Navigate the Pacific to Build Information Systems for ICH Safeguarding and Implementing the 2003 Convention
2012 Sub-regional Information and Network Meeting in the Pacific

The 2012 Sub-regional Information and Network Meeting for Safeguarding ICH in the Pacific was held in Avarua, Cook Islands, from 29 February to 1 March 2012. The meeting was co-organised by ICHCAP and the Ministry of Cultural Development (MCD) of the Cook Islands in collaboration with the UNESCO Office for the Pacific States in Apia.

The meeting opened with a traditional welcoming dance of the Cook Islands performed by schoolchildren. Hon. Teariki Heather, Minister of the MCD, welcomed all the participants from abroad and the Cook Islands.

Mr Sonny Williams, Secretary for Culture of the MCD, introduced the keynote speeches, which were delivered by Ms Repeta Puna, a representative for the Prime Minister of the Cook Islands, and Dr Samuel Lee, Director of ICHCAP. Ms Puna focused on the protection of indigenous culture and on the new Fiji-ICHCAP joint project for strengthening ICH databases, a project that aims to enlarge the scope to include the minority ethnic cultures in Fiji. Mr Weonmo Park, Section Chief of ICHCAP, presented a paper on Fiji’s cultural mapping for indigenous culture and on the new Fiji-ICHCAP joint project that aims to enlarge the scope to include the minority ethnic cultures in Fiji. Mr Weonmo Park, Section Chief of ICHCAP, presented a paper on the process of ICH documentation in Korea. He also emphasized the importance of ICH documentation for the protection of cultural heritage and the dissemination of information. The last presenter of the session was Dr Seong-Yong Park, Assistant Director of ICHCAP. Dr Park began by introducing ICHCAP’s main projects related to information systems and networking. He also pointed out that information systems can be effective measures for ICH safeguarding in the Pacific and that ICHCAP will work closely with Pacific countries to assist in building ICH information systems.

At the third session, participants were invited to discuss strategies for building ICH information systems. Participants agreed that it is important to encourage Pacific countries to ratify the 2003 UNESCO Convention and that we should explore each other’s experience with ICH information. As an outcome of this meeting, the participants have expressed resolve to work together to adopt a recommendation.

Toward a Common Mission for Intangible Cultural Heritage

Samuel Lee
(Director, ICHCAP)

Appointed on 1 January 2012 as the first Director of the newly inaugurated ICHCAP, I wish all the esteemed members of the ICH community a very happy and fruitful new year, and I send you my heartiest greetings of solidarity.

ICHCAP has a mission to respond to the serious needs of our times to protect cultural diversity and traditional values for sustainable development. This mission has been brought to the forefront through the 2003 UNESCO Convention.

Specifically, it is a very urgent and important task to safeguard intangible cultural heritage, such as traditional knowledge and skills, arts and crafts, and rituals and customs, that is very rich and diverse in Asia-Pacific but also easily lost in the tide of rapid globalization and the international trend towards monoculture.

I feel a grave sense of responsibility as the first Director of this very significant Centre. There are high expectations about the leading and supporting roles of ICHCAP in the region.

However, with my previous experience in UNESCO activities as the first Director of the Asia-Pacific Centre of Education for International Understanding and as the Secretary-General of the Korean National Commission for UNESCO, I will endeavor to put my best efforts forward to enhance ICHCAP’s activities and facilitate a cooperative atmosphere of solidarity and networking among the forty-eight Member States in the Asia-Pacific region.

I kindly ask for your continued support and concern.
ICH Issues

Linking Safeguarding Projects among ICH Guardians in Korea
Networking Meeting with ICH-Related Organisations in the Republic of Korea

On 27 January 2012 in Seoul, Republic of Korea, ICHCAP held a networking meeting with international cooperation organisations and ICH experts to find ways of effectively implementing ICHCAP’s projects and cooperative networks. During the meeting, two experts and representatives from twenty-three organisations introduced the major roles and projects of their respective organisations, and they became more aware of the need for mutual cooperation among ICH-related organisations.

Beginning this meeting, Dr Samuel Lee, Director of ICHCAP, addressed his expectation that this meeting would build close cooperative relationships and provide an effective system of discussion on ICH safeguarding among participants. For the next speech, Dr Seong-Yong Park, Assistant Director of ICHCAP, gave an introduction to ICHCAP’s three strategic tasks and thirteen projects for 2012. (For more information on the projects, please refer to ICHCAP Inside on page 12.)

Furthermore, the meeting created an opportunity for participants to have better understanding of ICHCAP’s programmes and to see how these programmes relate to building cordial, cooperative relationships among organisations throughout the region. In particular, participants from the National Center for Korean Traditional Performing Arts and the Performing Arts Museum of Korea had a chance to suggest ideas for collaborative work to document and archive ICH internationally. In addition, the Head of the Culture and Communication Team of the Korean National Commission for UNESCO expects that ICHCAP’s activities will ease the inscription-centred ICH safeguarding tendency while promoting the exchange, transmission, and use of ICH. The chairperson of the Pansori Centre asked ‘to build an environment for individual work to safeguard ICH through grassroots programmes.’

In light of the discussions that took place, the participants agreed to hold another meeting in April 2012 to plan detailed collaborative work. This meeting was a beneficial occasion to listen to ideas from various ICH-related organisations, including government organisations as well as non-governmental organisations, at once. It was also a good opportunity to strengthen and extend the existing networks in the field and to seek links among organisations by considering the characteristics of the different organisations. ICHCAP sees this meeting as an important stepping-stone in developing multi-lateral modes for mutual collaboration among ICH stakeholders.

CONTENTS
ICH Issues................................. 01
Director’s Note......................... 02
Expert Remarks ...................... 03
Windows to ICH .................... 04
Field Report ......................... 08
Inventory-Making Efforts ......... 10
ICHCAP Inside ....................... 12
Safeguarding Pioneers .......... 13
Understanding ICH ............... 14
ICH News Briefs ................... 15

Director’s Note

Even though it has been a short time since I was appointed Director of ICHCAP, I have been able to feel the significant role of the Centre in realising the ideals of UNESCO. As I participated the UNESCO Executive Board Meeting, the Centre’s annual sub-regional information and networking meeting in the Pacific, and the inauguration ceremony of the International Training Center for the Intangible Cultural Heritage in the Asia-Pacific Region under the auspices of UNESCO (CRIHAP), I became cognisant of the endless roles of the Centre and its great responsibility as well.

