

## ICH NGO Forum STATEMENT 13.COM – Port Louis - Republic of Mauritius

### 1. WORDS OF THANKS

The ICH NGO Forum is thankful to the host Country of Mauritius and the UNESCO Secretariat of the 2003 Convention for their kind hospitality and facilitation of the meetings and the work on the occasion of the 13COM sessions. We were happy to see the Director General of UNESCO present at the Session.

### 2. REALIZATIONS ICH NGO FORUM

As an international platform for accredited ICH NGOs the Forum is committed to contribute to the implementation of the 2003 Convention and the safeguarding of ICH.

Over the past six years the Forum has achieved **many concrete results**:

- **6 regional ICH NGO Forum networks** for exchange and cooperation have been set up at the regional level;
- We have **7 working groups working on specific issues** such as capacity building, research, ethics, Overall Results Framework, lighter ways of sharing safeguarding experiences, ICT for ICH, education and sustainable development;
- The NGO Forum's **online journal Heritage Alive** has around 40+ contributions for sharing experiences from the field. In 2017. A publication on traditional medicine (2017) was presented in collaboration with the Cat.II Center ICHCAP. We received 11 articles this year and prepare a publication on traditional food in 2019 with ICHCAP collaboration.
- We have the **newly launched ICHNGO.net**, an open website for accredited NGOs to share ICH practices, events, and for inventorying complementing the Forum website [www.ichngoforum.org](http://www.ichngoforum.org);
- At the occasion of 13.COM, the Forum and its members prepared an **ethical declaration** responding to the Convention's Ethical Principles for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage, which will be accompanied with an **Ethics Action Plan**, and which we prepare to complement with a code of conduct for Steering Committee members.

### 3. LINKING GLOBAL ICH NGO Forum to REGIONAL networking and cooperation.

In a **strategy for increasing involvement of accredited NGOs** in the implementation of the UNESCO 2003 Convention **at the national and (sub)regional levels** through **capacity building**, the first ICH NGO FORUM Capacity Building project was realized last year 2017 in Jeju at 12.COM. The specific goal being to **train a group of accredited NGOs for every region of the world**, that can thereafter take forward a role on **outreach** and **regional network building** towards a larger audience amongst NGOs and, more largely, civil society organizations in their respective regions.

This development of regional networks will also offer a wonderful opportunity in response to and to enhance **contribution to the reformed Periodic Reporting mechanism** and in **follow-up for the Overall Results Framework**. To this aim also the at 13COM a special session for regional network meeting was organized, and we are further embedding it in the organization of the Forum's activities strategy and governance. Adding to this the accredited NGO Traditional Arts Association invites the Forum for an international **ICH NGO networking meeting in Turkey in 2019**.

### 4. International Year of Indigenous Languages - 2019

The ICH NGO forum calls on the State Parties to consider proceeding with **the nominations on the urgent safeguarding list of elements related with indigenous languages** on the occasion of the International Year of Indigenous peoples.

## 5. ROLES of NGOs in the Convention

### 5.1. Consultation Process “Reflection on the advisory functions of accredited NGOs in the UNESCO 2003 Convention”

The Forum would like to express its deep satisfaction with the transparency and dialogical nature in which the reflection on the ways in which the participation of NGOs could be further enhanced, and how this reflection process will contribute to the development of the current accreditation system. Looking over and learning from the online consultation results, along with the Secretariat and the adhoc working group is something we look forward to in 2019, with recommendation and decision made and taken at 14.COM.

### 5.2. Forum initiatives towards the Reflection process

The Forum is also taking initiatives for consultation on the roles of NGOs *inter alia* for the implementation of the 2003 Convention. Three NGO meetings, in 2018, among which also the 2018 ICH NGO Forum’s annual Symposium (with over 90 participants from both NGOs, states parties and other actors in the Convention), were especially devoted to the INTER ALIA process. It is proposed to map the possible contributions of NGOs in alignment with functions of the Committee (article 7 Convention) and the Overall Results Framework.

### 5.3. Possible roles

NGOs form a rich resource feeding the implementation of the Convention to its full potential.

NGOs take up roles of mediation and facilitation with respect to cultivating local to global safeguarding processes in ICH. This has been highlighted before in your debates and it is also mentioned in the OD chapter on sustainable development.

Regarding the **possible advisory functions of the accredited NGOs**, we have already **identified 5 new dimensions**:

1. NGOs may serve as **a laboratory of ideas and inspiring practices**: for raising and discussing new issues in relation to societal changes; highlighting critical aspects in safeguarding, methodologies and procedures ... This often happens through transnational cooperation and effective networking of NGOs, and building connections -also with other actors, like research institutes, civil society and other partners.  
*Such cross-border collaboration of NGOs for example is the case for the drystone walling listed at this session; for the newly registered Good Practice Storytelling network of Kronoberg; or the ICH and Museums Project started by accredited NGOs in Europe.*
2. An obvious NGO role lies in contributing to the **safeguarding of ICH**:  
NGOs contribute to **safeguarding measures and methodologies**, in **general**, or of specific **elements** of ICH, whether or not inscribed (cfr. ORF 21); as well as for the **follow up on inscribed elements**.
3. NGOs are well equipped to **share safeguarding experiences in lighter and easy accessible ways**.  
*A nice example is the online platform [Nordicsafeguardingpractices.org](http://Nordicsafeguardingpractices.org) in which accredited NGOs are playing a vital role, as well as the *Heritage Alive* online journal on the Forum’s website [ichngoforum.org](http://ichngoforum.org).*
4. The role of NGOs for **awareness raising on ICH and safeguarding in society**, and for **building and strengthening capacities** with stakeholders at large.
5. A diversity of **reporting functions** serving the committee and the Overall Results Framework, regional reporting, status of inscribed elements, and other.

## 6. PERFORMANCE IN THE FORUM GOVERNANCE

The ICH NGO Forum has been working the past years also firmly for **strengthening its governance**. In that respect, we are delighted to announce that during this 13.COM, the ICH NGO Forum has its **first fully elected Steering Committee**. Each of the **6 regions** is represented, along with a seat reserved for **international NGOs**, to

maximise the exchange of experiences, and to develop our governance structure and guarantee good participation.

This Steering Committee, along with the general Forum, is playing an integral role coordination and communication, as well as in the training of regional NGOs on regional network building and reporting as well as on outreach programmes.

#### **7. EFFORTS FOR COMMUNICATION AND CONNECTION WITH THE STATES PARTIES**

The ICH NGO Forum consistently calls on, and makes great **efforts to better communication and connect with State Parties**. We reiterate our call and request to member states to support the efforts of the ICH NGO Forum for deepening our communication and strengthen collaboration.

#### **8. REQUEST FOR SUPPORT FOR DEVELOPING THE REGIONAL NETWORK EFFORTS**

The ICH NGO Forum kindly requests for **support -financial or other- from states parties and Category II Centres** for the initiatives it takes for **developing regional networking and collaboration** regarding accredited NGOs, and **supporting capacity building** of the accredited NGOs in the different regions.

Port Louis, Mauritius  
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#### **CONTACT:**

##### **The Steering Committee**

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