. The Nuba word *kujur* is composed of two parts: *kud* and *jur*, which means “who is possessed by the spirit” and “he who comes from the Eastern part of the Nuba

mountains" respectively. He explained the process of becoming a Kujur and the related traditions. He concluded by proposing some measures to transmit these traditions, in particular through the creation of studies centres for researcher, lectures as well as for all those who are interested in learning more about this ancestral tradition of the Nuba Mountains.

Music for Peace

Mr Ali al-Daw

Institute of African and Asian Studies

Traditional Music Archive TRAMA, Assistant Director

University of Khartoum

Mr Ali al-Daw presented his "Music for Peace" project, which aims to give a voice to peace, compassion and hope, because music can be a unifying element and an important tool for dialogue. Sudan's music is as diverse as its ethnic and linguistic diversity. The expert explained that collecting information and survey began in the 1970s, except in the south of Sudan. Music data has also been collected in the IDP communities around Khartoum. All this music information has been recorded on audio cassettes to be distributed freely among target groups at schools and universities, as well as in conflict areas. Videos will be presented to educate and inform children and students on the richness and cultural diversity of Sudan. Joined live musical performances from diverse cultures will be conducted to bring the conflicting communities together, and discussions on peace will be organized at the same occasion. Mr al-Daw hopes that this project can result in solutions to overcome conflicts of all kinds and educate people in issues related to culture and peace.

Social Practices and Festivities among the Dinka

Dr Mom Kou Nhial

Institute of African and Asian Studies

University of Khartoum

The speaker began by introducing the Dinka, composed of 500 sub-groups, mainly divided by geographical areas into three major groups. He presented some of the aspects of the social practices and festivities among the Dinka, on the basis of his personal experiences as a Dinka, in particular related to male-female relationships, the wedding process and ceremony and their implications in the social and economic structures. He also referred to the "peace ceremony", which concludes a fight between communities and the "river ceremony", performed during the dry season, when the cattle reach the Nile, which is thought to bring fertility and prosperity to the Dinka community.

Traditional Sports, Tourism and Peace

(special reference to Nuba wrestling and stick fighting)

Mr Graham Abdal Gadir

Ministry of Tourism and Wildlife

Historically, African ceremonies, festivals and rituals are considered an expression of belief as well as forms of art. In this respect, the tourism industry is an activity that could serve as a link between people either within the same country or beyond its geographical boundaries. These exchanges can be considered cultural dialogues and interactions and therefore forms of intangible communications leading to a better understanding and appreciation of each other. In line with a widely shared opinion on culture and cultural tourism, Mr Abdal Gadir highlighted that the challenge lies in ensuring that globalization benefits all and plays a crucial role in harmonizing and resolving conflicts. He recalled that Sudan is a treasure for traditional human establishment and ecosystems, methods of land and space occupation and possesses intangible heritage of great cultural and spiritual significance. Intangible heritage, ceremonies, traditions could lead to better understanding of various cultures. He

gave as an example the traditional Nuba wrestling and stickfighting. He concluded his presentation by underlining that those traditional ceremonies are at risk of disappearing because of various external and internal factors and recommended several measures for their safeguarding.

Discussion

The chairperson thanked all experts for their contribution related to session four. She reminded that States are given considerable freedom in drawing up their inventories within the framework of the 2003 Convention. Nevertheless, Article 15 of the Convention clearly requires the involvement of communities and groups for the identification of their ICH. She also informed the participants of a meeting organized in Tokyo, Japan, from 13 to 15 March 2006, with a view to discuss in detail the community involvement in safeguarding the intangible cultural heritage.

A participant spoke about the importance of media and various kinds of modern technologies, as well as the University's responsibility, in documenting and safeguarding ICH. Since the 1940s, films have been made on Sudanese history, geography and other subjects, and he suggested the safeguarding of all this documentation in digital format.

Another participant added that, especially in Sudan, ICH is the foundation of the country's memory. As such, the Sudanese must learn from their painful history and contribute towards achieving real peace by archiving and disseminating all information. However he noted that until today, no real use has been made of all this information, which constitutes an essential component of Sudan's history.