When I visited UNESCO headquarters in Paris and met my former colleagues, I was filled with emotion. It was an opportunity to rekindle relationships from when I was Director of the Korean National Commission for UNESCO. Best of all, my visit provided an opportunity to discuss the present tasks of ICHCAP, and I believe this experience will be an asset for operating the Centre in the future.

Last February, ICHCAP and countries from the Pacific gathered in the Cook Islands to discuss information systems, integral components for safeguarding and promoting ICH. We agreed that notwithstanding the importance of information systems, to build an effective system, we need integrated approach to solve problems related to definitions, classifications, identification, inventories, and documentation as well as issues related to databases. In the meeting, we had a great chance to discuss the tasks of safeguarding ICH and building information systems, which are difficult but important, and to seek for future direction.

I hope you will continue to support our commitment to sustaining cultural diversity while we work with various stakeholders and pursue our main mandate in information and networking for ICH safeguarding in the Asia-Pacific region.
Contribution of Intangible Cultural Heritage and Millennium Development Goals

J.P. Singh* (Professor, Communication, Culture and Technology Program, Georgetown University, USA)

If development is an aspiration, then culture is the historical sediment underlying this aspiration. Culture conveys humanity’s intersecting bonds and the kinds of rituals, practices, and representations that make up its ways of life. Development—conceived narrowly as income growth or broadly as ways in which people participate to achieve well-being—is heavily influenced by this sense of bonding and group-ness. Culture is literally the way humanity recognises itself and reveals its aspirations.

UNESCO has long recognised that any understanding of culture needs to be multifaceted and flexible—speaking to cultures as artefacts and as anthropological ways of life. Humanity’s intangible cultural heritage can, therefore, be nominally understood as a cultural representation or process, but it can equally instruct us on the ways in which groups participate in human economic and social development. Intangible heritage is defined in UNESCO’s Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (hereafter ICH Convention) as “the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills—as well as the instruments, objects, artifacts and cultural spaces associated therewith—that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognise as part of their cultural heritage” (Article 2:1). They form an integral part of the community’s identity and, at times, its economic and social resource, rendering difficult the task of documentation, let alone definition and measurement. Oftentimes, the cultural expressions and associated traditions cut across national boundaries and include various improvisational and hybrid techniques making categorisation hard. The various forms of Maqam singing across Central Asia, the Middle East, and North Africa are an example.

The ICH Convention addresses the many ways culture may be conceived to speak to development in general, and offers important input for the implementation of another important global endeavour and aspiration—the Millennium Development Goals, adopted by governmental and non-governmental global leaders after the 2000 Millennium Summit. The eight Millennium Development Goals in poverty eradication, nutrition, health, education, gender equality, and global partnership themselves reveal to us global cultural aspirations.

Intangible cultural heritage speaks generally to the ways that culture may be mobilised toward MDG aspirations and specifically to how existing contributions of ICH may be measured for the implementation of another important global goal fulfilment; and, the ways that ICH may be mobilised toward the Millennium Development Goals, adopted by governmental and non-governmental global leaders after the 2000 Millennium Summit. The eight Millennium Development Goals in poverty eradication, nutrition, health, education, gender equality, and global partnership themselves reveal to us global cultural aspirations.

The strength of mobilising ICH for MDGs lies in its ability to deliver on multiple goals. However, the weakness may be the diffused ways in which these connections may be understood. Therefore, we need a better understanding of different forms of ICH from MDG perspectives: the value chains that comprise ICH; the forms of human development that may be understood within ICH; the methodologies that may be used to ascertain goal fulfilment; and, the ways that ICH may be calibrated by communities to enhance their ability to deliver on MDG goals. All this sounds like a tall order. However, cultures run deep in societies. Mobilising cultures for development would speak to humanity’s tallest aspirations at the same time.

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Figure 1. Framework for cultural statistics domains (2009 UNESCO Framework for Cultural Statistics) © UNESCO UIS 2009
ICH and Weaving with Bark and Plant

Windows to ICH provides an introduction to examples of intangible cultural heritage practices throughout the Asia-Pacific region in relation to specific themes presented in the issue. This issue takes a look at representations and practices of bark or plant weaving as living heritage. In these examples of intangible cultural heritage from Malaysia, the Republic of Korea, Tonga, and Philippines, you can see the various weaving forms with natural resources in different countries as well as their influence on each community.

Malaysia  Anyam: Pandanus Leaf Weavings of the Orang Asli

Reita Rahim (Coordinator, Gerai OA, Malaysia)

The Orang Asli are the indigenous minorities of Peninsular Malaysia and number less than 170,000. They consist of eighteen ethnic groups with different languages and cultures but broadly similar traditional belief systems (adat). The Orang Asli live in a variety of ecological niches, including upland forested areas, freshwater swamps, and coastal lands.

These eco-niches determine the locally available raw materials. A common plant found in or nearby Orang Asli villages are screw pines or Pandanus fascicularis, a clumping plant with long, thorny leaves. The fibrous leaves are harvested, processed, and dyed before the leaf strips are woven by women into a variety of mats, baskets, and pouches.

Orang Asli handicrafts are often utilitarian in nature, but with availability of cheap plastic replicates of mats and other products, the art of Pandanus weaving (anyam) is now on the wane. The synthetic products have slowly been replacing the crafts that were once woven from wild or cultivated Pandanus harvests.

Realising the economic value of traditional knowledge

The Orang Asli have no written language. The community’s knowledge is passed down orally and through practice; this includes knowledge related to handicrafts. Unlike ethnobotany, which is often documented due to its biomedical potential, traditional knowledge related to handicrafts is overlooked, even by the Orang Asli themselves.

There have been efforts to train and maintain Orang Asli Pandanus weavers and even re-purpose their craft to fit modern usage. However, traditional knowledge related to the Pandanus plant and handicraft may soon disappear. Fortunately, some of this knowledge is being rediscovered by Orang Asli weavers themselves and shared communally as low-cost solutions to generate supplementary income for village women. Some weavers are relearning traditional ‘best practices’ that help conserve depleting plant stocks and improve the overall quality of the craft, ultimately increasing sales and earning the weaver more money.

