

International Meeting of Experts  
Intangible Cultural Heritage: Priority Domains  
for an International Convention  
Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 22-24 January 2002

**FINAL REPORT**

**INTRODUCTION**

Pursuant to resolution 31C/30 adopted by the General Conference at its 31<sup>st</sup> session, the Director-General convened an international meeting on “Intangible Cultural Heritage: Priority Domains for an International Convention”, in Rio de Janeiro (Brazil) from 22 to 24 January 2002. The meeting was financed jointly by the Brazilian and Japanese Governments and by UNESCO (cf Annotated Agenda, appendix 1). Participating experts were invited on a personal capacity basis (cf List of participants, appendix 2).

**OPENING OF THE MEETING**

The meeting was opened by Ms Ruth Cardoso, First Lady of Brazil, in the presence of Mr Francisco Weffort, Minister of Culture of Brazil and Mr Koichiro Matsuura, Director-General of UNESCO. Some 100 persons attended the morning session, including Brazilian public officials, scientific experts and representatives of the national media.

Ms Cardoso emphasized the importance of the theme of the meeting, recalling Brazil’s deep involvement in the preservation and diffusion of intangible heritage. She underlined the need to work for and in cooperation with the poorest communities and gave as an example the humanitarian project “Comunidade Solidária” which contributes to the development of art and handicrafts at local levels. The guiding principle of this initiative is to help local communities develop their own culture and specific know-how in order to create additional resources and contribute to the State’s welfare. Above all, she added, it is the recognition of people’s identity and of the value of their work which allows for the present success of “Comunidade solidária”. Thus, she stated, the linkage between culture and development is one of the best means to raise the social level of the poorest Brazilian populations and to foster positive views on the globalisation process. The identification of expressions of intangible cultural heritage, together with the recognition of the plurality of cultural identities, will certainly meet this challenge, she concluded.

Mr Weffort, Minister of Culture (Brazil), provided information on the National Institute for Cultural Heritage (IPHAN) and explained that the researches conducted by this institute inspired the Presidential Decree of 2000 creating a national Registry for Intangible Cultural Heritage and a national programme for its protection. He also presented the MONUMENTA programme for the protection of monuments, launched in cooperation with UNESCO and the Inter-American Development Bank.

Presenting the domain of Intangible Cultural Heritage as a new field of concern and activities for UNESCO, Mr Matsuura, Director-General of UNESCO, recalled the terms of the resolution 31C/30 adopted by the General Conference at its 31<sup>st</sup> session, by which he is invited to submit to the General Conference at its 32nd session “a report on the situation calling for standard-setting and on the possible scope of such standard-setting, together with a preliminary draft international convention”.

Mr Matsuura recalled the 1989 Recommendation on the Safeguarding of Traditional Culture and Folklore and the two new normative instruments recently adopted by the 31<sup>st</sup> Session of the General Conference to enrich the UNESCO unique legislative corpus on protection of cultural heritage at the international level: the Convention on the Protection of Underwater Cultural Heritage and the Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity.

He emphasized that the negotiation process applied for the latter instrument led to its unanimous adoption by the 185 Member States of the Organization, and should be considered as a model for the preparation process leading to the future convention on intangible cultural heritage. Mr Matsuura held up as inspiring examples the initiatives already undertaken by the Brazilian Authorities (Decree of 2000) and the successful 1972 Convention on the Protection of World Cultural and Natural Heritage.

The Director-General underlined that essential definitions and recommendations had been suggested in the Action Plan adopted during the Turin meeting of international experts in March 2001. He also acknowledged the strong impacts on the safeguarding of the 19 proclaimed masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible heritage of Humanity, allowing for the fruitful implementation of national policies.

Referring to resolution 31C/30, he noted that its implementation would require numerous expert meetings. The main purpose of the Rio meeting, he emphasized, would be to reflect upon the priority domains to be addressed by an international Convention for the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage. He also noted that the presence among the experts of certain members of the international Jury for the “Proclamation of Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity” should assist in examining the impacts of the Proclamation on the safeguarding of intangible heritage (cf Address by the Director-General, Appendix 3).

