

**CONVENTION FOR THE SAFEGUARDING OF THE
INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE**

**THIRTEENTH ANNUAL COORDINATION MEETING OF
CATEGORY 2 CENTRES ACTIVE IN THE FIELD OF
INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE**

**Report of the twelfth annual coordination meeting
of category 2 centres active in the field of intangible cultural heritage
(13 June 2024, UNESCO Headquarters, Paris)**

I. Background

Since 2012, the Living Heritage Entity annually brings together representatives of all category 2 centres (C2Cs) active in the field of intangible cultural heritage (ICH) to exchange experiences, discuss future strategies and workplans, and strengthen collaboration between the centres and with UNESCO. The [twelfth coordination meeting of the category 2 centres](#) took place on 13 June 2024 at UNESCO Headquarters, Paris, on the day after the tenth General Assembly of States Parties to the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (10.GA), held on 11 and 12 June 2024 (UNESCO Headquarters, Paris).

In addition to sharing information on recent developments under the 2003 Convention as well as the status of category 2 centres and the process of renewing agreements between host countries and UNESCO, the C2Cs were invited to discuss two specific topics, building on the conclusions of the eleventh meeting (see document [LHE/24/C2C/3](#)):

1. Safeguarding intangible cultural heritage and climate change; and,
2. Strengthening capacities to safeguard intangible cultural heritage using multi-modal approaches and contribute to sustainable development.

II. Participation

The meeting brought together representatives of the eight centres contributing to UNESCO's actions in the field of safeguarding intangible cultural heritage (see document [LHE/24/C2C/2](#)):

- ALGERIA – Regional Centre for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Africa (CRESPIAF);
- BULGARIA – Regional Centre for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage in South-Eastern Europe (RCSICH);
- CHINA – International Training Centre for Intangible Cultural Heritage in the Asia-Pacific Region (CRIHAP);
- IRAN (ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF) – Regional Research Centre for Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage in West and Central Asia (Tehran Centre)
- JAPAN – International Research Centre for Intangible Cultural Heritage in the Asia-Pacific Region (IRCI);
- PERU – Regional Centre for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Latin America (CRESPIAL);
- REPUBLIC OF KOREA – International Information and Networking Centre for Intangible Cultural Heritage in the Asia-Pacific Region (ICHCAP);
- UNITED ARAB EMIRATES – International Centre for Capacity Building in Intangible Cultural Heritage in the Arab States (ICCBICH).

III. Summary of discussions

Item 1. Opening and background

The meeting was opened by the Secretary of the 2003 Convention. During the first round of introductions, participants mentioned several recent or ongoing collaborations between their centres (particularly with regard to safeguarding ICH and climate change) and their willingness to pursue and develop them. The Secretary was congratulated on her recent appointment, and the Secretariat was thanked for supporting the C2Cs renewal process.

Looking back on 10.GA and the framework documents resulting from key events celebrating the Convention's twentieth anniversary (the Seoul Vision and the Spirit of Naples), the C2C representatives shared positive impressions of the Convention's orientations, including sustainable development, gender, climate change, community participation and synergies with other conventions, in particular the 1972 Convention.

The Secretariat recalled some recent developments.

- With regard to safeguarding ICH in the context of conflict and disaster risk reduction (DRR), capacity-building materials have been developed. Pilot workshops on DRR have been held in the Philippines and Honduras, now in Pacific and Caribbean SIDS. A manual on ICH in conflict situations is being developed for humanitarian actors, and a pilot workshop has been organized in refugee camps.

The Tehran centre underlined the importance of UNESCO's initiatives and shared its recent rewarding but challenging experiences of exploring ICH safeguarding in post-disaster and DRR contexts, in remote areas.

- A new thematic area on 'foodways' aims to identify and strengthen living heritage practices linked to food practices, social spaces and rituals relating to food and agriculture. Four expert meetings have been organized; a digital platform is planned for capacity-building to safeguard ICH (identifying community-led experiences and encouraging peer learning). CRESPIAF shared some African experiences in this field, with two elements inscribed on the Representative List in the region: 'Couscous' and 'Ceebu Jën, a culinary art of Senegal'. These inscriptions have had two major effects: 1. strengthening identity and continuity, offering a sense of pride to local communities; 2. in terms of sustainable development and local economy, a renewed interest and change in the way the economic system is organized, in Algeria. CRESPIAF has called on other C2Cs to support communities wishing to inscribe elements linked to food traditions.
- A book on the living heritage of indigenous peoples was launched during 10.GA, aimed at further engaging with indigenous peoples, as a first step in highlighting their needs and rights within the framework of the Convention. It is the result of a year-long engagement with a research team and communities around the world, initiated in the context of the 20th anniversary of the Convention and the International Decade of Indigenous Languages. CRESPIAL recalled the importance of indigenous peoples and populations of African descent in Latin America, to recognize their rights and use their own languages. It supports regional and multinational collaborative projects on their cultural and linguistic rights.

With regard to living heritage and education, a funding priority, the Living Heritage Entity has collaborated with UNESCO education sector; experience has shown that integrating living heritage and education can contribute to the goal of quality education for all and make national and local education systems more relevant. With 80 participating countries and an online clearinghouse, many resources and methods are available for integrating ICH into school learning. To integrate international standards, UNESCO has also adopted a new framework for cultural and artistic education.

