Unit 55

Workshop on policy development for intangible cultural heritage safeguarding

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Facilitator’s narrative 2: The impact of public policies on ICH safegurading (hand-out 1)

The purpose of this exercise is to get the participants thinking about the consequences of broad public policies on the safeguarding of specific elements. Some suggestions for possible responses are provided below.

#### **committee 1**

Recognising the value of cultural diversity in the constitution.

This approach would be in line with the promotion of Fan identity, and perhaps make it easier for them to celebrate their Day of Bread as a Fan event rather than a national event.

Prioritizing cross-border cooperation in regard to policy towards minorities.

This approach would assist in the renewal or strengthening of relationships between Fan in Kassen and the neighbouring country, and perhaps make it easier to share knowledge and experience about cheese making.

Research into authentic minority cultures, focusing attention on historical traditions in the rural areas in a programme called ‘ways of the past’.

This could encourage representation of Fanoko cheese making as something that was done in a certain way in the past and has not changed (or should not change). This might ‘freeze’ the element.

Food regulations requiring pasteurization of milk (these will apply only to cow’s milk).

This would not affect Fanoko making.

Intellectual property protection for traditional cultural practices, including those in the public domain.

This may help Fanoko makers to protect the use of their ingredient in Fanoko making – the endemic plant – if the secret is revealed.

Investment in transport infrastructure to boost international travel to and from the cities.

This would not assist in solving the problem of access between village cheese makers, rural goat and camel farmers and city cheese makers and markets for Fanoko cheese.

#### **Committee 2**

Celebrating Fan culture as the cultural ‘mother-node’ for the country and promotion of Fan cuisine as Kassen public heritage.

This policy approach celebrates Fan culture. However, representing Fan heritage as a ‘cultural mother node’ for the nation risks appropriating Fan heritage for the purposes of nation building. The importance of Fanoko making is represented not in terms of its value to the Fan community but in terms of its value as part of the narrative about the origin of the nation. Fan community members – especially those who ‘see their community as rather separate from the rest of Kassen society’ – might be unhappy with this representation, and feel it to be disrespectful. The meaning of the Day of Bread event for the Fan might be diluted if it became a national event.

Making different kinds of ‘Fanoko’ cheese for foreign dignitaries.

This policy approach does give opportunities to showcase Fanoko cheese but frames it as ‘national culture’ and might result in changing the taste of Fanoko cheese so that it can be ‘acceptable to foreign tastes’. Fan community members might object to this (see above) and to changing the cheese for outsiders, especially because in the past their cheese was derided for its taste even by other groups in Kassen. They might argue that new ways of making Fanoko ‘acceptable’ are not needed as it already has a niche market among non-Fan in the Kassen cities.

Food marketing regulations requiring pasteurization of all milk

Using pasteurized milk would unacceptably change the taste of Fanoko, according to the cheese makers, and it would therefore threaten the viability of the tradition in both rural and urban areas. Fan communities might decide to lobby for an exception to be made for Fanoko, and/or for alternative ways of ensuring food safety than pasteurization.

Promotion of open access to information (including traditional knowledge)

Fanoko makers share among themselves the secret knowledge of how to use the endemic plant as a coagulating agent in the cheese. Unless they can keep this a secret within the group, they might find that it is difficult to prevent other people from making the cheese. Because of the open access policies promoted by the State, they will not be able to get formal intellectual property protection for their traditional knowledge.

Investment to improve transport between rural and urban areas

Although the intention of this infrastructural work is mainly to do with mineral and oil extraction, which may or may not benefit the Fan, it may assist in the marketing of Fanoko in urban areas, and in the supply of milk to urban cheese makers. This could promote the viability of Fanoko making.