The 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage
Tangible and Intangible Cultural Heritage

**MATERIAL**
- monuments
- buildings
- sites
- landscapes
- spaces
- townscapes
- artefacts
- crafts

**IMMATERIAL**
- oral traditions & expressions
- performing arts
- social practices rituals & festive events
- knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe
- traditional craftsmanship

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23 August – 5 September 2010
UNESCO Key Culture International Instruments


1972: Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage

2001: Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage

2003: Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage

2005: Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions

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Intangible Cultural Heritage Convention

- 32nd General Conference of UNESCO
- Adoption on 17 October 2005
- Entry into force on 20 April 2006
- Became fully operational in 2008 with the adoption of its Operational Directives
Objectives of the Convention

- To safeguard the intangible heritage of humanity
- To ensure respect for it
- To raise awareness of the importance of the ICH and ensure mutual appreciation thereof
- To provide for international cooperation and assistance
Cooperating to safeguard intangible cultural heritage

128 States Parties have ratified the Convention, from most parts of the world
Communities
A key role in ICH Safeguarding

Preamble

Recognizing that communities, in particular indigenous communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals, play an important role in the production, safeguarding, maintenance and re-creation of the intangible cultural heritage, thus helping to enrich cultural diversity and human creativity,

Aymara communities
Bolivia, Chile and Peru
Article 15 – Participation of communities, groups and individuals.

Within the framework of its safeguarding activities of the intangible cultural heritage, 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.
Defining intangible cultural heritage

The “intangible cultural heritage” means 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. [...]
Defining intangible cultural heritage

- Expressions
- Representations
- Practices
- Knowledge
- Skills
- +associated:
  - Instruments
  - Objects
  - Artefacts
  - Cultural spaces
[...] For the purposes of this 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 mutual respect among communities, groups and individuals, and of sustainable development.
Domain: Oral traditions

Oral Traditions of the Aka Pygmies of Central Africa

The Art of Azerbaijani Ashiq
Azerbaijan

Proverbs, riddles, tales, nursery rhymes, legends, myths, epic songs and poems, charms, prayers, chants, songs, dramatic performances, etc.

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Domain: Performing Arts

The Royal Ballet of Cambodia
Kutiyattam India
Tumba Francesa Cuba

Vocal or instrumental music, dance, theatre, pantomime, sung verse, certain forms of storytelling, etc.

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Activities that structure the lives of communities and groups linked to the life cycle of individuals and groups (initiation rites or burial ceremonies), the agricultural calendar, the succession of seasons or other temporal systems, etc.
Domain: Knowledge about nature and the universe

Vanuatu Sand Drawings
Andean Cosmovision of the Kallawaya
Bolivia

Traditional ecological wisdom, indigenous knowledge, traditional healing systems and pharmacopeia, rituals, foodways, beliefs, esoteric sciences, initiatory rites, divinations, cosmologies, cosmogonies, shamanism, possession rites, etc.

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Domain: Traditional craftsmanship

China Engraved Block Printing Technique
China

Woodcrafting Knowledge of the Zafimaniry
Madagascar
Defining intangible cultural heritage

This intangible cultural heritage is:

• transmitted from generation to generation,
• constantly recreated by communities in response to
  – their environment
  – their interaction with nature and
  – their history,
• and provides them with a sense of identity and continuity

The Oral Heritage of Gelede
Benin – Togo – Nigeria
Defining intangible 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. [...]
Defining the Community

• Communities are networks of people whose sense of identity or connectedness emerges from a shared historical relationship that is rooted in the practice and transmission of, or engagement with, their ICH;

SOME QUESTIONS
• Defining the boundaries of communities: recent and political inclusion and exclusion of community members

• Link between defining heritage, minority identities and land claims

• Choosing representatives: the unequal nature of access to knowledge and power within communities
Some key points

- Community ownership of ICH rather than State ownership
- Definitions of intangible heritage place great value on the significance of the heritage to communities, groups or individuals who practice that heritage.
- The element must be still be practiced (‘living’)

The Cultural Space and Oral Culture of the Semeiskie Russian Federation
Some key points

• Opportunity to celebrate aspects of heritage (practices, ideas) that were not included in the traditional model of great buildings and artworks

• Not necessary to separate from ‘tangible’ heritage, as it can include the meanings associated with material objects and places. World Heritage Convention covers some symbolically significant places as well.

• Intangible cultural heritage, as heritage practice, focuses on safeguarding processes rather than ‘products’.
Changing conservation

**Tangible**
- Focus on physical fabric (things)
- Experts decide
- Authenticity is about keeping it exactly the same as in the old days.

**Intangible**
- Focus on significance
- Focus on continued practice
- Communities decide in collaboration with others where needed.
- Authenticity is about protecting value to the community. Allow for healthy change while protecting significance.
Changing conservation

Paradigm shifts in heritage conservation

from places to processes,
from product to process

from an object-based to
a value-based management approach

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National safeguarding measures (art. 13)

- Inventory making
- Adopt a general safeguarding policy
  - to promote the function of ICH
  - to integrate safeguarding into planning programmes
- Establish competent safeguarding bodies
- Foster studies and research methodologies
National safeguarding measures (art. 13)

- Adopt legal, technical, administrative and financial measures:
  - training institutions for intangible heritage management and transmission
  - ensure access to intangible cultural heritage while respecting customary practices governing access to specific aspects of such heritage;
  - establish documentation institutions

Ramlila - Traditional Performance of the Ramayana
India
Goals and purposes of inventorying

- “To ensure identification with a view to safeguarding” intangible cultural heritage.
- In what ways does the inventory potentially contribute to safeguarding?
- It may, e.g., include indications of the viability, strength or endangerment of elements to guide future safeguarding efforts.
Community participation and IPR

• Must be done with “the participation of communities, groups and relevant non-governmental organizations”.

