Response from State Party of Malawi

Nsima, the Culinary Tradition of Malawi

The State Party has submitted evidence which demonstrates clearly the office responsible for maintaining and updating the inventories containing the element under consideration and how regularly they will be maintained. The evidence consists of the full text of the “Inventory of Malawi’s ICH, Volume 2” which is referred to in the nomination form. The State Party had submitted with the nomination file before examination by the Evaluation Body an extract of the inventory which did not include the page on which the evidence is contained.

The State Party has submitted the full text of the inventory to the Secretariat which demonstrates in the “Preface” by the Director of Culture, who is the policy holding officer on all matters of culture, that the communities should be responsible for safeguarding their own heritage. It goes on to say that the inventories should be permanent testimony of intangible cultural heritage of different ethnic communities in Malawi to future generations and should be maintained and updated by the National Intangible Heritage Committee (NICH), at least once in six years to coincide with the periodic reporting cycles on implementation of the 2003 ICH Convention.

The reason why the NICH, indicated as the leading institution under section 4.d. of the nomination file, was given the responsibility to maintain and update the inventory is that some elements such as “Nsima, the culinary tradition of Malawi” are of a national nature which require coordination across seventeen ethnic communities and cannot be assigned to one community body or none state institution. Furthermore the State Party wishes to draw the attention of the committee members that it is indicated in the form under section 5 that after the Department of Arts and Crafts (a government body) had developed the first inventory in 2009, the NICH, working with the other concerned community organizations Chewa Heritage Foundation, Mulhakho wa Alhomwe and Mzimba Heritage Foundation, updated the inventory in 2012 (after 3 years) through community-based inventoring approach after learning the best way to do the inventories with full participation of the communities. The submitted full text therefore, contains updated information on the element under consideration.
Inventory of Malawi’s ICH, Volume 2 2013

MINISTRY OF TOURISM AND CULTURE
MalaWi NaTionaL COMMISSION FOR UNESCO

INVENTORY OF MALAWI’S INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE

VOLUME 2

September 2012 – April 2013

1
PREFACE

The importance of preserving one’s culture cannot be overemphasized. A nation is identified by its cultural values, beliefs, customs and tradition. Cultural practices are meant to preserve, unite and develop the practicing community. While culture is dynamic as it drops outdated practices and picks up new and sometimes foreign ones, this process must happen without complete loss of the identity of a people.

Elderly people are dying, thereby taking with them important cultural knowledge. We need to safeguard the knowledge for the sake of future generations. Traditional dances, therapy, spiritual and harvesting festivities, food preparation traditions, marriages, funerals, initiations, installation, birth ceremonies, just to mention some, have to be documented and made known to the public. Besides, due to geographical and spatial separation, people living in different areas of the country are not knowledgeable of some of the cultural values, beliefs and customs embodied in these living traditions. It is in recognition of this need as well as in the course of implementing the UNESCO 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage to which the Malawi Government acceded in 2010, that the National Intangible Cultural Heritage Committee (NICHC), under the Department of Culture in collaboration with community heritage associations embarked on the community-based Documentation of National Inventory of Malawi’s Intangible Cultural Heritage.

The exercise is aimed at capturing different elements of Malawi’s Intangible Cultural Heritage with a view to raise public awareness on the same in order to safeguard them for national identity, unity in diversity and community development. The present document is the second volume that has documented Intangible cultural heritage of eight ethnic communities from the northern region of Malawi particularly two districts of Chitipa and Karonga. The ethnic communities whose intangible cultural heritage is documented in this volume are: Bandya, Lambya, Mambwe, Namwanga, Ndali, Nyakyusa, Nyiha and Sukwa. In total, the second volume contains 35 elements on intangible heritage. The first volume documented Intangible cultural heritage of eight ethnic communities from southern, central and northern regions. These were: Chewa, Tonga, Ngoni, Sena, Tumbuka, Ngonde, Lomwe and Yao.

The inventory in the two volumes, though not representative of all the intangible cultural elements available among the 16 ethnic communities so far documented, will help raise public awareness on the importance of culture to the socio-economic life of the country and hence the need to safeguard it. The communities shall be responsible for safeguarding their own heritage. Lastly, the inventories shall be permanent testimony of intangible cultural heritage of different ethnic communities in Malawi to future generations and shall be maintained and updated by the NICHC, at least once in six years to coincide with the periodic reporting cycles on implementation of the 2003 ICH Convention.