For example, Orang Asli elders advise to plant Pandanus seedlings in prone positions rather than upright. Such a practice was found to increase seedling survival rates in Pandanus replanting schemes. Other traditional harvesting best practices being shared include limiting the harvest to a few leaves per clump to ensure sustainability. Only mid-range leaves are cut, sparing the harder lower leaves, which are not supple, and the fragile growing tips. Cutting the latter may cause the shoot to die.

As with many raw materials for Orang Asli handicrafts, Pandanus leaves are not harvested during a full moon when leaves are full of sap. Community members still adhere to this harvesting prohibition as they have learned from the elders that knew the finished product would attract borer insects.

Losing more than just a name

Orang Asli Pandanus handicrafts are displayed in local museums, but what is often overlooked is an understanding of what the craft means to the people who made it. A few Pandanus basketry forms have become extinct while names of certain motifs and patterns are lost.

Some Orang Asli names given to motifs indicate how the craft may have travelled between villages and even across cultures. While similar motifs do exist elsewhere in the region as a result of similar twill weaving methods, localised motif names offer a tantalising glimpse into a people’s history. For example, the cross-like Tanjung Sepat motif of the Semelai people in Pahang is named after its supposed place of origin, the Mah Meri village of Tanjung Sepat, Selangor, a location that is five hours away by car. Yet among the Mah Meri this motif is known as kallang dapor (pot stand).

Overall, efforts to ensure the continuation of Orang Asli Pandanus weaving should focus on encouraging women not only to weave, but also to appreciate that their craft heritage was shaped by valuable communally shared knowledge that is still relevant today.
Northwestern Luzon, Philippines, has a narrow coastal plain and a hilly inland terrain, both of which are full of rivers and streams that originate in the Gran Cordillera mountain range. The Ilocano ethno-linguistic communities make up most of the region’s population. Given the geographic location on the seacoast and near the mouths of rivers, fishing is an important economic activity for most inhabitants.

Fed by several tributaries from the Gran Cordillera, the rivers of the region grow wide and deep. During the rainy season from June to November, the rivers turn so unruly that they reform river banks and erode hillsides. In contrast to this period, the dry summer season, from December to May, is marked by calm and smooth waters. It is during these calmer summer months that the rivers become a major resource for the communities.

To access the variety of riverine life, the Ilocano people have developed various types of fish traps. All the traps are made entirely from strips of kawayan, a giant bamboo variety that grows in abundance locally. This material is quite durable and can withstand weeks and even months of submersion. The men in the communities usually make the fish traps. They gather the materials and cut the bamboo into thick sturdy strips for the framework and into finer cuts for the greater body. The overall shape of the bamboo fish traps and the interior funnels are fashioned according to tradition and further refashioned or perfected based on observations of the movements and the flow of the river.

A popular fish trap set in big rivers is the bubo. It is most remarkable for its very fine finish and cylindrical body. In use, it is positioned along the current to ensnare schools of fish going upstream. Large stones are piled on either side to keep it steady. The body has a sturdy inner framework on which innumerable fine strips are neatly interwoven to form a symmetrical outer body. The flat thick strips forming the inner frame are gathered around a circular opening that is lashed with fine strips of rattan at the tail end, which is plugged with a wooden stopper when the trap set in the river. At the opposite end are small rounded entrances that lead to a funnel-shaped, one-way valve interior, where balls of powdered and grilled rice bran are placed as bait. A bubo with five entrances commonly measures between 52 cm and 80 cm in length and has an 83 cm diameter. A bubo with nine entries can be as long as 160 cm with a 113 cm diameter. These traps can yield a catch between 10 and 12 kilograms.

The most formidable of the bamboo traps is the pamurakan. Shaped like a giant hammock, the pamurakan is 2.5 m long and 2.3 m across. Its voluminous body is reinforced with a pair of bamboo slats, and the surrounding rim-opening is strengthened with a rattan lining. The symmetrical pamurakan is made stronger with slatted bamboo weaving. The trap is half submerged in brackish water with its bottom side up. Underneath are piles of twigs and leafy branches that provide shelter to fish, crustaceans, and other riverine life during the hot summer months. After a month or two, the pamurakan is flipped in one concerted swipe, turning the open side of the trap upwards, above the water. The process scoops the twigs and bundled sticks but more importantly, the fish and crustaceans that sheltered in them.

Kawayan fish traps are sturdy and durable, and most trap varieties can last for a decade or more, as long as they are hung to dry under the shade immediately after use or kept under the kitchen roof for constant smoking during the winter months when they are not in use.
About 2,000 years ago, Korean people started using the sedge plant, according to the ancient record of Samguk sagi (The Historical Record of Three Kingdoms), which refers to the use of the plant to make a palanquin curtain. Start a new paragraph at “Sedge”.

Sedge is a semiaquatic annual plant that grows up to two meters high. Its triangular sectional stem is pliant and glossy. The cultivation of sedge is similar to the process and period for cultivating rice. Whole villages planted and produced large quantities of sedge plants in irrigated rice fields while some farmers, in a corner of their rice fields, produced smaller quantities for personal use. The sedge plant was widely used by farmers to make everyday articles such as baskets, mesh bags, round mats, rush mats, cushions, and shoes.

During the Joseon Dynasty, sedge products were produced on a large scale. At that time, production took place in more than eighty regions throughout the peninsula according to The Chronicles of the Joseon Dynasty, and most of these items were exported to China and Japan, where hwamunseok (a mat woven with flower designs) was in high demand because of its fine material and splendid patterns that were otherwise not available.

There are two ways to handle sedge to produce handicraft goods. One way is to cut the stem into three pieces. The cuts should be deep and run the length of the stem, so the working material becomes thick and crude but soft; this method has been applied to producing flower-patterned mats, usual mats, and baskets of the Ganghwa region. Another method is to pare the plant’s surface into seven to eight layers to dry and so it becomes thin and hard; such a technique was applied when making dragon-patterned mats and rush mats in the Bosung region.

Recently, the production of sedge handicraft goods has sharply declined due to rapid industrialisation. At present, this precious tradition is preserved only in the Ganghwa district in Gyunggi province and the Hampyung district in Jeonranam province. Furthermore with the widespread availability of industrial goods and the reduction of rural populations, the production of sedge goods for family use has almost ceased.

