

*The Intangible Cultural  
Heritage*

# UNESCO

- **UNESCO: International Intergovernmental Organization created on 16<sup>th</sup> November 1945**
- **Mandate: Promoting International Cooperation in Education, Science, Culture and Communication as a:**
  - **Laboratory of ideas**
  - **Clearing house**
  - **Standard normative action**

# Towards Recognizing ICH

- European nation building in 19th century : **monuments** confirm the promoted past
- Post WWII: peak of attention for **material** heritage
- 1960/70s: dominant and non-dominant communities, on supra-national and sub-national level, turn to **living** cultural heritage for confirmation of present-day identities
- 1970/80s: Harmonious development of groups and communities ask for balanced management of – new term: Intangible Cultural Heritage (**ICH**)
- 1990/2000: **Cultural diversity** widely conceived as endangered: UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity, 2001
- **2003: ICH Convention**



Il canto dei tenori, Italy

# Conventions and cultural diversity

- 1954: Convention for the Protection of Cultural Properties in the Event of Armed Conflict and its two Protocols
- 1970: Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property
- 1972: Convention on the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage
- 2001: Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage
- **2003: Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH)**
- 2005: Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions

# The Sector of Culture

- World Heritage (monuments and sites)
- Intangible Heritage
- Museums
- Cultural Policies
- Cultural Industries
- Intercultural Dialogue

Kabuki, Japan



**Strategic objectives 2014 - 2021: « Protecting, Conserving, Promoting and Transmitting Culture, Heritage and History for Dialogue and Development »**

# ICH: Two lines of action

- **Legal texts**
  - **Recommendation on the Safeguarding of Traditional Culture and Folklore (1989)**
  - **Steps towards a new normative instrument, preferably a Convention (1997, 2001)**
- **Programmes**
  - **Proclamation of Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity (1997-2005)**
  - **Living Human Treasures (1993-)**
  - **Endangered languages (1995-)**
  - **Traditional Music (1962-2005)**

# The ICH Convention

- Adopted: October 2003
- Open for ratification since November 2003
- Ratified by 30 States: 20 January 2006
- Entered into force: 20 April 2006
- Ratified now by 161 States (as of 15/05/2014)



The Al-Sirah Al-Hilaliyyah Epic, Egypt



Vietnamese Court Music  
Nha Nhac



The Cultural Space of Sosso-Bala in Nyagassola,  
Guinea



# Domains covered

- Oral traditions and expressions,
- Performing arts
- Social practices, rituals and festive events
- Knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe
- Traditional craftsmanship

The Traditional Music of Morin Khuur  
Mongolia





# Defining ICH: expressions and practices, knowledge and skills that

- are in conformity with human rights
- belong to one or more of the relevant domains
- are recognised by communities, groups, and in some cases individuals, as forming part of their cultural heritage
- are living, rooted in tradition, and constantly recreated
- are crucial for the sense of identity and continuity of communities and groups

The definition also includes **objects and spaces** that are associated with manifestations of ICH

# Goals

- **Safeguarding ICH: ensuring its viability (continued enactment and transmission) within communities/groups**
- **Awareness raising**
- **Sharing and celebrating**
- **Dialogue, respect for cultural diversity**
- **International cooperation and assistance**

# Obligations of States Parties

States Parties are committed to safeguarding (= **ensuring the viability** of) the ICH present on their territory, starting by identification the elaboration of one or more **inventories**:

- Community, groups to be involved
- Access to be regulated
- To be regularly updated

# Mechanism of the Convention

- General **Assembly** of States Parties
- Intergovernmental **Committee** for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage
- **Representative List** of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity
- List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of **Urgent Safeguarding**
- **Fund** for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage

# General Assembly

- Sovereign Body of the Convention
- Will meet in ordinary session every two years, and in extraordinary session
- Elects the members of the Committee
- Approves the **Operational Directives**
- Meets for the first time  
**27-29 June 2006**



The Al-Sirah Al-Hilaliyyah Epic,  
Egypt

# Intergovernmental Committee

- 18 Members, 24 after 50 ratifications
- 4 year term, renewal of half of the members every 2 years
- Membership: determined by equitable geographical representation and rotation
- Members to send experts as their representatives

The Art of Akyns, Kyrgyz Epic Tellers  
Kyrgyzstan



# Functions of the Committee



The Pansori Epic Chant  
Republic of Korea



- Prepare Operational Directives for implementation
- Implement the Convention
  - Examine requests for:
    - inscription on the Lists
    - international assistance
  - Make recommendations on safeguarding measures
  - Seek means of increasing its resources
  - Examine periodic reports of States Parties



# The Lists

- **Representative List of the ICH of Humanity**
- **List of the ICH in Need of Urgent Safeguarding**



The Garifuna Language,  
Dance and Music, Nicaragua

## Criteria for inscription

- To be prepared by Committee
- To be adopted by General Assembly

# The Fund: providing international assistance for

- **Safeguarding** of heritage inscribed on the List of ICH in Need of Urgent Safeguarding
- Preparation of **inventories**
- Programmes, projects and other activities in the States Parties (incl. **capacity building**)

Congos of Villa Mella  
Dominican Republic



# Work in progress

## Preparation of the Implementation of the Convention:

- Organization of experts meetings
- Collecting good practices
- Preparation of info, including thematic manuals
- Preparation of meetings of the Statutory Bodies



# Work in progress: Communities, groups, individuals

- **How to define them?**
- **How to be involved in**
  - **Defining ICH**
  - **Inventory making**
  - **Preparation and management of safeguarding measures**

# Proclamation of Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity



Zápara People, Ecuador-Peru

- Created in 1997
- Proclamations in 2001, 2003, 2005
- 90 Masterpieces have been proclaimed in all
- No new Proclamations will be organised
- Masterpieces located in States Parties to the Convention will be inscribed in the List of the Convention

# Features of the Convention

- Introduces List system; other main focus on programmes and projects
- Deals with heritage representative for communities (not of outstanding universal value)
- Emphasis on living heritage, enacted by people, often collectively, mostly transmitted orally
- Attention for processes/conditions rather than products
- Role of communities/groups
- Contribution to promotion of creativity and diversity, to well-being (of communities and groups and societies at large) and peaceful development

# States Parties: 6 June 2006

Algeria  
Mauritius  
Japan  
Gabon  
Panama  
China  
Central African Rep.  
Latvia  
Lithuania  
Belarus  
Republic of Korea  
Seychelles  
Syria  
United Arab Emirates  
Mali  
Mongolia

Croatia  
Egypt  
Oman  
Dominica  
India  
Vietnam  
Peru  
Pakistan  
Bhutan  
Nigeria  
Iceland  
Mexico  
Senegal  
Romania  
Estonia  
Luxembourg

Nicaragua  
Cyprus  
Ethiopia  
Bolivia  
Brazil  
Bulgaria  
Hungary  
Iran  
Belgium  
Jordan  
Slovakia  
Moldova  
Turkey  
Madagascar  
Albania  
Zambia  
Armenia