



WELCOMING REMARKS BY PROF. AMB. SAM K. ONGERI, EGH, MP, MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, DURING THE DIRECTOR GENERAL OF UNESCO VISIT TO KENYA, ON THE OCCASION OF THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL MEETING ON INTAGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE (ICH) ON 15TH NOVEMBER 2010 AT KICC - NAIROBI

Your Excellency, Director General of UNESCO- Irina Gueorguieva Bokova,

Minister for Natonal Heritage & Culture,

Minister for Foreign Affairs,

Assistant Director General Africa- UNESCO,

Permanent Secretaries present,

Ambassador Dr Mary M. Khimulu - Permanent Delegate to UNESCO,

Director of UNESCO Nairobi Office

Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my great pleasure to join the distinguished delegates to the 5th Session of the Intergovernmental Committee on Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage.

At the outset may I take this opportunity to warmly welcome the Director General, Members of the IGC on ICH and participants from across the globe to our beautiful country Kenya- KARIBU SANA.

I hope the delegates will enjoy the hospitality of the Kenyan people and also find time out of the conference schedule to visit our tourist sites within Nairobi and its environs.

Ladies and gentlemen, Kenya joined UNESCO in 1964 and has remained committed to the ideals of UNESCO which is to promote global peace and security through its areas of competence namely; Education, Sciences, Culture and communication. Since then we have enjoyed very cordial working relationships.

In the past we have hosted UNESCO convened meetings such as the 1976 UNESCO General Conference, Intergovernmental Committee on Bioethics in 2006 and today the 5th Session of the Intergovernmental Committee on Intangible Cultural Heritage. These among others are a testimony of the cordial cooperation between Kenya and UNESCO.

The Director General's presence at this auspicious occasion is a great privilege and honor to our country. Indeed, we are proud to have hosted and supported you during your campaigns for the post of Director General when you visited our KNATCOM UNESCO offices in 2009 prior to the General Conference.

Your election to the prestigious post of Director General of UNESCO is a testimony the UNESCO Community has in you and it's our prayer and hope that your wide experience will inform the endeavors envisaged by UNESCO and steer UNESCO to greater heights of development.

In your acceptance speech to the post you called for a new humanism for the 21st century and added that the greatest challenge is to lead the world into a new era of peace and humanism, to create more inclusive, just and equitable societies through sustainable economic and social development, based on science, innovation and new technologies that will serve mankind and preserve the environment. Your visit to Kenya for this ICH meeting is part of the global efforts to lead the world into a new era of peace and humanism.

On my own behalf as the chair of the Kenya National Commission for UNESCO and being the Minister responsible for UNESCO matters in the country and also Chair of Conference of Ministers of Education in Africa (COMEDAF), I wish to thank UNESCO for having accepted that Kenya hosts this ICH meeting being the first of its kind to be held in Africa. May I also take this opportunity to extend a word of congratulations to my colleague the Minister for National Heritage and Culture for having successfully steered the preparations and hosting of the meeting.

Finally, I would like to thank the Director General for the support Kenya received towards the event of Kenya Week in Paris. This activity provided Kenya with a rare opportunity to showcase the rich and varied cultures of our people. It is expected that it will act as a boost to our tourism sector and hope for continued cooperation and support.

In conclusion, may I wish all the delegates a fruitful conference, and a pleasant stay in Kenya.

Thank you.