Mr Antonio Augusto Arantes, anthropologist, outlined the methodology used in Brazil for the elaboration of cultural references (contacts, sites, registers, products, inventory, bibliographical collections) and for the creation of a national Registry of Intangible Cultural Heritage expressions. He gave some definitions for four of the selected domains of the Registry (places, crafts and ways of doing, celebrations, arts and forms of expressions):

- Places: spaces appropriated by ceremonies and other collective public activities;

- Crafts and ways of doing: traditional knowledge and practices used in work, healing and other cultural practices;
- Celebrations: festivities and public rituals associated with different aspects of social life;
- Arts and forms of expression: non-linguistic communication and expressive practices.

Brazil, he stated, presents a wide range of economic, social and cultural diversity, endowed with appropriate provisions in the Constitution and the 2000 Decree, both legal instruments which contribute to an effective protection of that intangible heritage. He then presented some of the pilot projects currently being conducted in the cities of Porto Seguro, Trancoso and Belmonte (cf A. Arantes : “Referencias e patrimonio cultural”, appendix 4).

At the end of the First session, participants were invited to visit the exhibition on the Brazilian programme “Artesanato Solidário” focused on the preservation and development of arts and crafts.

**AGENDA ITEM 1 – THE ROLE OF UNESCO IN THE FIELD OF INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE AS COMPARED WITH THAT OF OTHER INTERNATIONAL AND REGIONAL INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS. Presentation by H.E Ms Azziza Bennani.**

In his introductory speech, **Mr Mounir Bouchenaki**, Assistant Director General for Culture, underlined UNESCO’s experience in domains pertaining to the protection of cultural heritage. He emphasized that the project for an international convention was a legal and political response to the growing concern of humanity for the safeguarding and promotion of intangible cultural heritage. This commonly shared interest is closely linked to the international action in favour of cultural diversity, he added. He then proceeded with the election of the Bureau: Mr Mohammed Bedjaoui was elected Chairperson, Ms Maria-Cecilia Londres Vice-Chairperson, and Ms Sudha Gopalakrishnan Rapporteur.

*Ms Azziza Bennani* presented the specificity of UNESCO’s role in the field of intangible cultural heritage, in comparison with other UN agencies and inter-regional or regional organizations. She related in detail the activities of WIPO, the World Bank, FAO, ILO, WHO, UNCTAD, UNHCHR, the Convention on Bio-diversity, the Agence de la Francophonie, the Council of Europe, MERCOSUR, SADC, TURKSOY, and the Islamic Conference Organization. She also gave examples of the most relevant legislation existing at national level, citing in particular that of Japan, Republic of Korea and Philippines (system of Living Human Treasures), Brazil and Dominican Republic (system of Registries) and Lithuania (system of committees and foundations). Finally, she outlined some possible lines of action for UNESCO, noting that the Organisation should avoid overlaps with other agencies such as WIPO which holds specific competencies in the

domain of economic rights (intellectual property). Nonetheless, she urged, UNESCO should maintain a cultural approach to intangible cultural heritage, and further develop its action by enhancing the value of this heritage, raising awareness of Member States to the need for its protection, while bearing in mind the specific requirements and constraints of States on this issue (cf A. Bennani: “The role of UNESCO in the field of intangible cultural heritage as compared with that of other international and regional intergovernmental organizations”, Appendix 5).

### **Discussion on Agenda item 1**

During the discussion which followed the presentation, a participant intervened to mention the impetus brought by the 2001 Oruro Declaration and the Bolivian legislation, together with the Brazilian decree, on the normative action taken in Dominican Republic. Another participant underlined the various actions developed at the national level in Africa, where oral traditions are essential, and emphasized the role of the Organization of African Unity (OAU). The creation of an overall coordinating structure, in order to foster complementary actions between international agencies, was suggested.

Finally, participants asked UNESCO to intervene in domains not covered by other specialized agencies and to protect most particularly the cultural dimension of intangible heritage.