• The inventory must also “respect customary practices governing [access to] specific aspects” of ICH in collecting, archiving or disseminating information.
Make-up, purpose, scope

• May be national, regional or local.
• May include all ethnic/social groups within an area, or targeted toward one or more groups.
• May include all age groups or only some.
• Should cover heritage elements practiced by both men and women.
Domains and definitions

- May cover ICH in general, including the domains listed in the 2003 Convention.
- May cover only one domain or one sub-domain.
- May include detailed, scientific classification of domains, sub-domains and genres.
- May use common-sense categories.
Domains and definitions

- May include only intangible elements.
- May also include tangible elements in a single inventory.
- In its definition of intangible heritage, the inventory should cover living elements, currently practiced, rather than elements that are no longer practiced.
Comprehensiveness

- Relatively complete or comprehensive, within its stated scope and focus.
- May seek to include all elements, or only representative or selected elements.
- There should be objective and transparent criteria for inclusion, especially if the inventory includes only representative elements.
Depth of information

- Elements may be extensively described and documented or briefly identified and listed.
- Uniform minimum level of detail should be provided for all elements.
- However, certain elements might be selected for more extensive information if inventory is done at the general level.
Consistency and classification

• Internal consistency within the inventory to extent possible.
• May also be consistent with other existing inventories.
• May reflect a community’s own system of classifying and delimiting elements and domains.
• May adopt a uniform external classification.
Depth of information

- May update by including additional ICH elements.
- May update by extending to other domains or broader geographic areas.
- May update by eliminating ICH elements that are no longer practiced, or that are practiced only in a frozen, unchanging form.
Conformity and rights and respect

• May include ICH elements that do not conform with international human rights instruments, or with the principle of mutual respect specified in the Convention.

• If so, there should be a means of identifying elements of ICH that do conform and distinguishing them from those that do not.
Safeguarding at the international level

- Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity
- List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding
- International Cooperation and Assistance
- Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund

Nôgaku Theatre
Japan

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International safeguarding

List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding

• "Viability is at risk despite the efforts of the community, group or, if applicable, individuals and State(s) Party(ies) concerned"

• Requires safeguarding plan

• May receive international assistance
U.2.a. The element is in urgent need of safeguarding because its viability is at risk despite the efforts of the community, group or, if applicable, individuals and State(s) Party(ies) concerned. (or)

b. The element is in extremely urgent need of safeguarding because it is facing grave threats as a result of which it cannot be expected to survive without immediate safeguarding.
U.3. Safeguarding measures are elaborated that may enable the community, group or, if applicable, individuals concerned to continue the practice and transmission of the element.
• U.4. The element has been nominated following the widest possible participation of the community, group or, if applicable, individuals concerned and with their free, prior and informed consent.
U.5. The element is included in an inventory of the intangible cultural heritage present in the territory(ies) of the submitting State(s) Party(ies).
U.6. In cases of extreme urgency, the State(s) Party(ies) concerned has (have) been consulted regarding inscription of the element in conformity with Article 17.3 of the Convention.
Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity

• "Inscription of the element will contribute to ensuring visibility, awareness of the significance of the intangible cultural heritage and dialogue"

• Management plan

• No international assistance
R.2. Inscription of the element will contribute to ensuring visibility, awareness of the significance of the intangible cultural heritage and dialogue, thus reflecting cultural diversity worldwide and testifying to human creativity.
Representative List

- R.4. The element has been nominated following the widest possible participation of the community, group or, if applicable, individuals concerned and with their free, prior and informed consent.
• R.5. The element is included in an inventory of the intangible cultural heritage present in the territory(ies) of the submitting State(s) Party(ies).
Intangible Heritage Lists

- Intangible Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding list: 12 elements
- Representative list: 166 elements
- Total of 178 elements listed by 80 Member States

Hudhud Chants of the Ifugao, Philippines

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Indonesian Batik

Inscribed in 2009 on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity

Country: Indonesia

Domain: Traditional Craftsmanship
Sbek Thom
Khmer Shadow Theatre

Inscribed in 2008 on the 
Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity (originally proclaimed in 2005)

Country: Cambodia

Domain: Performing Arts
Mak Yong Theatre

Inscribed in 2008 on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity (originally proclaimed in 2005)

Country: Malaysia

Domain: Performing Arts
The Space of Gong Culture

Inscribed in 2008 on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity (originally proclaimed in 2005)

Country: Viet Nam

Hudhud Chants of the Ifugao

Inscribed in 2008 on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity (originally proclaimed in 2001)

*Country:* Philippines

*Domain:* Oral Traditions and Expressions
www.unesco.org/culture/ich