The Korean government has designated a master as a national intangible cultural property for the preservation and transmission of Korean sedge handicraft. Both Seoul and Incheon have also each designated a master as an intangible cultural property at municipal level. Even though these three artisans are dedicating themselves to the transmission of the tradition, it is still doubtful that their strenuous efforts will keep this tradition from the threat of cheap sedge goods manufactured in foreign countries and flooding Korean markets.

1. Farmer harvesting tall flat sedge
2. Drying sedge
3. A woman making a rush mat
4. A sedge basket
5. Turtle designed sedge cushion
6. A woman making a sedge basket

(All photos by the Straw Culture Foundation, ROK)
Mosikaka weaving is special to Tongans, who identify themselves with the craft. It is a distinct art form that belongs to Tongans and no one else. Historically, mosikaka basket making was done for royalty alone. At the same time that mosikaka weaving is revered, it is also a very rare, not only in terms of the resource material used but also in the process of doing the actual weaving.

It is very unfortunate that this traditional form of weaving was long forgotten. However, a lecturer at a teachers’ college in 1968 saw the need to revive and safeguard mosikaka weaving in spite of it no longer being practiced. She organised a group of female students to do a research on mosikaka weaving. They got hold of the only mosikaka basket from the Tupou College Museum, with the permission of the principal. That mosikaka basket is now kept at the Tonga National Museum. The leader of the group found a damaged part near the bottom of the basket. She carefully unravelled it, noting how the weaves were constructed, and she managed to figure out the weaving process. The group’s findings are now published in a book called *Ko e Tala ‘o e Lalanga* (The Story of Weaving).

To make the mosikaka weaving easier for beginning weavers, some adaptations and concessions have been made. For example, instead of practicing on expensive coconut fibres that are also very difficult to work with, beginners start by using the *Pandanus*, a very common and much-used material in Tonga. The thick *Pandanus* leaves are split finely, and beginning weavers are taught basic mosikaka weaving techniques. Once they get the process right, switching to doubled-twisted coconut fibres is a smoother transition. However, using the *Pandanus* for mosikaka weaving can be more productive than using the coconut fibres, and more items can be produced and ready for sale in a shorter time. This makes *Pandanus* the preferred material for weavers for individuals who have mastered the techniques and skills and who need a source of income.

Mosikaka weaving is an identity of Tongan cultural heritage. It needs reviving and safeguarding, and it needs to be taught and practiced in schools and the community.

Mosikaka weaving using double-twisted coconut fibres

(Photograph by Mr. Koliniasi Fuku, Tonga Ministry of Education, Women’s Affairs & Culture)

A mosikaka basket with black designs using black coconut fibres

(Photograph by Mr. Koliniasi Fuku, Tonga Ministry of Education, Women’s Affairs & Culture)

Innovation on the basic mosikaka weave to make a hat and a handbag with *pandanus*

(Photograph by Mr. Koliniasi Fuku, Tonga Ministry of Education, Women’s Affairs & Culture)

Mosikaka weaving is very foreign to the ears of young Tongans. The majority have never heard of mosikaka weaving or seen a mosikaka basket. Therefore, building capacity in the community and in schools is very important. A number of awareness programmes have been instituted. In June 2008, there was a workshop to train unemployed young girls and housewives in Vava’u and newspapers reported on the workshop displays. In addition, there were cultural displays and festivals in 2009 and 2010. Small group training for women in community churches has also been popular. Capacity building and awareness activities are best channelled through schools and women’s groups in the communities although it is a slow process to cover the outer islands.
In June 2011, a friend of mine, Mr Venkitesh Krishnana, an IT professional living in New Jersey, wrote to tell me that he would be visiting Chennai, the capital city of Tamil Nadu. His month-long visit would be starting in the middle of December so he could be in the culturally rich Indian southern province during Margazhi, the ninth and most sacred month on the regional calendar.

During the month of festivities, Chennai is the host to more than fifteen hundred music and dance concerts, making it the biggest festival of its kind in the world. The annual event serves as a suitable reminder that music continues to be a way of life for hundreds of performing artists and thousands of ordinary people. It is also no wonder that so many people from different walks of life, like my friend in the United States, take it as an opportunity to revitalise their cultural and aesthetic roots. Furthermore, while some people lament that the golden era is behind us because contemporary musicians are predominantly driven by commercial success, not fidelity to tradition; others in society believe that southern classical art forms are on a path of revival and that the newly found enthusiasm during the festival is a validation of this belief. Personally, I admit that it is a matter of debate as there are very genuine concerns about the alleged dilution or deterioration that has been creeping into a commercially driven cultural realm.
In 2012, Chennai Music season completed its eighty-fifth year of uninterrupted existence. In 1927, the then emerging nationalist movement under the leadership of Indian National Congress had its all-India conference in Madras, and the city had its first national music conference along with the political conglomeration. The present-day Margazhi Music Season is the continuation of a socio-political resurgence, though it has departed somewhat from its political origins in recent years.

The Madras festival stands as a mirror to the transformations that Carnatic music and the South Indian dance forms have been going on over time. Though the present day kutcheri (concert structure) style in Carnatic music has been in position for more than a hundred years, there have been innumerable evolutions (progressions and sometimes decline) within the system. Initially the festival was one month long; however, it has gradually lengthened, and it is now two months long. This year the festival had more than 1500 stages, presenting a panoramic view of the present day arts scene in the carnatic music and South Indian dance forms.

Chennai festival is the world’s largest cultural event, perhaps larger than the Woodstock festival, but the majority of the people in the city or even the participating artists are not conscious of the proportion and size of the festival. One sociological reason for this might be that the festival showcases only classical art forms, which continue to be operational within a minority in the entire spectrum of the society despite the fact that the estimated expenditure for the festival was above thirty million rupees.

One of the many reasons for the unprecedented participation of non-resident Indian music lovers is the increased access to music archives that are widely available on the Internet and shared by many through different social networking groups. Archiving music and having it available has made a difference in the Carnatic music scenario as well. As a clear departure from the past, this year many concerts were also webcast and had many viewers from all over the world.