### **AGENDA ITEM 2 – BEST PRACTICES FOR SAFEGUARDING AND PROMOTING INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE – IMPACT OF THE FIRST PROCLAMATION ON THE NINETEEN SELECTED MASTERPIECES**

Video clips of the nineteen masterpieces were presented by the Chairperson. Participants presented examples of best practices and of their impact.

#### **The Cultural Space of the Brotherhood of the Holy Spirit of the Congos of Villa Mella, Dominican Republic, presented by H.E. Ms Lil Despradel**

*Ms Despradel* presented the function and value of this cultural space. She explained that the Brotherhood of the Holy Spirit of the Congos, which concerns an area of 1 million inhabitants, performs its activities during religious festivals, especially at Pentecost. She stressed that support for the Brotherhood was important with regard to the transmission of values and the preservation of cultural identity. She emphasized the importance of the environment in the protection of intangible cultural heritage. For example, in the Congos of Villa Mella, due to the destruction of forests and a consequent shortage of wood, musical instruments are now made of plastic.

She recalled that the Brotherhood had primarily been threatened by a common lack of interest in mixed and African cultures, the acceleration of urban growth, etc. Following the Proclamation, however, the cultural space benefited from a large-scale promotion in the media (television, radio, press articles). An international drum festival was organized in the park of the community. CDs of sacred and secular music were produced. Construction projects were rejected by the Government. Furthermore, inspired by the Bolivian and

Brazilian laws, a national Registry of cultural intangible cultural manifestations was created by presidential decree (2 October 2001).

### **Kutiyattam, Sanskrit Theatre, India, presented by Ms Sudha Gopalakrishnan**

*Ms Gopalakrishnan* gave a brief presentation of the Kutiyattam. Kutiyattam is a tradition going back to 2000 years old, she underlined. It represents a unique synthesis of Sanskrit classicism and local traditions of Kerala and was traditionally confined to temple theatres. It has only recently emerged into the secular space. She also mentioned that, following Proclamation, the Kutiyattam community (patrons and practitioners) for the first time made efforts to join forces and form a network in order to address the issue of revitalization more efficiently. This union within the community is perhaps the greatest advantage gained through the UNESCO recognition. A budget is currently being prepared by the Ministry of Culture in the wake of a five-year plan (2002-2007) for the revitalization and documentation of intangible cultural heritage. At the regional level, new initiatives are being planned but Ms Gopalakrishnan suggested that a global action plan should be undertaken under the leadership of UNESCO.

### **Nôgaku Theatre, Japan, presented by Mr Yoshikazu Hasegawa**

*Mr Hasegawa* noted that Nôgaku was designated an important intangible cultural property in 1957. He explained that as a consequence of Proclamation, the Nogaku Kyokai intended to initiate new programmes scheduling performances of Nôgaku and that additional resources had been allocated for this purpose. He mentioned that special ceremonies of Nô and Kyogen had been organized to celebrate the Proclamation. The Nôgaku theatre also publicized the Proclamation in brochures and in the media. In conclusion, he mentioned that the Asia/Pacific Cultural Centre for UNESCO (ACCU) would organize an international seminar in March 2002, focusing on the methodology and systems relevant to the dissemination and safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage in Asian/Pacific States, based on Japan's experience.

### **Cross Crafting and its Symbolism in Lithuania, presented by H.E. Ugné Karvelis**

*Ms Karvelis* explained that cross crafting and the rituals associated with crosses are linked to the founding legend of Lithuania. The making of crosses is also an art that has never been codified, she emphasized, and is the result of the work of anonymous crafters. She insisted on the fact that cross-crafting is not taught in any school but is transmitted orally from master to pupil. Consequently, the impact of Proclamation on the masters of cross-crafting was important because it represented an official recognition. Young people, she noted, now show an interest in perpetuating the tradition of cross-crafting which relies on the transmission of systems of knowledge, beliefs and know-how. She also noted that the Lithuanian Arts Museum was currently preparing a special CD-ROM of all cross-crafting material to be found in Lithuanian museums.

