

## ICH NGO Forum STATEMENT 12.COM - Jeju UNESCO 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural heritage

1. The ICH NGO Forum works for strengthening the outreach and civil society involvement in the life of the Convention. The ICH NGO Forum appreciates the support received this year from **Indonesia, the Korea Cultural Foundation and ICHCAP for capacity building**, networking and experience sharing. We will welcome further support from the State Parties, the Category II Centres and other organisations to strengthen regional networks, capacity development, online and printed publications for sharing experiences and translation of content for the Forum website and the publication by #Heritage Alive. The Secretariat stresses the financial challenges for the Forum though highlighting the possibility to play a more active role. This is an additional reason why the Forum would welcome receiving support for achieving the missions that it is gradually building up towards an improvement of civil society involvement in the life of the Convention.
2. Capacity-building at all levels is important for the implementation of the 2003 Convention. The ICH NGO Forum organized in Jeju from December 1 to 3, 2017, **the first International Capacity-building workshop for accredited NGOs**. With close to 100 participants, the workshop opened up a higher level of understanding of the 2003 Convention and its mechanisms, and made possible fruitful discussions and exchanges on the diverse roles of the accredited NGOs.
3. The NGO forum hopefully welcomes the initiative to discuss the topic of the “**inter alia**” part of the advisory functions of the accredited NGOs to the Committee, and encourages the proposed dialogue with the ICH NGO Forum to envisage and define the diverse roles of accredited NGOs for contributing to the collaborative process of implementing the Convention, so as a reconsidered process of accreditation and renewal. As a response, we would therefore welcome the creation of an **informal working group** with State Parties, the Secretariat, and NGOs, including the NGO Forum, to enhance the formal contribution of NGOs in the implementation of the Convention.
4. Regarding the NGOs’ online journal for exchange of experiences from the field, **#HeritageAlive**, it reached a new milestone at the 12.COM. In cooperation with ICHCAP, #HeritageAlive presented its book, *Traditional Medicine: Experiences from the Field*, a publication which includes 18 articles from most parts of the world, and produced by NGOs and experts. In the spirit of the Convention this book gives a unique insight on the diversity of traditional medicine in different contexts. At the book presentation in Jeju, 9 of the authors presented their articles and experiences in the #HeritageAlive symposium attended by 150 people. #HeritageAlive shall continue its successful cooperation with ICHCAP. ICHCAP and #HeritageAlive plans for publication of a new book, sharing experiences from the field, to be presented at 14.COM.
5. Other active and foreseen **working groups** of the Forum include Ethics, Communication, Research,

Information and Technology Communication, Lighter ways of safeguarding ICH, Role of ICH in Education and Sustainable Development, and the follow up of the Global Results framework, the adoption of which is highly appreciated by the NGOs:

- The Working Group **on ICH and Research** organized a short symposium on the topic of challenges in inventorying ICH, like for instance talking about community involvement in the safeguarding process. During future meetings it will further elaborate on the role of researchers in safeguarding Intangible heritage, thus strengthening the cooperation between NGOs, as “heritage workers” in the field, and the research community.

The Working Group **on Ethics** reflected upon a proposed document containing a set of ethical principles directly linked to the work of NGOs that are working with ICH, in direct line with the 12 ICH UNESCO ethical principles. It also examined the invitation made by the Committee to collaborate in implementing ethical tools and good practices regarding ICH on the website of UNESCO. Both dimensions are to be further elaborated in the following year(s).

- On an initiative of the ICH NGO Forum a new working group is launched on the **Global Results Framework** of the Convention recommended by the Committee for adoption by the next GA.

6. NGOs consider the assessment of contribution of ICH for **the pursuit of the SDGs** as a cross-cutting theme for its various activities. This will be taken up as a permanent concern in the future.

7. The ICH NGO Forum acknowledges the hard work of the experts and NGOs in the **Evaluation Body**, and welcomes the newly implemented measures, such as the dual option and the changes in the layout of the form.

However, regarding the inscriptions on the Convention lists the Forum has observed at this session that the recommendations made by the Evaluation Body are once again almost systematically overruled by the Committee. Providing new information appears to be significantly predominant on the review of the Evaluation Body. By continuing the trend set in Addis Ababa, i.e. “clarifying” the nomination files, overruling the files seems to be substantially eased.

While respecting the Committee’s decisions, the ICH NGO Forum expresses its clear concern for a development that weakens the credibility of the ICH Convention as well as the very relevance of the Evaluation Body. This affects among other the potential valuable advisory contributions NGOs can offer in this Convention. In line with the current debates and decisions reflected in the sessions 11.COM and 12.COM, the advisory process of the Evaluation Body could eventually evolve from a judging role towards a more assisting one. Indeed, the ICH convention is not a competition, its objectives and beauty reflect an including approach.

8. The ICH NGO Forum is concerned and permanently working towards a more transparent and sustainable format of **governance** so to allow full participation of its global peers. It has for instance successfully held its first elections of its Steering Committee to appoint, as requires by its rules, three new members from three electoral regions:

Latin America and the Caribbean: Mr. Jorge Gustavo Caicedo

Eastern Europe: Mr. Michal Buchowski

Arab States: Mr. Fares Kallas

Three current members of the Steering Committee will remain until their mandate expires, ie. the next election at 13.COM,

Western Europe and North America: Mrs Jorijn Neyrinck

Asia and the Pacific: Mrs. Ananya Bhattacharya  
Africa: Mr. Leonce Ki

The Forum has acknowledged those Steering Committee founding members of the Forum that have leaving their position after having completed their mandate (Mrs Magdalena Tovornik, Mrs Joanne Orr, Mr Diego Gradis and Mr Antoine Gauthier). It also recognises the work done by its first Electoral Board in charge of this year's first elections in Jeju.

The revised rules of the Forum provide that starting at 13.COM, its Steering Committee shall have a seat for an International NGO and will make all possible efforts to reach an equal gender representation in the Steering Committee.

The ICH NGO forum is now developing **regional networks** to share experience and find ways to develop network cooperation, relationships and capacities in the regions. To that effect, **regional meetings of NGOs** were held in Jeju to further enhance, and support from the regions efforts of the Forum, determined to be an even more active role player in the process of safeguarding ICH.

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