

INFORMATION SHEET: SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

POLICY AREA / POLICY ISSUE

Other sectors / General introduction – Sustainable Development

Note: At the national level, the policy issues raised by sustainable development may be allocated to a variety of different ministries, and not always to ministries of development. Some issues raised in the ODs on sustainable development are dealt with in the fact sheets on sustainable development (environmental sustainability, economic development and peace), while other issues are dealt with in separate fact sheets (such as education, or health).

ISSUES TO CONSIDER

Recent work in UNESCO has underlined the importance of the link between ICH safeguarding and the goal of sustainable development as part of a broader effort to integrate culture into the international agenda for sustainable development.¹ The Chengdu Recommendations in 2013 recalled ‘the Convention’s fundamental premise that intangible cultural heritage is a guarantee of sustainable development’, and stated that:²

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.

The IOS report of the same year found that

although the link between ICH and sustainable development is generally considered to be important, clarifying the nature of this link, identifying its potential both for sustainable development and for the viability of ICH and identifying the potential risks that development, if not sustainable, holds for ICH are still very much work in progress.³

Building on the idea in the Convention that ICH safeguarding is closely related to sustainable development, some references were made to sustainable development in the ODs even before 2013 (see below). In 2014, on the recommendation of the Committee in its 2013 session,⁴ a new chapter VI dealing with the relationship between safeguarding ICH and sustainable development at the national level was drawn up. These ODs were approved by

1. See <http://en.unesco.org/themes/culture-sustainable-development>. This section draws on the background paper, ‘Expert meeting on safeguarding intangible cultural heritage and sustainable development at the national level’, Available at <http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/doc/src/ITH-14-EXP-1-EN.docx>; Chengdu International Conference on Intangible Cultural Heritage (document ITH/13/EXP/8); Meeting Report, UNESCO-EIHCAP Regional Meeting Safeguarding Intangible Heritage and Sustainable Cultural Tourism: Opportunities and Challenges Hué, Viet Nam 11-13 December 2007, <http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/doc/src/00349-EN.pdf>. See also Keitumetse, S., 2011. ‘Sustainable development and cultural heritage management in Botswana: towards sustainable communities’. Sustainable Development, 19(1), pp.49–59.
2. UNESCO, Chengdu Recommendations, 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, www.unesco.org/culture/ich/doc/src/ITH-13-EXP-8-EN.docx
3. IOS report, ITH/13/8.COM/INF.5.c.
4. UNESCO, Intergovernmental Committee of the Intangible Heritage Convention, Decision 8.COM 13.a

the General Assembly in 2016.⁵ Following the Rio+20 Conference position,⁶ the ODs now define sustainable development in terms of four core dimensions: inclusive social development, inclusive economic development, environmental sustainability, and peace. This inclusive approach has been taken because of the general tendency to interpret sustainable development in a primarily economic, rather than a holistic way.⁷

Today, as part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development adopted at the United Nations Sustainable Development Summit on 25 September 2015, the Sustainable Development Goals underline the importance of strengthening ‘efforts to protect and safeguard the world’s cultural and natural heritage’ (11.4) as part of the global agenda, particularly in urban environments. The Habitat III New Urban Agenda that aims to set global standards of achievement in sustainable urban development mentions the important role of heritage (including intangible heritage) in development, supporting urban economies, the ‘rehabilitation and revitalization of urban areas’, and ‘social participation and the exercise of citizenship’. The protection and promotion of cultural heritage thus needs to be included ‘as a priority component of urban plans ... and strategic development policies’.⁸

The ODs illustrate a broader commitment to ensuring that ‘sustainable development plans, policies and programmes respect ethical considerations’ such as the involvement of communities, groups and, where appropriate, individuals in drafting and implementation, and as the primary beneficiaries thereof. Also, there is a commitment to ensure that sustainable development policies do not negatively affect the viability’ of the ICH or ‘de-contextualize or denaturalize’ it (OD 171). Even so, different stakeholders continue to hold varying interpretations of what sustainable development means and how safeguarding strategies or policies (including guidance such as the Operational Directives) should intersect with sustainable development approaches. The different views held by States are illustrated by the debates in the General Assembly of June 2016 in Paris during the adoption of the Sustainable Development chapter of the ODs.

Policymaking at the national level should thus consider both the role of ICH in promoting sustainable development (broadly understood), as well as the need to ensure that development helps to safeguard this heritage. It should consider both the specific benefits to communities concerned that result from ICH practice and safeguarding, as well as the broader benefits to society and humanity in general (social and economic development, environmental sustainability, and peace).

WHAT THE CONVENTION AND ITS TEXTS SAY

The Convention

The Convention’s Preamble recognizes ‘the importance of the intangible cultural heritage as a mainspring of cultural diversity and a guarantee of sustainable development’.

Article 2.1 of the Convention says that ‘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.’