### **The Cultural Space of Jemaa el-Fna Square, presented by H.E. Ms Aziza Bennani**

*Ms Bennani* presented the cultural space of the Jemaa el-Fna Square as a centre of multiple activities involving magicians, dancers, artists, musicians and many other people. She stressed that it was highly endangered by urban growth and development projects and that Proclamation had helped to conciliate urban planning and economic development with cultural and environmental concerns. Thus, during the first phase of the implementation of the action plan, pedestrian streets converging on the Square were created, motor traffic was reorganized so as to decrease the number of cars and tourist coaches, pollution was reduced.

Concerning the second phase, which focuses on the “safeguarding of traditions”, she underscored the role of the story-tellers who regularly transmit their oral tradition in schools of the Medina. She added that a competition with prize-awarding ceremonies was now organized by the Association of Friends of the Square and by the Ministry of Culture in order to discover and support new talents. She noted that three major activities were being planned : preservation of the cultural space, promotion of traditions, research and publication.

Finally, she mentioned that the Proclamation of the living intangible heritage on the Jemaa el-Fnaa Square was a highly significant recognition, complementary to the inscription of the old Medina on the World Heritage List in 1985.

### **The Oral Heritage of Gelede, Benin, presented by H.E. Mr Olabiyi Babalola Yai**

*Mr Yai* presented the Gelede as a complete art comprising rites and dances, songs, masks, costumes, etc. Main purpose, he explained, is to appease the anger of the mothers and to honour the primordial mother, as well as the spirits of the ancestors.

The Proclamation of the Gelede, he noted, has been widely broadcasted throughout the local and national media. Furthermore, an association ensuring the link between the traditional bearers living in the villages and the practitioners living in towns has been established in the administrative capital. Governmental funding has been allocated to this project and support given to the creation of an international house of the Gelede. He mentioned the risk of the Gelede being folklorized due to the Yoruba diaspora and urged for more concerted action among concerned States.

### **Brazilian policy in the field of intangible cultural heritage safeguarding, by Ms Maria Cecilia Londres**

*Ms Londres* stated that harmonious policies must be established in order to preserve the continuity of tangible and intangible heritage. However, due to migration flows, mass-tourism or urban growth, she noted that specific policies in favour of intangible cultural heritage had to be thoroughly implemented. The notion of “preservation” in Brazil, she noted, does not refer to legal protection but rather to an action of identification, documentation, dissemination and support for the reproduction process of those intangible cultural expressions.

She then stressed several issues to be addressed :

- i) How to delimit a scope of action without opposing tangible to intangible heritage?
- ii) How to preserve a heritage that mostly depends on a dynamic and creative process relying on the will and commitment of bearers/actors ?
- iii) Is the Registry methodology complementary to the inscription on a List?
- iv) How to avoid the notion of “authenticity”?
- v) How to take into account or not the question of collective property rights on expressions of intangible heritage?

She underlined that in Brazil, the main issue was to articulate the social and economic dimensions of public policies. She also argued that it was incumbent upon the State to develop partnerships with local agencies (local councils, NGOs’, etc.) and private organizations.

## **Discussion on Agenda Item 2**

*The Chairperson*, referring to the 1950 Japanese legislation, said that the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage was a way in which to strengthen group identities because it encompasses numerous forms of artistic and cultural expressions. Policies in favour of intangible heritage, he added, are a powerful means of intercultural dialogue and an important factor for unity and communication.

Underlining the risk of creating stereotypes, a participant noted that intangible cultural heritage is an ongoing creative process. The relevance of policies aiming at the “preservation” of a living heritage was therefore put into question. A participant proposed to include in the future convention an article on the necessity to respect and encourage the process of “invention” and “evolution”, as opposed to “distortion”. Nonetheless, it was mentioned that intangible heritage faced dangers of distortion and that appropriate publications should duly take into account the fragility and malleability of intangible cultural heritage.

Another participant pointed out that the use of new technologies in the safeguarding of intangible heritage was unfortunately often restricted to the most developed countries and needed to be extended. Thus, the development of a modern system of archiving was strongly suggested.

The Chairperson announced the creation of a drafting committee. He proposed Mr Yai as President of the Drafting Committee and Mr Seitel as Rapporteur. The proposal was unanimously approved. The Chairperson then announced the names of the members of the Drafting Group: Mr Arantes, Ms Bennani, Mr Harvilahti, Mr Hasegawa, Ms Martynova, Mr Pocius.