CRIHAP, as a specialized capacity-building centre, is developing initiatives on ICH and education in China and other countries, such as a workshop on teaching methods in collaboration with the UNESCO Beijing office, an e-learning platform and a program to disseminate videos created by UNESCO headquarters on living heritage and education on Chinese social media platforms, and it will develop collaboration with TVET organizations.

- The Secretariat highlighted and thanked the C2Cs for their support in the periodic reporting (PR) exercise, which had produced excellent results. The Secretariat will work on the global theme of MONDIACULT, producing the global report for 2025, and the new submission system for PR from 2027.
- Each centre has its own specificities and context, but many of these achievements can serve as models for other conventions.

Item 2. Status of the evaluation process of Category 2 Centres and renewal of agreements between host countries and UNESCO

The Head of the Capacity Building and Heritage Policy Unit thanked the C2Cs for their support to the evaluation teams, within the framework of the global strategy adopted by the General Conference

in 2019 that guides the work of the C2Cs. The renewal process was recalled as well as the status of each centre. The centres felt that the evaluation was useful, enabling them in particular to improve recognizability. In addition, the Secretariat has noted significant progress since the last evaluations, in line with the objectives set; C2Cs play a key role in developing the ICH network in the regions. There are also areas for improvement in terms of strategic planning, strengthening regional collaboration and technical and human capacities within the centres, monitoring and evaluation systems. There is a need to strengthen fundraising to complement government funding.

- CRESPIAL thanked the Secretariat for its support in the negotiations with the host country and stressed the importance of C2Cs in recognizing and safeguarding ICH, and in helping Member States to improve their policies as well as to reflect on several issues such as climate change, urban contexts and conflicts - particularly for indigenous populations moving between rural and urban areas.
- The Sofia centre stressed that renewal was a long process but a very positive experience; future work will be based on the report's conclusions and recommendations.
- CRESPIAF also highlighted the positive experience that led to the change in its legal status as an international research centre, and thanked UNESCO for its support.
- IRCI, while underlining the benefits of the evaluation process, pointed out certain challenges in terms of timing. The Secretariat is aware of each centre's financial schedules and is making every effort to take them into account.

Item 3. Safeguarding intangible cultural heritage and climate change

Following a presentation by the Secretariat of the ongoing work on ICH and climate change within the framework of the thematic initiatives on ICH and sustainable development, the C2Cs were invited to share experience and reflection in this domain.

- ICHCAP has launched a call for case studies on safeguarding ICH and climate action and will publish the results. Several publications on related themes in 2020-2022 are available online. The Secretariat has welcomed the many case studies received.
- CRESPIAL is currently running three projects on safeguarding ICH and climate change. The agricultural and food knowledge of the Aymara community in Chile, Bolivia and Peru shows how ICH can help to understand climate change. Communities in all three countries have expertise in mitigation (for example, harvesting quinoa in the highlands). But there is a communication challenge between the different sectors (agriculture, culture, etc.).
- IRCI launched a research project on ICH and DRR in 2016. For phase 1, in 2018, a regional workshop was held in Sendai, with recommendations for safeguarding ICH in disaster contexts. Phase 2, started in 2020, aimed to identify and assess how ICH is linked to DRR with a literature review, field research and a workshop. A report is online. Climate change emerged as a key topic during the implementation of the project. Based on these results, a three-year project on ICH and climate change (2024-26) has been designed, with preparatory phase currently underway (information gathering and online seminars).
- The Tehran centre has carried out ICH mapping in selected rural and urban areas. The working plan for 2024-25 includes assessing the challenges of ICH and climate change; mapping the roles of non-state actors in program design and implementation, with a focus on NGOs; a sub-regional expert meeting with a focus on the role of children in safeguarding ICH. A capacity-building workshop is also planned on women's empowerment for sustainable livelihoods and development. The Secretariat highlighted opportunities for synergies to be developed between this work on the role of children in safeguarding ICH and its work on ICH and education, and the Tehran centre confirmed interest in collaborating with the Secretariat on climate change and education.
- The Sharjah centre explores ICH and sustainable development; it has not yet implemented actions in the specific field of climate change but is inspired by other C2Cs and GA 2023 has

expressed interest in developing this theme. The Secretariat would like to integrate experts or case studies from the region into ongoing work.

- CRIIHAP has organized workshops since 2018 in areas related to climate change, including on facilitating ICH and DRR or safeguarding in emergency situations. CRIIHAP participated in a call on climate change and ICH launched by UNESCO in Beijing. Raising awareness is essential to move forward. The Secretariat supports the idea of developing capacity building in this area with CRIIHAP. It is needed to use simple language and concrete examples, and to collaborate with people from different disciplines and perspectives, to create synergies.
- CRESPIAF mentions the impact that global warming will have on ICH and the actions required. Food traditions as living heritage are key, hence the need to liaise with agencies such as the FAO. If the elements affected are not inscribed on the Urgent Safeguarding List, continuity will need to be supported. CRESPIAF's working plan includes research into ICH and climate change. It is also working on a nomination file for the Urgent Safeguarding List related to water management and distribution systems.

