

### **Common statement of NGOs to States Parties to the 2003 UNESCO Convention**

1. The 26 NGOs, signatories of this statement, want to thank Kenya for the warm hospitality. We are also thankful to those who have made possible the participation of numerous NGOs from Africa at this Fifth Session of the IGC and at the NGOs Forum, and we especially thank the Republic of Hungary for its generous support.
2. This Forum was a wish clearly expressed at Abu Dhabi and we are very pleased that this wish became a reality. We thank UNESCO's Secretariat for the efficient organization of our meeting and hope that such important initiative takes place prior to all IGC meetings in the future, with support for travel expenses of NGOs from developing countries.
3. It is important in the process of implementing ICH Convention to have a wide participation of civil society and communities. Consequently, although the live webcast established for this year's meeting was satisfactory, it is necessary to extend it as much as possible and make it interactive.
4. For our part, we are ready to work closely with the Secretariat to prepare the next Forum and to help in any possible way to have a successful event. The NGOs Forum is a unique occasion to establish a closer dialogue with the States Parties, as well as among ourselves, on issues that are critical to the implementation of the ICH Convention, like matters concerning the communities' participation in the safeguarding process and the significance that ICH elements have for them.
5. NGOs develop their expertise in a large variety of fields and at various territorial levels. We are therefore ready to serve as a link of the complex chain that ties UNESCO to cultural communities. This link is very specific because we have the knowledge, skills, experience and human resources to enhance the relation between governments and heritage holder communities, while testifying to the often precarious conditions in which they live.
6. In joining UNESCO's clear commitment to contribute to attaining the Millennium Development Goals, we consider that the implementation of the ICH Convention can contribute to the eradication of extreme poverty (MDG 1), to the empowerment of women (MDG 2) and to ensuring environmental sustainability (MDG 7) in the context of ICH holding communities. We also believe that the safeguarding plans have an extremely important role to play in relation to youth and education.
7. We have a positive appreciation of the first experiences of examination of dossiers and proposals by NGOs and experts. We shall actively follow the work done by the Consultative Body and the specific contribution of the NGOs. We welcome having an easier access to the sessions of the Convention's governing bodies. For us, these important steps are the recognition of the added value that civil society organizations can bring to the implementation of the Convention.

8. We trust that the cooperation with the IGC and the Secretariat will continue. NGOs are prepared to assist decision making such as nominations, funding, actions plans and programs, inventories, awareness raising, capacity building and training programs. In other words, we will always be glad to be partners to States Parties and to the Secretariat.
9. We believe that the following mechanisms, among others, would meet such expectations and we are ready to participate in their implementation. These mechanisms would significantly contribute to enrich the information available to State Parties, so that they can better identify the support that can be received from the NGOs. These mechanisms would also interconnect the NGOs more effectively, increasing the efficiency of their contribution to the safeguarding process:
  - 9.1 Create a platform of information, exchange and communication accessible to them as well as to States parties and, of course, the Secretariat.
  - 9.2 Establish a program for the direct exchange of experience and methodology between NGOs.
  - 9.3 Facilitate, through the cluster offices of UNESCO, the organization of thematic meetings to strengthen coordination and increase the professional capacity of NGOs.
10. We finally wish to reiterate our strong commitment to participate in the implementation of the Convention in the spirit of the principles established by its drafters, as a promotion of peace and harmony among all, through the strengthening of intercultural dialogue and of cultural diversity.

**List of NGOs signatories:**

African Cultural Regeneration Institute, Amis du patrimoine de Madagascar, ASAMA, ARTESOL - Artesanato Solidário, Association Nationale Culture et Traditions, Centre for Heritage Development Africa, Contact Base, Craft Revival Trust, Cultural Heritage Exchange Center, FARO, Fundación Erigaie, Goa Heritage Action Group, ICOM, ICTM, IDAST, International Organisation für Volks kunst, IVV, Ka'Meru International Foundation, Médecines et traditions africaines, Norwegian Crafts Development, Rural Women Environmental Protection Association, SIMBDEA, Tapis plein, Traditions pour Demain, UNESCO Centre of Cataluña, World Martial Arts Union

November 18, 2010