### **AGENDA ITEM 3 – PRIORITY DOMAINS IN THE FIELD OF INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE TO BE COVERED BY AN INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION**

#### **a) Presentation of the Report of the International Round Table “Intangible Cultural Heritage -Working Definitions” (Turin, March 2001). Presentation by Mr Frederico Lenzerini.**

*Mr Lenzerini* took the floor on behalf of Mr Francioni, unable to attend the meeting. On the basis of the conclusions drawn at the end of the International Round Table, he stressed the following:

1. The importance of fostering cultural diversity: the relevance of cultural diversity is stated in the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity and is also expressed in the action plan adopted by the Turin Round Table.
2. The need to involve local communities in policies aiming at the selection, safeguarding and management of intangible cultural heritage, as underlined in the Turin action plan. He noted that the relevance of intangible heritage for the social identity of the people, communities and groups which are the creators or bearers of this heritage, is essential. He added that the development of classification and documentation of cultural manifestations should be pursued. He pointed out that the schema of the 1972 World Heritage Convention might not be the suitable model for Intangible Cultural Heritage and that a legal approach should perhaps avoid the establishment of a List based on selective criteria of importance. The latter might give rise to arbitrary discrimination among cultures, he underlined.
3. The objectives to be pursued by safeguarding intangible cultural heritage in an international convention, are identified in the Turin action plan: “i) to conserve human creations that may disappear forever; (ii) to give them world recognition; (iii) to strengthen cultural identity; (iv) to enable social co-operation within and between groups; (v) to provide historical continuity; (vi) to enhance the creative diversity of humanity; (vii) to foster enjoyment”. He added that these objectives should allow social groups to enjoy the recognition of certain fundamental rights, such as the right to practice and transmit one’s religion. Finally, he insisted on the fact that the safeguarding of intangible heritage was a way to recognize the value of different cultures. The international community should therefore refer to the universal value of such heritage, to the extent that loss or destruction of this heritage amounts to loss and impoverishment of the common heritage of humanity.

*Mr Arantes* judged it important to recall the work currently conducted by the Brazilian Authorities, as this experience could be useful at the international level:



1. Collections of material: in this regard, UNESCO could help in the collecting and registering;
2. Historical continuity, vitality, promotion: Brazil has successfully created new programmes in these fields;
3. Registration: it is important to take into account all information collected by national institutes, independent researchers, universities, architects, etc.

Mr Arantes explained that the concept of “sites” was used in the terminology dedicated to the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage in Brazil and proposed the following definition: “a socio-spatial configuration, delimited by cultural, political or legal boundaries, continuous or discontinuous, including one or more focal areas (localities), possibly associated with surroundings”.

UNESCO has a role to play, he urged, by coordinating the works already done at national level and by producing some standards, such as in the Proclamation of Oral and Intangible Masterpieces of Humanity programme which presents a panel of best practices.

The second action to be undertaken, he added, concerns the holistic approach to adopt and the criteria to be used to select the intangible cultural heritage. These criteria should have two dimensions:

- **internal**: those pertaining to social groups/local communities (representations, practices, ideas, beliefs). As the spiritual, symbolic, political, economic meanings of intangible cultural expressions are always changing, it is important to identify these elements of the intangible cultural heritage from the internal point of view;

- **external**: the values attributed to this cultural heritage, especially by common or universal norms, concerns, and interests.

He noted that the globalization process, together with the market value of intangible cultural heritage, makes it indispensable to recognize the dynamic link between internal and external approaches, which interact with one another. Thus, he underlined that local cultures are closely related to the market and associated with consumer-like habits and modes.

Finally, he outlined five important recommendations:

- i) establish national registries on intangible heritage,
- ii) develop assistance programmes,
- iii) promote registries or panels of best practices,
- iv) disseminate the principle of international solidarity,
- v) consider the intrinsic link between internal and external criteria.

