

Paris, 27nd November 2014

1. With regard to ITH/14/9.COM/6 – the Report by the Secretariat on the activities in the area of capacity building.

- The ICH NGO Forum expresses its satisfaction for the ongoing efforts by the Secretariat and the Convention's Bodies to **foster the sharing of safeguarding experiences and to elaborate alternate lighter ways for this (§26) and for capacity building programs (§48).**
- The ICH NGO Forum is **gradually building capacity in order to support the safeguarding aims of the UNESCO 2003 Convention.**
- As reported earlier in the week the NGO Forum symposium was attended by **95 participants from 38 countries** and there is now an **clear prospect to establish a permanent secretariat for the forum.**
- The ICH NGO Forum has the **potential to further support NGOs in the future accreditation processes and in the organization of networking opportunities and in the sharing of experience not only in the practices of safeguarding ICH but also in actively participating and representing the NGOs in the mechanisms of the Convention and the work of UNESCO.**

2. Concerning ITH/14/9.COM/11 - the Establishment of the Evaluation Body for the 2015 Cycle

- The ICH NGO forum seeks **further clarification and transparency on the nomination procedures of experts and NGOs for the evaluation body.**
- In particular for NGOs operating in an **international capacity** and for those NGOs operating in **non-State party countries** we would also welcome **further information on the opportunities for NGOs to participate actively in the mechanics of the Convention.**
- The ICH NGO Forum considers important a **discussion by the Intergovernmental Committee concerning future criteria and procedures for proposal and election, taking into account all stakeholders involved.**

3. Concerning ITH/14/9.COM/14 - Accreditation and Evaluation of NGOs

- The ICH NGO Forum is **anxious to see the results the evaluation of the first cycle of 97 NGOs accredited in 2010.** The Forum regrets but understands the current postponement of accreditation. We however feel necessary to repeat that **accreditation also strengthens the capacity of NGOs to contribute to the implementation of the Convention worldwide on all scales and at all levels involved,** and to fulfill their bridging and mediating roles between States and communities. In line with our previous comments the NGO Forum is discussing and sharing experiences in the process of evaluating the NGOs.
- A possible undertaking for the future could be to assure **capacity building training for accreditation that certifies the candidate NGO.** Training programs could be organized regionally.
- We would additionally ask some consideration for NGOs operating in the field of **cultural heritage under special circumstances,** specifically NGOs operating in conflict zones/areas.

The ICH NGO FORUM current activities

SYMPOSIUM 9COM

The annual SYMPOSIUM of the forum that took place on November 23 offered a direct follow up of the decision made in the Baku Session by the IGC (DECISION 8.COM 5.c.1): *Encouraging States Parties to 'Promote increased NGO and community involvement in the development of policy, legislation, safeguarding plans and sustainable development plans (Recommendation 2)'*; The idea of the symposium was to revisit the accomplishments of ICH NGOs in four important and mutually interlinked realms of ICH safeguarding – public policies, legislation, safeguarding measures and sustainable development -, which all require a close collaboration between NGOs and States Parties.

The Symposium had an exceptional attendance with **95 participants** from NGOs, communities, researchers, State parties and members of National UNESCO Commissions from **over 38 countries worldwide**.

The event combined presentations with an **interactive format** that facilitated the exchange of ideas and the sharing of experiences **producing a day of diversity, inclusivity and positive energy**.

The forum has taken another step in **fostering mutual collaboration of public policy decision makers and civil society organizations** in the shared purpose of safeguarding ICH in the world. By the end of the day it was demonstrated that exist growing active and dynamic relationships between NGOs and State parties. An important part of this collaboration has been established since the 8.COM Baku Session by the recommendation to actively involve NGOs in periodic reports by States Parties. This is confirmed in ITH/14/[9.COM/5.a](#) (§81, §82) periodic reports of the States Parties. The ICH NGO Forum envisages a deeper involvement in the future implementation of this recommendation.

The symposium brought together a range of stakeholders fostering awareness of their diversity and the wide range of roles that they play to benefit communities. The rich diversity of the NGO community is enriching and means that the Convention is implemented on many different levels. This also comes with the challenges of NGOs working at very different scales. The inclusivity of the forum provides a setting that gives even the smallest NGO the opportunity to make a valuable contribution to the Convention.

MEETINGS and WORKING GROUPS

The ICH NGO Forum is organizing its **main activities along different Working Groups (WG)**:

- **Developing alternate lighter ways for sharing safeguarding experiences**
- **#Heritage Alive**, bringing online articles on safeguarding methodologies from the field
- a **Regional Working Group**, bringing together Inter-American and Caribbean NGOs with the aim of organizing regional networking of NGOs active in safeguarding ICH.

Furthermore, the ICH NGO Forum organizes **regular meetings and consultations** gathering accredited NGOs, as well as **introducing and briefing sessions for those recently accredited**.

COMMUNICATION AND VISIBILITY

The activities of the Forum may be followed through the website [ICHNGOForum.org](#) including the online journal **'#heritage alive'** and an on going platform for exchanges and experiences from several working groups, **social media tools** and the newly established newsletter.

INTERNATIONAL NETWORKING AND COOPERATION

Another significant event was the **Conference 'Towards Efficient Roles of NGOs for Safeguarding ICH in the Asia-Pacific Region'** held in Korea, in June 2014, organized by ICHCAP, the Korea Cultural Heritage Foundation and the National Intangible Heritage Centre, with support of the Korean Government.

The ICH NGO Forum looks forward to related future initiatives, engaging with diverse partners. In June 2015 the ICH NGO Forum will be partner in an **international meeting for Accredited NGOs**, initiated by ENS de l'Associacionisme Cultural Català, to take further steps in the organization and activities. Further a meeting with the ICH Researcher's Forum is planned to explore possibilities of cooperation.

ORGANIZATION of the ICH NGO FORUM and SUPPORT

Finally, we wish to express our **gratitude to Indonesia**, which has recently announced that it will start **supporting the ICH NGO Forum activities**, which will help to build structure and capacity.

The ICH NGO Forum expresses its **hope that other States Parties will follow the Indonesian initiative**.