The hundreds of workshops and seminars that take place during the festival complement the thousands of concerts, which are literally shaping the future of Carnatic music and South Indian dance. That is why my friend from New Jersey wrote to me, ‘If you want to feel the future getting evolved in just two months’ time, take a trip to Chennai during December and January’.
Presently, there are three inventories of intangible cultural heritage in Japan: List of Important Intangible Cultural Properties, List of Important Intangible Folk-Cultural Properties, and List of Holders of Selected Conservation Techniques. These lists are compiled and administered annually by the Agency for Cultural Affairs, a governmental organisation.

1. Three types of inventory and the contents thereof

1) List of Important Intangible Cultural Properties
This inventory consists of traditional performing arts and craft techniques that have particularly important artistic and/or historical value; the holders of these skills are also in the inventory.

- Information included in this inventory
  Individual recognition
  Class, designation name, designation date, name of holder (real name, stage name, or artist’s appellation), holder’s date of birth, date of recognition, address of holder, and other comments (history of major awards, etc.)
  General recognition, holder group recognition
  Name, designation requirements, name of the applicable holder or the representative thereof (performing arts) or the name of the applicable holder group or the representative thereof (craft techniques), the name and contact information of the applicable affiliated institution or group (performing arts) or the address of the offices of the holder group (craft techniques), and designation date

2) List of Important Intangible Folk-Cultural Properties
This inventory consists of manners and customs, folk performing arts, and folk techniques that are particularly important in terms of understanding the changes in the lives of the Japanese people.

- Information included in this inventory
  Name of prefecture, designation name, address, name of preservation group, and designation date

3) List of Selected Conservation Techniques
This inventory consists of traditional techniques and skills that are essential for the conservation of cultural properties and for which preservation measures need to be implemented.

- Information included in this inventory:
  Recognition of holders
  Name of technique, selection date, name of holder (real name, artist’s appellation), holder’s date of birth, recognition date, and address
  Recognition of preservation groups
  Name of technique, selection date, name of preservation group, recognition date, name of the group representative, and address of the offices of the preservation group

2. Procedures for designating, recognising, and selecting

1) Preliminary surveys
The designation, ICH selection, and the recognition of holders and holder groups are based on the results of preliminary surveys. As the number of applicable intangible cultural properties and the number of conservation
techniques for cultural properties are comparatively limited, these surveys are primarily conducted by investigators in the Agency for Cultural Affairs. In these cases, it is important to adequately ascertain the research trends by relevant academic societies, the research results of researchers related to the applicable field, and other types of information.

At the same time, because there are numerous applicable intangible folk cultural properties in existence nationwide, it would be difficult to have sufficient basic surveys conducted by only the investigators working in the Agency for Cultural Affairs. However, most intangible folk cultural properties have already been designated at the prefectural or municipal level prior to being designated at the national level, which means that the surveys that are required for a certain degree of basic value assessments have already been made; in many cases, survey reports and video recordings are also available.

2) Candidate selection
A candidate is chosen according to the following steps based on a preliminary survey.

Draft proposal produced by secretariat

Approved by the Agency for Cultural Affairs

Approved by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology

3) Final decision
The Minister submits the advisability of including the candidate in an inventory to the Culture Council. While the Culture Council then investigates this submission through the Cultural Properties Subcommittee, a request to engage in deliberations is further issued to an expert panel comprising specialist researchers in the given field. Matters that have been carefully discussed by this panel of experts are reported to the Cultural Properties Subcommittee and the Culture Council. Finally, the results of this process are submitted to the Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology. Based on these results, the government publicly announces the designation, recognition, or selection, and the candidate is then included in the applicable inventory.

3. Key points for each inventory
1) Important intangible cultural properties / Selected conservation techniques
What is designated as important intangible cultural properties and selected as the chosen preservation techniques is the “intangible technique” itself, such as performing arts, craft techniques, and conservation techniques for cultural properties. However, it only theoretically declares the importance. It is essential to have technique holders who have mastered and embodied the techniques to a high degree in order to show it to the public in a visible way and to ensure that such techniques are passed on to future generations of experts. Therefore, when another technique is designated or selected, recognition of holders, holder groups, and preservation groups is required at the same time. What we must take notice of here, in particular, is the case when an individual person is designated as a holder.

For the candidate, all pertinent information, such as the conditions and award history, must be understood. It must also be known whether the person has a successor. All related information must be kept as confidential as possible.

2) Important intangible folk-cultural properties
In the case of important intangible folk-cultural properties, only the national government has the resources to grasp the situation in detail since the objects range widely across Japan. The national government must build close relationships with prefectural and municipal governments that understand the status of local important intangible folk-cultural properties in detail.

As for the designation of important intangible folk-cultural properties by the nation, it is important to consider the intentions of each community with such properties. It requires enormous effort by the local community to inherit properties even after the nation designates them. Therefore, when designating, the nation should consider the thoughts of each community and assign academic value to the properties.

Conclusion
Inventory making is the most fundamental work of safeguarding ICH. If we don’t have any ICH inventories, we cannot make effective safeguarding projects, documentation, projects to train successors, and so on. As shown above, Japan has some experiences in this matter. Of course, since the ICH environment in each country differs, it may be rare for this experience to be directly helpful. If ICH is a representative symbol of cultural diversity in the world, the measure taken to preserve it should be equally as diverse. I hope that our experience will be helpful for other countries trying to start a difficult but meaningful effort for safeguarding ICH.
Cooperative networks for ICH include activities

**Cooperative Networks for ICH**

the Centre and building an international foundation for information systems and networks are the Centre’s priorities. This is based on the agreement between the government of the Republic of Korea and UNESCO to promote ICH safeguarding in the Asia-Pacific region. Strategic tasks of the annual work plan for 2012 are as follows: 1) Foundation for Information Building and Sharing for ICH, 2) Cooperative Networks for ICH, and 3) Raising Awareness and Promoting ICH.

**Foundation for Information Building and Sharing for ICH**

Activities for the foundation of building and sharing ICH information include collecting information on the status of ICH safeguarding, supporting ICH identification and documentation, video documenting ICH, restoring and digitising ICH-related data, and assisting Member States in accessing and managing information for ICH safeguarding systems and policies. Collecting information on the current status of ICH safeguarding aims to collect relevant information on the ICH safeguarding efforts of Member States in the region, and the data will be used to develop the Centre’s future projects and strategies.