The importance of enhancing public access (media, Internet, etc.) to inventories of collected information was also acknowledged by several participants.

A participant from Darfur requested that the cultural diversity of Sudan include the ICH of Darfur and the IDPs, which has not been taken into account.

Lack of data on ICH in the areas of South Sudan and Nuba Mountains were acknowledged by several participants. It was also recommended that these two areas be selected for field surveys. One participant appealed to the authorities to establish a Nuba Heritage Institute.

The chairperson concluded this last session of the workshop by thanking all experts and participants for their very productive and active participation in this meeting.

The representatives of UNESCO presented the meeting's recommendations, based on the presentations and discussions of the working sessions. Each recommendation has been examined and remarks formulated by the experts are reflected in the final version of the recommendations presented below. The expert meeting was closed by the adoption of the recommendations and some concluding words by representatives from UNESCO.

**UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL
ORGANIZATION**

Expert meeting on Identification of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Sudan

(Khartoum, Sharjah Hall, 21-22 March 2006)

RECOMMENDATIONS

The participants, attending the expert meeting on identification of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) of Sudan, which took place in Khartoum on 21 and 22 March 2006,

Expressing their gratitude to UNESCO for providing a forum to discuss issues relating to inventories of ICH, such as scope and criteria, management, and involvement of actors and stakeholders;

Thanking the Sudanese National Commission for UNESCO for their efficient organization of the meeting;

Recognizing that there is a need to enlarge capacity at governmental, institutional, research and community levels;

Recalling the importance attached in the 2003 Convention to the representative character of intangible cultural heritage and to the need to involve the communities concerned in its identification and safeguarding;

Considering the upcoming entry into force of the 2003 Convention and to be in line with its principles and implementation criteria;

Recommend:

Recommendation 1:

Being aware of the very rich and diverse intangible cultural heritage of Sudan and the need to provide the necessary means to preserve it,

Highly recommend the competent Sudanese authorities to take appropriate measures to ratify the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage.

Recommendation 2:

Recognizing the importance of information sharing at country and repository institutions' level, as an essential step to coordinate and develop adequate measures to ensure the viability of ICH to future generations,

Recommend the Sudanese concerned institutions and relevant NGOs to establish a network at the national and regional level, and further call upon UNESCO to facilitate this process.

Recommendation 3:

Noting that many data have been already collected and are available on obsolete support in research and repository institutions, and that modern technologies can facilitate the sharing of data, promotion and preservation of ICH,

Recommend to start transferring in digital format the documentation available on obsolete support at IAAS, at the Ministry of Culture, etc. and to start identifying, through

different sources, including public media archives, the already collected material on ICH, in particular those at risk of disappearance.

Recommendation 4:

Recognizing that languages are a vehicle of the rich and diverse ICH and that media, together with universities, can contribute to developing language skills and revitalizing the ICH of Sudan,
Recommend to encourage the use of local languages in media.

Recommendation 5:

Considering that, due to conflict, some areas are less documented and that many data are hosted outside the country in universities and institutions worldwide, and conscious of the relevance of such material in particular for endangered ICH,
Call upon international research institutions which gathered and host ICH data on Sudan, to made available information on such material to Sudanese research institutions, concerned communities and the recommended network (Recommendation 2).

Recommendation 6:

Acknowledging the importance of the involvement of communities in the inventory-making process, management and preservation of ICH,
Recommend to explore modalities to ensure the full involvement of communities, groups and individuals in the inventory-making process in coordination with local authorities to start a survey and on-field data collection (in the spirit of Art. 11-12 of the 2003 Convention), and therefore
Call upon UNESCO to support modalities to ensure the full involvement of communities, groups and individuals in the inventory-making process, in particular developing tools for collecting data on ICH (questionnaires) in communities, including IDPs.

Recommendation 7:

Highly appreciating the outcomes of the present meeting, and the opportunity given to Sudanese experts to share information and experience,
Recommend UNESCO to continue its efforts to support the development of training, research, promotion, information and awareness-raising activities for the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage of Sudan.