*Ms Londres* gave additional information on the research project established by the Ministry of Culture to complete the national registry of intangible cultural expressions. She mentioned the very positive impact of fiscal incentive measures on various projects that had been prioritized by local communities. The creation of a special mechanism in favour of intangible cultural heritage, she added, needs the help of representatives from civil society and from experts who are able to elaborate conceptual criteria and establish priorities. The government will help, in that way, by supporting a global approach to the issue:

- Collection of information,
- Development of data bases,

- Dissemination of information and transmission to local populations (Television, Local Councils),
- Political and Financial support for creators.

Ms Londres stressed the importance of the dissemination of this heritage which is often an essential expression of national identity. However, she underlined the question of the transformation and distortion to the heritage brought about by the globalization process. The difficulty often lies in the local monitoring of this heritage. Thus, she supported the idea of drafting a legal instrument inspired by the model of the Living Human Treasures system, recalling, nonetheless, that the external/internal balance should be respected. Finally, she asked for policy-impact reports on the safeguarding of intangible heritage to take into consideration its cultural dimension. This has been one of the main battles of IPHAN, she added.

**Mr Rallis**, Observer and Deputy Permanent Delegate of Greece, took the floor on behalf of H.E. Mr Vassilikos who could not attend the meeting and presented the views of H.E. Mr Vassilikos on intangible heritage: he reiterated the support of Greece to the process which should lead to the adoption of a normative instrument for intangible cultural heritage. He stressed that the 1972 Convention was an excellent guideline and acknowledged the positive impact of a Heritage List on the transmission of the value of this heritage.

Mr Bouchenaki welcomed the support brought by Greece to this debate and to the future convention. He summarized the debates on the objectives of the Convention, the modalities and means of action that this instrument should encourage. He also raised the issue of the criteria to be established within a possible list and of the priority domains.

### **Discussion on agenda item 3 a)**

A participant raised three issues to be addressed :

- how to protect a creating process ?
- how to give financial support to artists and creators?
- how to distinguish intangible heritage from folklore?

Another participant explained that the protection of cultural heritage should be dealt with on three distinct levels:

-at the local level: the role and function of local communities is fundamental, he urged, but the financial implication of States often remains necessary;

-at the national level: States are intermediary actors between the communities bearing the cultures and programmes developed at the international level (UNESCO). The intervention of States is requested for providing efficient political and economic resources;

-at the international level: international action must not replace the action of States nor of local communities. The purpose of an international convention, for example, is to offer an adequate framework for the development of capacities of communities and States.

The need to involve the local communities as much as the States, was strongly reaffirmed. A participant underlined the role of the media, which, even in developing

countries, play a major role in the access to culture. UNESCO should focus on the role of the media in awareness-rising campaigns, it was urged. Also, it was noted that many elements of oral expressions are silently disappearing: the case of regional languages or local accents in France was mentioned.

Another key concern to participants was the crucial connection between intangible cultural heritage, environmental harmony, and economic sustainability. The case of local communities in Dominican Republic, compelled to use plastic material for the making of traditional musical instruments, due to destruction of forests, was referred to. As a consequence, it was stated that the natural conditions where intangible cultural heritage originates, should be fully respected.

A participant concluded on the need to promote the view that all expressions of cultural intangible heritage are valuable and deserve protection.

Finally, a participant proposed to include four cultural references in the priority domains of a convention : Music; Dance; Oral Traditions; Endangered Languages.

**b) Priority domains for the Proclamation in the field of intangible heritage and suggestions for a future international convention (a report on the Elche meeting of the Proclamation Jury, 21-23 September 2001, Spain). Presentation by Mr Ralph Regenvanu**

Mr Regenvanu recalled that the mandate of the jury for the Proclamation was to select or choose, out of a broad range of candidatures submitted in a number of domains of intangible heritage by member states, those to be proclaimed.

He then presented the four outcomes of the Elche meeting, mentioning that they could provide valuable insights in the process of developing a future international instrument :

- i) endorsement of the Turin definition of intangible cultural heritage,
- ii) no prioritizing of domains, but possibility for the jury to set specific domains in which candidatures could be submitted in each submission period,
- iii) ineligibility of languages as such from the Proclamation and clarification on “orality” as a defining feature of the expression,
- iv) consistency with the ideals of UNESCO.