Seventeen Member States in the Asia-Pacific region are targeted for this activity. ICH identification and documentation support aims to create a foundation for ICH safeguarding and to enhance implementation of the Convention in the region; we are targeting four countries in Central Asia. Video documentation of ICH is intended to contribute to raising awareness and activating educational activities for the public by producing a professionally documented video that promotes ICH visibility; Viet Nam is the target country for this year. Restoration and digitisation of ICH-related data are performed to secure resources of superannuated and damaged ICH-related data and to raise awareness of it; target countries in the Asia-Pacific region include Mongolia. Assisting Member States with accessing and managing information on ICH safeguarding systems and policies aims to help with developing ICH safeguarding policies and measures and to disseminate ICH safeguarding systems. Target countries of the project are Tonga and Lao People’s Democratic Republic.

**Cooperative Networks for ICH**

Cooperative networks for ICH include activities of UNESCO policy collaboration and strategy development, sub-regional network meetings, ICH expert networking meetings, and ICH enhancement projects for raising awareness of ICH. UNESCO policy collaboration and strategy development activities seek to understand international ICH issues and trends and to reinforce collaboration among UNESCO headquarters, regional offices, and ICH-related organisations. Sub-regional network meetings endeavour to discuss regional tasks and strategies for sub-regional collaboration regarding the implementation of the Convention. ICH expert networking meetings in the Asia-Pacific region try to organise network programmes for encouraging information sharing and to build networks among policymakers and experts in the ICH field in the Asia-Pacific region.

ICH enhancement project for raising awareness of ICH is planned to raise awareness of the importance of ICH safeguarding through an international prize award and to contribute to promoting the visibility of ICH safeguarding activities.

**Raising Awareness and Promoting ICH**

By disseminating information about ICH and the issues regarding ICH safeguarding in the Asia-Pacific region, the Centre enhances ICH visibility and promotes the Centre’s activities. Raising awareness and promoting ICH include publishing the ICH Courier and Korean versions of the UNESCO ICH Lists. The project of protecting intellectual property rights in relation to information materials and documentation is targeted to develop a guideline through research for protecting intellectual property in the process of building and sharing information. Promoting the role of ICH communities and NGOs sets its goal on promoting the participation of communities as main agents of ICH transmission and safeguarding, and NGOs for implementing the Convention. Making ICH-related digital contents aims to contribute to raising public awareness, especially for young generations, by developing and disseminating ICH-related digital contents.

In addition to the above projects, ICHCAP will also implement three projects with the Korean government’s Official Development Aid fund (ODA). Two projects sponsored by this fund are Identifying and Documenting ICH for Building an ICH Information System in Laos and the Development of a National ICH Inventory System in Bhutan. The main purpose of the ODA projects is to support participating countries to collect information on ICH elements and bearers and to build ICH information systems. Furthermore, the Cultural Partnership Initiative (CPI) program is scheduled to be undertaken in 2012.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategic Tasks</th>
<th>Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Foundation for Information Building and Sharing for ICH</strong></td>
<td>Collecting Information on the Current Status of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) Safeguarding in the Asia-Pacific Region</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ICH Identification and Documentation Support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Video Documentation of Intangible Cultural Heritage in the Asia-Pacific Region</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Restoration and Digitalisation of ICH-Related Data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Assisting Member States in Accessing and Managing Information of ICH Safeguarding System and Policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cooperative Networks for ICH</strong></td>
<td>UNESCO Policy Collaboration and Strategy Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sub-regional Network Meetings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Intangible Cultural Heritage Expert Networking Meetings in the Asia-Pacific Region and Korea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ICH Enhancement Project for Raising Awareness of ICH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Raising Awareness and Promoting ICH</strong></td>
<td>Publication of the ICH Courier and UNESCO ICH Lists in Korean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Protecting Intellectual Property Rights in Reflecting to Information Materials and Documentation of ICH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Promoting the Role of ICH Communities and NGOs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Making ICH-Related Digital Contents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ODA &amp; CPI</strong></td>
<td>Official Development Assistance Projects, and Cultural Partnership Initiative programmes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
established on 1 April 1971 as the Institute of Arts, after a number of name changes, the Vietnam Institute of Culture and Arts Studies (VICAS) adopted its current name pursuant to Decision No 2845/QĐ - BVHTTDL on 25 June 2008 by the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism (MoCST).

Functions and Duties
VICAS is a scientific institution under the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism (MoCST), which conducts research and scientific activities and provides graduate training in culture and arts. It has been assigned the following specific duties:

- Carry out research and develop scientific foundations for MoCST to develop strategy and build instruments and policies for state management of culture, family life, sports, and tourism; carry out both theoretical and applied research on the history, culture, families, arts, sports, and tourism of Vietnam.
- Carry out research on foreign cultures, families, arts, sports, and tourism in accordance with the Institute's functions and duties; provide suggestions for implementing findings and experiences of foreign researchers on culture, family, and arts in a Vietnamese context.
- Collect, research, and safeguard intangible cultural heritage; build up, manage, and develop a databank on the intangible cultural heritage of Vietnamese ethnic groups.
- Develop doctoral programs in culture and arts with six majors as follows: Cultural Studies; Cultural Management; Folklore; Theory and History of Theatrical Arts; Theory and History of Fine Arts; and Theory and History of Cinematography and Television.
- Collaborate on scientific research projects and graduate training programs with Vietnamese and foreign institutions working in culture, family, sports, and tourism in accordance with the relevant laws.

Organisational Structure

Institute's Board of Directors
Director: Associate Prof, Dr Nguyen Chi Ben
Vice Directors: Dr Hoàng Sơn and Associate Prof, Dr Luong Hong Quang

Functional Offices
- Office of Science-International Collaboration
- Office of Training
- Office of Information-Library
- Office of Finance
- Office of Administration-Organization

Professional Departments
- Department of Cultural Policies and Development
- Department of Cultural Heritage Studies
- Department of Ecological Culture and Tourism Studies
- Department of Foreign Culture and Arts Studies
- Department of Theoretical and Historical Studies of Culture and Arts
- Department of Arts Studies
- Department of Family Culture Studies
- Center of Northeast Asian Studies
- Center of Cultural Heritage Data
- Center of Public Opinions on Culture, Sports and Tourism

Organisations Directly under the Institute
- Scientific Committee
- Sub-Institute of Culture and Arts in Hue City
- Sub-Institute of Culture and Arts in Ho Chi Minh City
- Journal of Cultural Studies

Outstanding Achievements
For many years, VICAS has been one of Viet Nam’s leading institutions in theoretical research and cultural policy development. It participated in the development of National Decisions 5 (the Eighth Session), in the conclusion of the ten-year implementation of the National Decisions 5, and in the design of a national cultural development strategy in 2010 as well many other important theoretical issues and policies of the Vietnamese Communist Party and Government.