Operational Directives

5. See UNESCO, Operational Directives 2016, <http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/en/directives>; on the drafting process see UNESCO, Report of the expert meeting on safeguarding intangible cultural heritage and sustainable development, <http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/doc/src/ITH-14-9.COM-13.b-EN.doc> which also contains the draft ODs.
6. United Nations 2012, Realizing the Future We Want for All, http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/pdf/Post_2015_UNTReport.pdf
7. L. Lixinski, ‘Sustainable Development in International Heritage Law: Embracing a Backwards Look for the Sake of Forwardness?’, Australian Yearbook of International Law (forthcoming, 2015).
8. United Nations, Agreed Draft of the New Urban Agenda 10 Sept 2016, para 38,45,60,124,125; accessed at <https://habitat3.org/the-new-urban-agenda>

Chapter VI of the ODs on ‘Safeguarding ICH and Sustainable Development at the National Level’ covers a broad range of topics including inclusive social development, inclusive economic development, environmental sustainability, and peace.

The ODs state that

With a view to effectively implementing the Convention, States Parties shall endeavour, by all appropriate means, to recognize the importance and strengthen the role of intangible cultural heritage as a driver and guarantee of sustainable development, as well as fully integrate the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage into their development plans, policies and programmes at all levels. (OD 170).

Under the heading ‘inclusive social development’ the ODs on sustainable development (chapter VI.1) include references to food security, health care, quality education, gender equality and access to clean and safe water and sustainable water use. Health care (OD 179) and education (OD 180) are dealt with in separate fact sheets on health and education, as these issues would likely be dealt with by health and education ministries. Gender equality and the recognition of the diversity of perspectives on gender and its relation to ICH (OD 181) is covered in the policy fact sheet on human rights. Access to food and water and the use of traditional knowledge to mitigate the effects of climate change (OD 182) would likely be addressed under environmental and social ministries at the national level, and/or treated as a human rights issue.

Under the heading ‘inclusive economic development’ the ODs on sustainable development (chapter VI.2) include references to income generation and sustainable livelihoods, productive employment and decent work, and the impact of tourism on the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage and vice versa. Two of the major sources of income associated with ICH are tourism and cultural products or creative industries. There is some overlap between sustainable development issues relating to cultural industries and intellectual property policies, which are discussed in a separate fact sheet on intellectual property.

Under the heading ‘environmental sustainability’ the ODs on sustainable development (chapter VI.3) include references to environmental impacts of the safeguarding of ICH, and community-based resilience to natural disasters and climate change using traditional knowledge and practices. These issues are dealt with in the fact sheet on sustainable development and the environment.

Under the heading ‘intangible cultural heritage and peace’ the ODs on sustainable development (chapter VI.4) include references to acknowledging and promoting ICH that plays a role in improving social cohesion and reducing discrimination, preventing and resolving disputes, and the restoration of peace and security. These issues are covered in the policy fact sheet on sustainable development – social cohesion and mutual respect.

The concept is also referred to in OD 73 (on contributions to the Fund),⁹ and 111 (on raising awareness about the link between ICH and sustainable development). OD 102(e) says that awareness-raising actions about ICH should not ‘lead to over-commercialization or to unsustainable tourism that may put at risk the intangible cultural heritage concerned.’ OD 117 stipulates that ‘Particular attention should be paid to avoiding commercial misappropriation, to managing tourism in a sustainable way, to finding a proper balance between the interests of the commercial party, the public administration and the cultural practitioners, and to ensuring that the commercial use does not distort the meaning and purpose of the intangible cultural heritage for the community concerned.’

Ethical Principles

⁹ OD 73: No contributions [to the ICH Fund] may be accepted from entities whose activities are not compatible with the requirements of sustainable development or with the requirements of mutual respect among communities, groups and individuals.

Ethical Principle 3: 'Mutual respect as well as a respect for and mutual appreciation of intangible cultural heritage, should prevail in interactions between States and between communities, groups and, where applicable, individuals.'

Ethical Principle 4: 'All interactions with the communities, groups and, where applicable, individuals who create, safeguard, maintain and transmit intangible cultural heritage should be characterized by transparent collaboration, dialogue, negotiation and consultation, and contingent upon their free, prior, sustained and informed consent'.

Ethical Principle 7: 'The communities, groups and individuals who create intangible cultural heritage should benefit from the protection of the moral and material interests resulting from such heritage, and particularly from its use, research, documentation, promotion or adaptation by members of the communities or others'.

Ethical Principle 11: 'Cultural diversity and the identities of communities, groups and individuals should be fully respected. In the respect of values recognized by communities, groups and individuals and sensitivity to cultural norms, specific attention to gender equality, youth involvement and respect for ethnic identities should be included in the design and implementation of safeguarding measures'.

