

Remarks by

Vera El Khoury Lacoueilhe
Chairperson of the Executive Board

At the opening of the

Journey of the United Arab Emirates Intangible Cultural Heritage

13 May 2024, Hall Ségur

His Excellency Mr Mubarak Al Nakhi, Undersecretary of the United Arab Emirates Ministry of Culture

His Excellency Mr Ali Alhaj Al Ali, Ambassador and Permanent Delegate of the United Arab Emirates to UNESCO

Madam President of the General Conference,

Ms Fumiko Ohinata, Secretary of the 2003 Convention
Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,
Dear friends,

What a pleasure it is for all of us to take this “*Journey of the United Arab Emirates Intangible Cultural Heritage*”, through this exhibition showcasing the variety and the beauty of the country’s heritage.

As evidenced by the 15 intangible heritage cultural practices and expressions registered by the United Arab Emirates under the 2003 Convention, this is an area of the world with an extremely rich and diverse culture.

To name just a few:

The Arab Calligraphy, that makes every sentence and every text look like a piece of art,
The traditional embroidery and performing arts,
The Arabian coffee, a symbol of generosity and conviviality,
And, of course, the delicate art of falconry, which is more than just a sport - it's a connection to the soul of the desert.

The United Arab Emirates was once described as “*a land where the whispers of ancient poetry dance on the wind, and where the rhythmic beat of traditional music echoes through bustling souks*”.

But it's not just about the past : it's about a living legacy, a vibrant tapestry of culture woven by the hands of artisans, the voices of storytellers, and the spirit of a proud nation. A nation that has exponentially developed economically, embraced modernity and even leapfrogged into the future, whilst at the same time keeping its feet deeply grounded into the sand of the Arabian desert as a guardian of its traditions, its social values, and of its identity.

Therefore, as the sun rises over the dunes, it illuminates both a history and a promise. A promise to cherish, celebrate, and safeguard the intangible heritage that makes the United Arab Emirates a beacon of inspiration for the world.

Thank you.