The Institute has built up three successful UNESCO Cultural Heritage candidature files: The Space of Gong Culture in the Central Highlands of Vietnam (2005), Quan Ho Bac Ninh Folk Songs (2009), and The Giong Festival of Phu Dong and Soc Temples (2010); and the candidature file of The Worship of Hùng Kings in Phu Tho, submitted to UNESCO for the cycle of 2012.

VICAS has carried out four scientific projects at the state level and many projects at ministerial, provincial, and municipal levels. The Institute also directs and monitors the National Target Program on collecting, safeguarding, and promoting intangible culture heritage. Through this program, thousands of items of intangible cultural heritage from all over Vietnam have been collected, safeguarded, and promoted, and a number of items of intangible cultural heritage have been saved from the risk of disappearance or loss. Several research projects on issues relating to rural and urban culture and cultural change under the impact of modernisation and globalisation have been carried out, resulting in publications and management strategies for application in the field.

VICAS has the largest doctoral program in the field of culture, sports, and tourism in Vietnam. In the course of just over a decade, more than eighty VICAS doctoral candidates have successfully defended their work, representing an outstanding achievement of Vietnamese higher education and providing an important intellectual resource with tremendous potential for contribution to the cultural development of the country.

VICAS has collaborated on research projects and graduate training programs with many international institutions such as Temple University in Philadelphia, the University of Toronto, the University of South Australia, the China Institute of Arts, and the Korea Institute of Culture and Tourism.
Understanding ICH

The Basic Terminology in Intangible Cultural Heritage Safeguarding

Glossary from documents for the Training of Trainers Programmes

Understanding terms related to intangible cultural heritage (ICH) helps broaden views towards the conception, domains, institution, and research on ICH. The following glossary from documents for the Training of Trainers Programmes conducted by UNESCO (2011) and based on the 2003 UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, provides a basic explanation of the key terms associated with ICH.

Element
An ICH element is a social or cultural practice, expression, knowledge, or skill that concerned communities, groups, and individuals define as part of their heritage. According to the Convention, ICH elements are about processes, not products or objects even if a tangible element, such as a place, building, or costume, is associated with it. Thus, in some cases, safeguarding includes ensuring the availability of the tools, materials, or conditions that are required for the enactment or transmission of the ICH element, but safeguarding does not specifically focus on conserving the tangible products of ICH practices.

Community, Group, Individual, Tradition-Bearer, Practitioner
Communities, in particular indigenous communities, groups, and individuals, play an important role in the production, safeguarding, maintenance, and re-creation of ICH. Communities, groups, or individuals can be defined in relation to a specific ICH element or to a set of such elements. While the Convention does not indicate how to differentiate between communities and groups, some experts interpret groups as people, such as practitioners or tradition-bearers, within a community or across communities who have special knowledge of a specific element or a special role in its transmission or enactment. Individuals in some cases have very specific roles; for instance, as practitioners or as custodians they are often the only surviving persons within a community who have the requisite knowledge and skills to practice a specific form of ICH.

Free, Prior, and Informed Consent
When communities, groups, or individuals are involved developing a nomination file for inscribing an ICH element on one of the ICH lists of the Convention, they must be in a position to consent, freely and voluntarily, to the preparation and submission of the file. They should be given sufficient information and time to make this decision and be properly informed of the likely benefits and any possible negative consequences that may result from inscription.

Shared Heritage
Many ICH elements, and the communities associated with them, exist in more than one country because national borders were arbitrarily drawn and people have migrated to other places. The Operational Directives of the Convention encourages international cooperation for shared heritage to help ensure that elements are better safeguarded. More generally, cooperation among States in the domain of culture promotes positive international relations and mutual understanding.

Viability, Threats, and Risks
ICH viability is an element’s potential to continue to be enacted, developed, and transmitted and to continue to be important to the concerned community or group. Threats are current problems that hamper the enactment and transmission of the element, and the related risks are essentially future threats.

Sustainability
Sustainability is as the act of meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. The practice of an ICH element has to meet the requirements of sustainable development.

Commercialisation and Decontextualisation
The term commercialisation is used to describe a situation in which the goal becomes introducing new products and ICH elements to new audiences and markets, with actual or potential adverse effects on safeguarding the element in its community context. When the intangible heritage experience is packaged or abridged for presentation to tourists and other paying audiences, decontextualisation occurs—that is to say, the ICH element is taken out of its context in ways the concerned communities may consider unacceptable.

Authenticity
The Convention deals with living heritage that is constantly evolving and re-creating itself, so authenticity is not a concept used in the Convention.

Respect
Understanding the importance and value of ICH in its cultural context and appreciating its role in the community concerned are forms of respect. One of the Convention’s objectives is to encourage mutual respect for each other’s ICH.

* This article refers to the UNESCO Convention (2003), Operational Directives (2010), documents for the Training of Trainers Programmes, and UNESCO’s ICH Website http://www.unesco.org/ich/
The International Day of Nowruz (Navruz) is celebrated by the international community of South and Central Asia.

The spirit of peace and unity at the core of Nowruz, the spring festival marking the Iranian New Year, is especially important at this time of global change and uncertainty, UN officials said on 21 March.

Secretary-General Ban Kimoon stressed that Nowruz serves as an opportunity to unite regions and nationalities as well as religions and languages that celebrate the renewal of life on the first day of spring.

On 25 March, the third Nowruz Celebration kicked off in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, in the presence of the presidents of Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Tajikistan. In the opening of the ceremonies, the Iranian, Afghan, Pakistani, and Tajik presidents (Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, Hamid Karzai, Asif Ali Zardari, and Emomali Rakhmon, respectively) stressed the importance of strengthening amicable relations and bonds.