Elizabeth Gomani-Chindebvu, PhD
DIRECTOR OF CULTURE, MINISTRY OF TOURISM AND CULTURE
CHAIR OF NATIONAL INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE COMMITTEE (NICHC)
2.8 Sukwa and Chewa Communities, Chitipa and Kasungu Districts

2.8.1 Ukupiya Ubughali/Kuphika Nsima

**IDENTIFICATION OF THE ELEMENT:**
Name of the element as used by the community, groups or individuals concerned: Ukupiya Ubughali/Kuphika Nsima
Short Informative Title: Preparation of Ubughali/Nsimma, the Dietary Tradition of the Sukwa of Northern Region and Chewa of Central Region of Malawi
Community (ies) concerned: Sukwa
Physical location(s) of element(s): South of Chitipa District, Northern Region of Malawi and North of Kasungu District, Central Region of Malawi
Short description: To prepare Ubughali/Nsimma, gather maize flour, a pot, a cooking stick, plates, serving spoon, water and fire. We put a pot of water on the fire and let it boil. Thereafter, add handfuls of maize flour while stirring until the mixture becomes porridge. Let the porridge boil further for some time. When the porridge has boiled enough, add handfuls of maize flour while stirring until the porridge thickens to one’s liking. It is then served in plates and taken together with the relish.

**CHARACTERISTICS OF THE ELEMENT:**
Associated Tangible Elements (if any): Fire/heat, water, pots, maize flour, steering stick, serving spoon.
Associated Intangible Elements (if any): Knowledge of preparation of Ubughali/Nsimma, Chisukwa and Chichewa languages used in instructions on its preparation
Language(s) involved: Chisukwa and Chichewa languages.
Perceived origin: It is perceived that the knowledge originated from within the Sukwa and Chewa communities and passed on through generations.

**PERSONS AND INSTITUTIONS INVOLVED WITH THE ELEMENTS:**
Practitioners, performers: Sukwa and Chewa households
Names: Tamala Kayuni, Joyce Mazibuko
Ages: from 12 years upwards
Gender: Men and women
Social status: married or single
Professional category: culinary
Other participants: na
Customary practices governing access to the elements or to aspects of it: There are no limitations to access.
Modes of transmission: The culinary traditional knowledge is transmitted within the community through participation and observation during meal times and other occasions.
Concerned Organizations: Department of Nutrition, Office of President and Cabinet

**STATE OF THE ELEMENT:**
Threats to the element: The introduction of new and diverse dietary recipes is providing a wider range of choices of foods and the demands on a modern working household is making people prepare and take less and less of Ubughali/Nsimma particularly in urban areas.

69
Threats to transmission: Young generations are more interested in the contemporary recipes than the traditional ones.

Availability of associated tangible elements and resources: Associated tangible elements are readily available in stores and in villages.

Viability of associated intangible elements: The knowledge of preparing Ubughali is still relevant today as households still take Ubughali/Nsima as staple diet in most Sukwa and Chewa households.

Safeguarding measures: Continued practice is the best safeguarding measure for this element. Households still take Ubughali/Nsima as staple diet in most Sukwa and Chewa households. Children are taught informally in the households on how to prepare the staple diet. The tradition is also taught in formal education system at tertiary level.

DATA GATHERING AND INVENTORY:
Involvement of the Community/Groups In, and consent for data gathering and Inventorying: Tamala Kayuni of Kapoka 1. Village Headman Mwenemisuku, Chitipa and Joyce J.B.O Mazibuko participated in interviews for the inventory. Consent for data gathering was provided by Chief Mwenemisusku and Sub Traditional Authority Mphomwa. Anthony Simovwe, a Bandya himself was a member of the data gathering team and Lovemore Mazibuko, a Chewa himself, was a member of the datat gathering team.

Restrictions, if any, on use of Inventoried data: None

Date and place of data gathering: 27 January, 2013
Date of entering data into an inventory: 2 April, 2013

The inventorying entry compiled by: Christopher Magomelo, Harrison Simfukwe and Lovemore Mazibuko

REFERENCE TO THE LITERATURE AND VISUAL MATERIAL ARCHIVES:
Pictures

Pic. No.1: Green maize in the garden
Pic. No.2: Maize cob after harvesting
Pic. No.3: Maize flour
Pic. No.4: Human treasure Joyce Mazibuko
Sievng the flour

Pic. No.5: Cooking Ubughali/Nsima

Pic. No.6: Human treasure Tamala
Kayuni serving Ubughali

Pic. No.3: Ubughali/Nsima and accompaniments

Pic. No.8: Eating Ubughali/Nsima is a communal tradition

Video: Title: Inventory of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Malawi
CERTIFICATE OF CONSENT

BANK OF ELEMENT:  Umbukali

This is to certify that free, prior and informed consent has been granted for the inclusion of the above-mentioned element as a candidate for inclusion in the Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity as stipulated in the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.

Name of Community or group concerned:

Address:  Kapanga F.P. School, Post Office Chilongo, Machinga

Name of representative:  Chief Mawumula

Signature:  

Date:  02/03/13
CERTIFICATE OF CONSENT

NAME OR ELEMENT: 

This is to certify that the aforesaid person named above has been granted the above specified grant of financial support towards the research project as a consultant to Malawi for the long-term use of the specified traditional medicine of barley in the South Commission for the Sub-regional Traditional Medicine.

Name of Community or Group, etc:

Name of the individual: 

Address: 

Name of Representative: 

Signature: 

Date: 14-02-2013

[Signature and stamp]