



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



Intangible
Cultural
Heritage

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Chengdu, 16 June 2013

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**Chengdu International Conference on Intangible Cultural Heritage
in Celebration of the Tenth Anniversary of UNESCO's Convention
for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage**

Chengdu, China, 14 to 16 June 2013

Chengdu Recommendations

The Chengdu International Conference on Intangible Cultural Heritage in Celebration of the Tenth Anniversary of UNESCO's Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage was held from 14 to 16 June 2013, in Chengdu, Sichuan Province, China. More than 300 experts came together for wide-ranging debates on the achievements and challenges of the first decade of the Convention and on its opportunities and perspectives for coming decades. The conference was enriched by the participation of a number of persons who had played key roles at the time the Convention was drafted at the turn of the 21st century, and complemented by those who have come more recently to the task of implementing the Convention.

We resoundingly thank the authorities of Chengdu, Sichuan and China for their generous hospitality and the warm welcome provided to visitors from China and abroad. We are impressed by their comprehensive commitment to safeguarding intangible cultural heritage and are particularly appreciative of their dedication to international cooperation and dialogue.

The Convention was adopted at the 32nd session of the General Conference of UNESCO on 17 October 2003. Looking back from the vantage point of the Convention's tenth anniversary, we the participants congratulate the framers of the Convention for their foresight and imagination in drafting a Convention that has mobilized the interest of the world community to an unprecedented degree. The Convention has had far-reaching impacts in every region of the world, among its 153 States Parties and even among States not yet party to the Convention. The concept of 'intangible cultural heritage' has entered the vocabulary of languages to an extent that few could have imagined a decade earlier. The Convention's ground-breaking definition of intangible cultural heritage has fundamentally reconfigured the relations between the bearers and practitioners of intangible cultural heritage and the officials, experts and institutions involved in its safeguarding. By emphasizing the active agency of communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals, and their indispensable role in recognizing their own intangible heritage and taking responsibility for its safeguarding, the Convention has established a fundamentally new paradigm.

We nevertheless note that the Convention's great success has been accompanied by a number of real challenges, and we call for diligent attention from all concerned to ensure that the Convention does not become a victim of its own success. The rapid rate of ratification has not always been matched by adequate institutional capacities for effective implementation of the Convention. We therefore salute the Convention's global strategy for strengthening national capacities for safeguarding intangible heritage, and take appreciative note that a number of donor countries have generously provided support to implement that strategy in developing countries in every region of the world.

**Chengdu
Municipal
People's
Government**



**Sichuan
Provincial
Department of
Culture**



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CRIHAP

International Training Center
for Intangible Cultural Heritage in the Asia-Pacific Region
under the Auspices of UNESCO
联合国教科文组织亚太地区非物质文化遗产国际培训中心



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We call upon the international community to renew its commitment to the Convention's fundamental premise that intangible cultural heritage is a guarantee of sustainable development. As the world frames the post-2015 agenda for sustainable development, the importance of intangible heritage in countless domains of human life must be acknowledged. We take note of the Hangzhou International Congress in May 2013 on the theme of 'Culture: Key to Sustainable Development' and endorse its declaration: 'Inclusive economic development should [...] be achieved through activities focused on sustainably protecting, safeguarding and promoting heritage'.

Cultures adapt and respond to the development requirements of humanity. In people-oriented societies, cultural diversity is necessarily respected. Intangible cultural heritage includes the full expression of human emotions, vividly demonstrates the extraordinary creativity of human beings, and concretely embodies cultural diversity. It is indispensable for maintaining close interpersonal relationships, fostering cultural exchanges and promoting mutual understanding. Intangible cultural heritage is therefore the foundation for the sustainable development of humankind.

Inclusive education that aims to equip all with the tools and skills to thrive in the world of tomorrow must be built upon and integrate the knowledge embedded in intangible cultural heritage. We call on educators, institutions and policy-makers to recognize that intangible heritage has a central place in educational curricula and in formal and non-formal education systems.

The framers of the Convention already recognized that intangible cultural heritage constitutes a precious resource when societies and communities face difficult challenges such as rapid socioeconomic transformations. We recall the countless systems of conflict avoidance and dispute resolution that are part of the intangible heritage of communities worldwide and the contribution they can bring to building and maintaining peace, a prerequisite for all sustainable development.

We are also reminded of the central role that intangible cultural heritage plays in helping communities to prevent or mitigate natural disasters and especially in helping them to recover from such events and to reweave their social fabric and reaffirm their cultural identities. Intangible cultural heritage was at the forefront of recovery efforts here in Sichuan Province after the devastation of the Wenchuan earthquake of 2008, and we acknowledge the many lessons that Chinese communities, experts and authorities can share with the world. We express our sincere condolences to the people of Sichuan for the losses suffered in the Lushan earthquake this past April, confident that they will recover fully and that intangible heritage will once again be a vital resource for that recovery.

Intangible cultural heritage is also essential in sustaining the natural environment. We acknowledge the central role that knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe play in maintaining sustainable ecosystems and biodiversity and in helping communities to ensure food security and health. We point in particular to the increasing importance of intangible heritage as a reservoir of resources and responses as the world confronts global climate change.

We encourage establishing sound and effective safeguarding mechanisms driven by and responsive to communities' needs and aspirations, and addressing appropriately the relationships between transmission and innovation and between safeguarding and commercial use. Such use must never threaten the viability of the heritage and should benefit first and foremost the communities concerned, and we will fight adamantly against excessive exploitation and abuse.

We call for redoubled commitments to cooperation and synergies, both at the international and at the national levels, between the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, the 1972 Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, the 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions and the efforts and initiatives of the World Intellectual Property Organization in the domain of traditional knowledge, genetic resources and traditional cultural expressions.

As we celebrate the Convention's tenth anniversary, we pledge ourselves to ensuring that the viability of intangible cultural heritage remains at the centre of its mission and that the communities, groups or individuals that practise intangible cultural heritage continue to be its leading force. We recommit ourselves to strengthening the contributions of intangible cultural heritage to fostering creativity, dialogue and mutual respect.

Drawing confidence from the successful experiences and achievements already obtained, and looking forward to the Convention's next decade, we express our shared hope and aspiration that:

Communities, groups and individuals worldwide will continue to cherish their own intangible cultural heritage and to gain an ever-greater respect for the heritage of others;

At the national level, countries will increasingly align their own safeguarding practices with the values and orientations of the Convention;

States will share their own diverse safeguarding experiences with others, through the Convention and other forums for international exchange, in order to contribute to enhanced safeguarding;

The international community and people worldwide will recognize the aims of the Convention and devote themselves to its effective implementation;

Factors that threaten the continuity, practice and transmission of intangible cultural heritage will be weakened or eliminated;

Intangible cultural heritage will nurture people's self-awareness, self-confidence and cultural self-determination, and will play an ever-increasing role in constructing a harmonious world and promoting cultural diversity.

Chengdu, China

16 June 2013