

# INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE

## WHAT IS IT?

Intangible cultural heritage includes practices, representations, expressions, knowledge and know-how that communities recognize as part of their cultural heritage. Passed down from generation to generation, it is constantly recreated by communities in response to their environment, their interaction with nature and their history, providing them with a sense of identity and continuity.

## WHY DOES IT MATTER?

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) strives to cooperate with countries around the world for the safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage. This heritage, which is both traditional and modern, nourishes cultural diversity and human creativity. It can help to meet many contemporary challenges of sustainable development such as social cohesion, education, food security, health and the sustainable management of natural resources. It is also a significant source of income and job creation. For the purposes of the Convention, consideration will be given solely to such intangible cultural heritage as is compatible with existing international human rights instruments, as well as with the requirements of sustainable development and mutual respect among communities.

## UNESCO'S ROLE

Since its adoption by the 32nd session of the General Conference in 2003, the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage has experienced an extremely rapid ratification, with over 150 States Parties in the less than 10 years of its existence. In line with the Convention's primary objective – to safeguard intangible cultural heritage – the UNESCO Secretariat has devised a global capacity-building strategy that helps states worldwide, first, to create institutional and professional environments that encourage the sustainable safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage and, second, to promote broad public knowledge and support for the Convention's concepts and objectives. This strategy entails a long-term, multifaceted approach that involves many different stakeholders. UNESCO provides assistance in revising policies and legislation, redesigning institutional infrastructures, developing inventory methods and systems and fostering the technical skills required to safeguard intangible cultural heritage.

## THE INSCRIPTIONS

The Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage has several systems for safeguarding at the international level. The **List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding** has 31 elements, following the seventh session of the Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, held in Paris, France, in December 2012. There are also 257 elements on the **Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity** as well as 10 programmes included in the **Register of Best Safeguarding Practices**.

## INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE FUND

The Fund for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage can contribute financially and technically to State safeguarding measures. If you would like to participate, please send a contribution.

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Please indicate that the contribution is a donation to the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund.

## SECRETARIAT OF THE CONVENTION

The List of elements of intangible cultural heritage is updated every year by the Intangible Cultural Heritage Section. If you would like to receive more information about the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, please contact:

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ELEMENTS INSCRIBED IN 2012 ON THE URGENT SAFEGUARDING LIST, THE REPRESENTATIVE LIST AND THE REGISTER OF BEST SAFEGUARDING PRACTICES



**INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE**



**ALGERIA** – Etes and craftsmanship associated with the wedding costume tradition of Tlemcen © 2007, Lucie Bekard



**BRAZIL** – Frevo, performing arts of the Carnival of Recife © 2007, Recife Team Net



**INDIA** – Buddhist chanting of Ladakh: recitation of sacred Buddhist texts in the trans-Himalayan Ladakh region, Jammu and Kashmir, India © 2008, Centre Institute of Buddhist Studies, Ladakh, Jammu and Kashmir. Photographer: Sagar Ray



**MALI, BURKINA FASO AND CÔTE D'IVOIRE** – Cultural practices and expressions linked to the balafon of the Senufo communities of Mali, Burkina Faso and Côte d'Ivoire © 2005, Culture Heritage Division, Côte d'Ivoire. Photographer: Aniss Aza



**SPAIN** – Fiesta of the patios in Cordova © 2006, Clavelly y Olivares Association



**ARMENIA** – Performance of the Armenian epic of 'Daredevils of Sassoun' or 'David of Sassoun' © 2004, 'House of Sassoun' NGO. Photographer: Aray Arayanyan



**CHINA** – Strategy for training coming generations of Fujian puppetry practitioners © 2009, Fujian Provincial Intangible Cultural Heritage Safeguarding Centre. Photographer: Hong Shihlan



**INDONESIA** – Noken multifunctional knotted or woven bag, handcraft of the people of Papua © 2005, Centre for Research and Development of Culture. Photographer: Dede Priana



**TURKEY** – Mezir Macunu festival © Information and Documentation Centre of Folk Culture, Ministry of Culture and Tourism



**AUSTRIA** – Schemenlaufen, the carnival of Imst, Austria © 2004, Markus Ahammer



**COLOMBIA** – Festival of Saint Francis of Assisi, Quibdó © 2001, Luisa Davis Probst



**IRAN (ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF)** – Qalbiyati rituals of Mahbad-e Ardehal in Kāshān © 2010, ICHCID Research Centre. Photographer: Abbas Torabizadeh



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**UGANDA** – Bigwala, gourd trumpet music and dance of the Busoga Kingdom in Uganda © 2001, James Nabwire



**AZERBAIJAN** – Craftsmanship and performance art of the Tar, a long-necked string musical instrument © 2001, Ministry of Culture and Tourism. Photographer: Rezaul Karimov



**CROATIA** – Klapa multipart singing of Dalmatian, southern Croatia © 2001, Ministry of Culture. Photographer: Ivana Boljković Jukić



**ITALY** – Traditional violin craftsmanship in Cremona © 2006, Terra di Cremona Production. Photographer: Flavio Rossi



**MOROCCO** – Cherry festival in Sefrou © 2006, Sefrou Team Council



**UNITED ARAB EMIRATES, AUSTRIA, BELGIUM, CZECH REPUBLIC, FRANCE, HUNGARY, REPUBLIC OF KOREA, MONGOLIA, MOROCCO, QATAR, SAUDI ARABIA, SPAIN AND SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC** – Falconry, a living human heritage © 2001, Czech Falconry Club, Czech Republic. Photographer: Bohumil Straka



**BELGIUM** – Marches of Entre-Sambre-et-Meuse © 2006, Balmor. Photographer: Jacques Meulder



**ECUADOR** – Traditional weaving of the Ecuadorian toquilla straw hat © 2006, National Institute of Cultural Heritage. Photographer: Olivier Auvray



**JAPAN** – Nachi no Dengaku, a religious performing art held at the Nachi fire festival © 2009, Cultural Heritage Division, Wakayama Prefectural Board of Education



**OMAN** – Al'azi, elegy, procession march and poetry © 2006, Ministry of Heritage and Culture. Photographer: Mohammed al-Shabbi



**UNITED ARAB EMIRATES AND OMAN** – Al-Tughrooda, traditional Bedouin chanted poetry in the United Arab Emirates and the Sultanate of Oman © 2001, Ministry of Heritage and Culture, Oman. Photographer: Manoharan



**BOLIVIA (PLURINATIONAL STATE OF)** – Ichapekene Fiesta, the biggest festival of San Ignacio de Moxos © 2006, Fama Producciones. Photographer: Christian Nájica



**FRANCE** – Fest-Noz, festive gathering based on the collective practice of traditional dances of Brittany © 2006, Myriam Aeger



**KYRGYZSTAN** – Ala-kiyiz and Shyrdak, art of Kyrgyz traditional felt carpets © 2009, United Nations



**REPUBLIC OF KOREA** – Airing, lyrical folk song in the Republic of Korea © 2006, Jeongsang Arirang Research Institute



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