Item 4. Strengthening capacities to safeguard intangible cultural heritage using multi-modal approaches and contribute to sustainable development

And Item 5. Moving forward

The Secretariat recalled the recent developments of the capacity building programme including multimodal approaches, online platform and self-paced course on living heritage and education, as well as the periodic reporting process, opening the floor for the C2Cs to provide their inputs.

- IRCI focuses on research, contributing to capacity building in ICH safeguarding and research. Projects include information gathering on research cooperation in the ASPAC region, particularly in Central Asia and SIDS; an ASPAC research forum for safeguarding ICH (6 webinars); a conference on new research frontiers for safeguarding ICH. A symposium will be held in Kyoto on ICH for sustainable cities and communities, with an exhibition to disseminate project results.
- CRESPIAL has developed a guide to integrating ICH into the classroom, using information and communication technologies, and prepared a MOOC for the initial level of training, aimed at government members and policymakers. The centre now hopes to reach other audiences and stakeholders, including NGOs and communities, and UNESCO Chairs. The demand for capacity-building is high; used to face-to-face courses, they have learned to adapt to online modality. CRESPIAL is keen to exchange ideas with C2Cs active in capacity building.
- In addition to the MOOC on ICH and sustainable development, ICHCAP has developed an online course for teachers and educators, providing guidelines for integrating ICH into classrooms and extracurricular activities, as well as a toolbox. It organized a capacity-building workshop for 100 participants in Hangzhou (China) and is currently developing a handbook on periodic reporting. The centre has provided funds to UNESCO Apia to implement a project on ICH and DDR, with a view to integrating ICH and education.
- In 2023, the Sharjah Institute hosted a capacity-building workshop for new facilitators from the Arab States and Africa. Furthermore, information and data management is essential for ICH safeguarding: the centre organizes training courses in this field. Similarly, it is important to use digital tools to increase the scope of actions. Cooperation with other C2Cs and the strengthening of work on ICH and digital technologies are essential for the future.
- In 2019, CRESPIAF organized a workshop on safeguarding plans in Algiers, with 27 African countries participating. In 2023, it hosted a training course for focal points for periodic reports, for 44 African representatives. Capacity-building workshops are co-financed by UNESCO and CRESPIAF thanks to a budget provided by Algeria. The centre also coordinates a working group on the translation of UNESCO texts into several African languages. CRESPIAF is becoming a research centre, but will not abandon safeguarding or capacity-

building, while encouraging synergies between conventions. This knowledge can also be used to support nominations, as can the sharing of experience between African countries.

- The main activities of the Sofia centre are capacity building, information sharing and networking. It regularly organizes capacity-building for its Member States on various topics (e.g. ICH and sustainable development, safeguarding plans, etc.), with 500 participants trained to date. The centre supports the European branch's network of facilitators. Erasmus accreditation aims to encourage the mobilization of young people, with two apprenticeship mobility programs in Bulgaria in 2024 to discuss ICH. At the World Conference on Arts and Education, the centre organized a side event on ICH and education. After COVID-19, the centre adapted its modalities, combining an online approach with face-to-face activities. It has two key projects: documentation and information on ICH, including online courses; safeguarding foodways with the involvement of the communities.
- CRIHAP organized capacity-building workshops over the years, notably on ICH and sustainable development, including an online workshop for community leaders (2020), for participants from Bangladesh, and for youth from the Lao People's Democratic Republic (2021), and another one on youth and sustainable development (2022). It runs an e-learning platform, including ICH and the Sustainable Development Goals, or ICH in the context of climate change. The centre could explore the possibility of translating into Chinese the online courses developed by and in collaboration with the Secretariat.
- The Tehran centre is currently evaluating its capacity-building activities, with a view to adapting them to the needs of Member States. A workshop on the implementation of the Convention in Pakistan was held in Islamabad. Member States need capacity-building in new areas, such as the links between ICH and museums: the centre is currently developing a new proposal on this topic, and a workshop will be organized in Armenia.

The ensuing discussion focused on online instruction and learning platforms. It was reiterated that the interfaces should be simple and user-friendly, and that approaches combining synchronous activities, such as live webinars, and asynchronous activities, offered good possibilities.

IV. Conclusions and follow up

New topics were addressed during this twelfth meeting. With regard to safeguarding ICH in the context of climate change, the Secretariat took note of the important actions undertaken by the C2Cs and will examine how to integrate this expertise into ongoing work in this field. About capacity building, the Secretariat underlined the contribution of C2Cs to the success of the periodic reporting exercise. New themes and delivering modalities were discussed, with opportunities to reach wider audiences and strengthen synergies between the C2Cs and with the Secretariat. These collaborations could in future be developed around the capacity-building platform for course dissemination, co-development and translation.

The Teheran centre has offered to host the next thirteenth coordination meeting of the C2Cs; the Secretariat took note of this invitation with appreciations. [Post-meeting note: due to many events and meetings planned both for the Culture Sector and at the level of the Organization, it was decided to convene the next meeting online.]