The Nowruz holiday was added to the Representative List of ICH of Humanity in 2009. In 2010, the UN General Assembly declared 21 March the International Day of Nowruz.

[Source: UN News Centre/Press TV]

**[South and Central Asia] The Third International Nowruz Celebration**

Nowruz food in Tajikistan © Romish Sherali, Amir Isayev, and Mikhail Romanyuk

On 25 March, the third Nowruz Celebration kicked off in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, in the presence of the presidents of Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Tajikistan. In the opening of the ceremonies, the Iranian, Afghan, Pakistani, and Tajik presidents (Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, Hamid Karzai, Asif Ali Zardari, and Emomali Rakhmon, respectively) stressed the importance of strengthening amicable relations and bonds.

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[Source: UN News Centre/Press TV]

**[China] Inaugural Meeting of CRIHAP in Beijing**

On 22 and 23 February 2012, the official inaugural meeting of the International Training Center for the Intangible Cultural Heritage in the Asia-Pacific Region under the auspices of UNESCO (CRIHAP) was held in Beijing, P.R. of China.

During this event, the first governing board meeting and an international information session convened. Around one hundred and fifty participants, including experts from the Asia-Pacific region, Chinese officials, and representatives from ICH Category 2 Centres, took part in the meeting.

At the governing board meeting on 22 February, CRIHAP shared its vision, mission, short- to midterm strategies, key activities, and the 2012 work plan.

The international information session was organised for the following day. The presenters emphasised the importance of building capacity and in prioritising the effective implementation of 2003 Convention for the developing countries.

To respond to the need, UNESCO shared some of its 2012-2013 programmes to Member States to build capacity at the national level. Also, Samuel Lee, Director of ICHCAP, presented on ICHCAP’s current activities and future plans. The session concluded with the participants’ strengthened commitment to increase international cooperation for ICH safeguarding in the Asia-Pacific region.

[Source: UNESCO Office in Apia]

**[Samoa] ICH Ratification Workshop**

Exchange of fine mats in Savai © UNESCO/N.Furutani

The ICH Ratification Workshop was held by the Samoan Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture (MESC) from 14 to 15 February 2012 in Apia, Samoa. As a follow-up to the awareness-raising workshop on ICH safeguarding held in June 2010, this workshop aimed at enhancing the understanding of the 2003 Convention in terms of its importance and benefits to Samoa and the process by which the Convention can be ratified. The workshop brought together some thirty experts, including government officials from concerned ministries, academics, NGOs, and ICH custodians in Samoa.

Workshop participants learnt the key concepts and international mechanisms established by the ICH Convention. The participants had particularly lively discussions on specific issues that included how the Convention treats sacred and secret ICH, how it relates to customary laws, and how it is compatible with other international treaties.

Additional discussion topics included ICH in the public domain, de-contextualisation of ICH, quantitative and qualitative measurement of ICH, and so forth.

The participants also discussed appropriate terminologies in the Samoan language for the key concepts of the Convention; these terms included ICH, community, viability, and safeguarding. The participants agreed to assist the MESC in moving the matter forward and assume advisory roles for ICH safeguarding in Samoa.

[Source: UNESCO Office in Apia]

**[India] Workshop on Safeguarding India's ICH: Experiences and Challenges**

The diverse, multicultural, and pluralistic nature of Indian heritage requires multiple focused approaches at the national, regional, and local levels to safeguard, foster, and promote ICH. On 30 January, Sahapedia collaborated with the Sangeet Natak Akademi to hold a one-day workshop called ‘Safeguarding India’s ICH: Experiences and Challenges’. The workshop brought together stakeholders from various organisations and provided a platform for ICH experts, practitioners, and representatives to discuss methods of documentation, inventory, and transmission as well as the legal protection of rights of communities.

The welcoming address by Shanta Serbjeet Singh, Vice Chairman, Sangeet Natak Akademi, was followed by an introductory address by Sudha Gopalakrishnan, Executive Director, Sahapedia, who provided an overview of the challenges and opportunities of ICH in India. In a detailed presentation, Amareswar Galla from the National Institute of the Inclusive Museum traced the significance of the 1972 World Heritage Convention and the 2003 ICH Convention and compared methodologies of inventorying. He illustrated the possibilities of a creative, dynamic, and participatory approach through case studies. Dr Shubha Chaudhuri, American Institute of Indian Studies, shed light on documentation, research, and archiving practices in the field of music in India and addressed issues of inventorisation, content management, and intellectual property rights. Ritu Sethi, Craft Revival Trust, shared the challenges of creating sustainable models of livelihood for crafts traditions to continue.

There was a consensus that it is critical to organise integrated efforts between government and civil society to mobilise
The National Institute of Folk and Traditional Heritage, Lok Virsa, in collaboration with Norwegian Directorate of Cultural Heritage (Riksantikvaren), published the book, which contains twenty-four folk games along with descriptions, number of players, preparations, steps, and rules of each game. It also contains sketches and photographic representations to help readers understand the traditional games better.

The games introduced in the book will let children know that the games belong to the broad fraternity of children across the world. A reading of the book shows that games played by Norwegian and Pakistani children are almost the same. The games may have different names, yet the methods of play and the different stages have remained unchanged.

[Source: Daily Times, Pakistan]

[2CCentre] UNESCO launches new Intangible Cultural Heritage Centre in southeast Europe

On 20 February, a regional centre for the safeguarding of ICH in South-Eastern Europe under the auspices of UNESCO (Category 2 Centre) was opened in Sofia, Bulgaria.

This new centre opened in Sofia is one of six Category 2 Centres in the field of ICH around the world. This center is the only one in Europe and therefore “plays a crucially important role” according to UNESCO.

At the inauguration ceremony held in Sofia Irina Bokova, Director-General of UNESCO, emphasised the importance of ICH as our bridge from the past to the future. She added that ICH was the way we understood the world and the means by which we shaped it. She also put emphasis on the role of communities, groups and individuals in safeguarding and descending of their own precious possession.

The ceremony took place with the participation of the Chairperson of the National Assembly of the Republic of Bulgaria Tssetska Tsacheva, Foreign Minister Nikolay Mladenov and Culture Minister Vezhdi Rashidov. Minister Mladenov underlined the deep commitment of the Bulgarian government to promote the work of the Centre and he expressed strong support to UNESCO.

[Source: UNESCO]