OTHER RELEVANT INTERNATIONAL LEGAL INSTRUMENTS

Paris Agreement (2016) within the framework of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).¹⁰

Sustainable Development Goals (2015).¹¹

Convention on Biological Diversity (1993).¹²

FURTHER INFORMATION

2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development¹³

The Habitat III New Urban Agenda.¹⁴

Report, United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, Rio+20 (2012).¹⁵

Johannesburg Declaration, World Summit on Sustainable Development (2002).¹⁶

EXAMPLES

In **Viet Nam**, ICH safeguarding is incorporated into development programming and the Strategy for Cultural Development 2010-2020 encourages joint programmes with the Committee for Ethnic Minorities to strengthen the development of ethnic minority cultures.

The National Programme of the Development of Small Towns and Villages of **Belarus** provides some measures and investments for development of the economy and social and cultural environment of provinces rich in ICH.

The 2011-2015 strategy for safeguarding, protecting and the sustainable commercial use of the cultural heritage of **Croatia** requires the inclusion of ICH in local- and State-level strategic

10 <http://unfccc.int/2860.php>

11 <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdgs>

12 <https://www.cbd.int/>

13 http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1&Lang=E

14 United Nations, Agreed Draft of the New Urban Agenda 10 Sept 2016, accessed at <https://habitat3.org/the-new-urban-agenda>

15 The Future We Want - Outcome document
<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?menu=1298>

16 http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/documents/WSSD_POI_PD/English/POI_PD.htm

programmes and plans and includes culture and tourism and supporting craftsmanship in its main goals.¹⁷

The legislative and policy framework for ICH safeguarding in **Slovakia** encourages integration of ICH management into development activities.¹⁸

In **Honduras**, safeguarding of ICH has been integrated into a ‘cultural guards’ training programme for park rangers.¹⁹

RELEVANT CASE STUDIES IN THE CAPACITY-BUILDING MATERIALS

Case Study 1. Stakeholders in the management and safeguarding of a festival in Japan
CS1-v1.0: [English](#)|[French](#)|[Spanish](#)|[Russian](#)|[Arabic](#)

Case Study 15. ICH and income generation: circumcision processions in Bandung, Indonesia
CS15-v1.0: [English](#)|[French](#)|[Spanish](#)|[Russian](#)|[Arabic](#)

Case Study 16. Traditional crafts and income generation in Penang, Malaysia
CS16-v1.0: [English](#)|[French](#)|[Spanish](#)|[Russian](#)|[Arabic](#)

Case Study 17. Intangible cultural heritage and inclusive economic development: textile art in Taquile (Peru)
CS17-v2.0 (RU + AR: still version 1.0):
[English](#)|[French](#)|[Spanish](#)|[Russian](#)|[Arabic](#)

Case Study 18. The commercialization of traditional knowledge about an appetite suppressant in South Africa and Namibia
CS18-v1.0: [English](#)|[French](#)|[Spanish](#)|[Russian](#)|[Arabic](#)

Case Study 19. Socio-economic development and the promotion of ICH in Ecuador
CS19-v1.0: [English](#)|[French](#)|[Spanish](#)|[Russian](#)|[Arabic](#)

Case Study 20. Safeguarding and income generation by exploring new markets for traditionally produced cloth in Uganda
CS20-v1.0: [English](#)|[French](#)|[Spanish](#)|[Russian](#)|[Arabic](#)

Case study 36. Traditional brass and copper craft of utensil making among the Thatheras of Jandiala Guru, Punjab, India
CS36-v1.0: [English](#)|[French](#)|[Spanish](#)

Case study 39: Indonesian batik
CS39-v1.0: [English](#)|[French](#)|[Spanish](#)

Case study 35. Intangible cultural heritage and environmental sustainability: cultural mapping of the sacred sites of the northwest Amazon – a binational initiative
CS35-v1.0: [English](#)|[French](#)|[Spanish](#)

Case Study 14. ICH and social development: literacy through oral poetry in Yemen
CS14-v2.0 (RU + AR: still version 1.0):
[English](#)|[French](#)|[Spanish](#)|[Russian](#)|[Arabic](#)

Case study 34. Intangible cultural heritage, a model for peace and security: The Manden Charter in Mali
CS34-v1.0: [English](#)|[French](#)|[Spanish](#)

Case study 41: Two examples of ICH and conflict prevention/resolution
CS41-v1.0-EN: [English](#)|[French](#)|[Spanish](#)|[Arabic](#)

17. Examination of the reports of States Parties 2012, ITH/12/7.COM/6, para 50.

18. Examination of the reports of States Parties 2014, ITH/14/9.COM/5.a, para 10.

19. Examination of the reports of States Parties 2014, ITH/14/9.COM/5.a, para 17.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- To what extent, and for what reasons, is ICH, and culture more generally, considered to be a driver of sustainable development in the State? What are the roles of different groups (e.g. youth, women, indigenous groups) in this process?
- How does this affect the kinds of priorities for ICH safeguarding in the State, from the perspective of policy makers?
- What kinds of development needs do communities in the State express? How can these be addressed through safeguarding of their ICH, if at all?
- What major barriers are there to ensuring that communities benefit from the safeguarding of their ICH? How can these be addressed?