He mentioned the criteria established by the international jury for the Proclamation in order to achieve the objective of expediting the selection process for the jury while still maintaining the capacity to embrace all cultural diversity :

“In the vast domain covered by the oral and intangible heritage of humanity (as defined in the Regulations relating to the Proclamation), the selection of masterpieces may include but not be limited to areas such as cultural events [expressions] closely linked to languages, oral traditions, rituals, the performing arts and craft skills. To facilitate this process, the Jury may identify certain fields of expression for specific consideration in each submission period”.

Concerning the issue of priority domains, Mr Regenvanu expressed his personal view that the principle of cultural diversity endorsed by UNESCO required and demanded

no privileging of domains in the field of intangible heritage. He urged the expert group to rather adopt terminology and establish principles that encompass and embrace all forms of cultural expression.

Finally, he underlined that it would be logical that the Proclamation Programme and the forthcoming convention converge.

### **Discussion on Agenda item 3-b)**

**The Chairperson** recalled that the wide variety of elements forming intangible cultural heritage precluded the international community to recommending that a State protect all the components of this heritage (lack of financial and human resources). On the contrary, the wish to establish in a draft Convention a list of priority domains could lead to other problems such as arbitrary choices depending on circumstances and not answering real needs.

A participant suggested two possibilities: i) the establishment of a list of priority domains without any classification, ii) a list of criteria which could help States to determine priority domains.

Another participant suggested that the States, upon consultation of local communities, could establish themselves a list of indicative and temporary priority domains. It was also suggested to complete such a list by another priority list drafted by UNESCO, on the basis of established criteria recognized by the international community.

**The Chairperson**, however, raised the difficulty of having two parallel lists of priority domains and of translating this commitment into legal terms.

Some participants mentioned that the process of assessing priority domains was not entirely satisfactory :

-a participant noted the difficulty of establishing a list of priority domains or categories which could imply ideological or cultural bias. Thus, taking into account the fact that categories are determined by cultural and social practices, a list of priority domains should be temporary and indicative, he added.

-a participant stressed the utmost importance of fully respecting the variety of intangible cultural expressions.

-a participant insisted upon the difficulty for States to establish priority domains : in Africa, for example, international borders do not coincide with the manifestations of cultural expressions, which are often transnational.

A common concern was expressed concerning the possibility for UNESCO to establish some kind of priority actions or criteria, while adopting at the same time a flexible approach, in order to fully respect cultural diversity and ensure the possibility for States to complete this list.

A debate followed, giving voice to different proposals on the appropriate manner to privilege priority domains in the field of intangible cultural heritage.

- refer to a large agreement from Member States,
- refer to several categories of intangible cultural heritage,

- establish an evaluation of priorities by States,
- implement a registry of cultural expressions at national levels,
- establish an indicative List, with the implication of communities,
- support all ways of expression and doing, without any hierarchy, and avoiding any territorial approach,
- avoid priority domains, and use very cautiously the reference to national cultures in the context of an increasingly globalized world,
- use the word “scope” rather than “priority domains”, in order to avoid any ideological bias,
- implicate as much as possible the local communities.

**The Chairperson** stressed the importance of deciding who takes part in the process leading to the drafting of an international convention (social groups, States, international community). Ultimately, he emphasized, States decide which criteria are the most appropriate, and which priorities should be given.

#### **AGENDA ITEM 4: TERMINOLOGY IN THE FIELD OF INTANGIBLE HERITAGE. Presentation by Mr Peter Seitel**

**Mr Peter Seitel** presented his paper, “Defining the Scope of the Term Intangible Cultural Heritage”. He provided a review of the definition of intangible cultural heritage (“Naming Intangible Cultural Heritage”), a review of related terminology and its conceptual and operational definition (“Defining Intangible Cultural Heritage”), a specification of the scope of intangible cultural heritage (“Defining the scope of Intangible Cultural Heritage”), and a consideration for the implications of the scope of the definition for future UNESCO action (“Defining Intangible Cultural Heritage and Safeguarding Operationally”).

Mr Seitel underlined that the scope of Intangible Cultural Heritage could be defined on two axes:

- i) The first relates to the different kinds of communities in which intangible cultural heritage plays its important roles. These kinds of communities include, but are not limited to, those that can be characterized in the following ways : indigenous, ethnic, hybrid or creole, trans-national, classical court-related, religious, occupational, gender-based, and disability-based ;
- ii) The other axis is comprised of the scope of human activity within a society to which the term Intangible Cultural Heritage applies. He underlined that the dimension of the traditional knowledge and practice encompassed by Intangible Cultural Heritage had been defined by example in the Action Plan developed by the participants at the Turin roundtable. He noted it was broad in scope as culture itself, including all knowledge and practice socially shared by a given group of people.

Although broad in scope when defined conceptually, he emphasized that Intangible Cultural Heritage has a narrower scope when defined operationally for institutional engagement such as policy formation and safeguarding projects. Thus, he noted that operational definitions for the terms intangible cultural heritage, safeguarding, traditional

cultural process, and traditional knowledge, all depend on mutual and respectful dialogue and decision-making in collaboration with living people. It is living people whose words identify, and specify the boundaries of the practices and bodies of knowledge that are the defining features of Intangible Cultural Heritage, he added.

Noting that it is the ongoing activities and projects themselves that constitute the actual instruments of safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage, he pleaded in favour of systematic knowledge on a wide range of best practices among communities and institutions.

Finally, he suggested two steps to be taken :

- i) a survey of best practices for safeguarding ;
- ii) an expert meeting to develop conceptual and operational definitions for the complete set of terms needed for an international agreement on Intangible Cultural Heritage.

**Mr Bouchenaki** suggested that the elaboration of a practical glossary of terms and notions would be a useful tool for experts during the preparatory process of the future draft convention.

## **AGENDA ITEM 5 – ADOPTION OF ACTION PLAN AND FINAL REPORT**

The morning session was dedicated to work in the Drafting Committee. The plenary meeting started with a query on the modalities of integration of sites and spaces on a possible intangible heritage list. A participant recalled the Turin conclusions and the need to mention spaces; another referred to the French notion of “lieux de mémoire” (“spaces of memory”).

Several participants asked to draw upon the Turin definition which suggests the inclusion of spaces and places with a cultural or spiritual dimension. **Mr Bouchenaki** therefore mentioned the importance of criterion 6 of the Operational Guidelines of the World Heritage Convention<sup>1</sup> and of the notion of cultural landscape<sup>2</sup>.

A participant drew attention to the difference between the terms “indigenous” (linked to the land) and “traditional” (linked to time), and noted that some very old heritages remain free of any territorial reference.

Participants underlined that it was necessary to give to local agencies and NGOs a right of consultation and that such a procedure would mark an important step up in comparison with the 1972 Convention.

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<sup>1</sup> Criterion VI: Each property nominated should “be directly or tangibly associated with events or living traditions, with ideas, or with beliefs, with artistic and literary works of outstanding universal significance (the Committee considers that this criterion should justify inclusion in the List only in exceptional circumstances and in conjunction with other criteria, cultural or natural)”, in *Operational Guidelines, C, Criteria for the inclusion of cultural properties in the World Heritage List*.

<sup>2</sup> Concerning cultural landscapes, “The inclusion of such landscapes on the World Heritage List is justifiable by virtue of the powerful religious, artistic or cultural associations of the natural element rather than material cultural evidence, which may be insignificant or even absent”, in *Operational Guidelines, C, 39-iii), Criteria for the inclusion of cultural properties in the World Heritage List*.

**Mr Bouchenaki** emphasized that UNESCO was already cooperating with certain well-known and respected NGOs such as IUCN and ICOMOS. It was also stressed by the Secretariat that the Proclamation of Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity had fostered many contacts and exchange of views between local communities and national or international organizations.

The meeting ended with the adoption of the report read by the Rapporteur and a discussion and agreement on the Recommendations to UNESCO (cf Appendix 6).