



ENGLISH VERSION

**ICH NGO Forum Speech for the 11.COM IGC – Addis Ababa  
UNESCO 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural heritage**

Dear Mr Chair,

Thank you for offering the floor to the ICH NGO Forum.

Before all, the Forum would like to express gratitude to the members of the IGC for the opportunity to make a speech as part of the proceedings, and to UNESCO and the hosting Ethiopian authorities for the many ways of being supportive to the accredited NGOs that take part as observers to these meetings. We are also grateful for the growing consideration given to the ICH NGO Forum in which the accredited NGOs meet and coordinate activities relating to the 2003 Convention.

Thank you, for funding the participation of 22 NGO colleagues to this 11.COM and for considering and communicating the NGO activities as official side-event to the Committee's Meeting; we highly appreciate offering English-French interpretation for the Symposium and annual plenary meeting and also, for offering facilitation, and rooms for meeting and developing the activities of cooperation among NGOs and other 11COM participants during this Committee session.

NGO participation to the 11.COM session is vivid and numerous, with more than 90 representatives of over 54 NGOs that have registered, and with six of our colleague NGOs offering advisory services to the Committee in the Evaluation Body. The Forum looks forward to this 11<sup>th</sup> Session of the IGC Meeting with great interest. Observing the Agenda, first, we look forward to the reflections related to developing an overall results framework for the Convention, notably regarding situations in urgent need of safeguarding. We also welcome the initiation of exploring issues concerning safeguarding ICH in contexts of emergencies. Additionally, the Forum looks favourably at a diversity of proposals to the instruments of the Convention, especially 6 nominations to the Urgent Safeguarding List and 7 proposals to the Register of Good Safeguarding.

There is one proposal requesting international assistance through the Fund. In general, the Forum can only express its hope for the Fund being able to be mobilized as a source for fostering a diverse range of potential safeguarding measures and actions.

Relating to such very important aspects that will be discussed during this session of the IGC, the NGO Forum has made a special contribution to facilitate exchanges and insights, and deepen reflections, through the organization of the 5<sup>th</sup> ICH NGO Forum Symposium, that took place yesterday in this room. We are honoured to bring to the Committee a concise report on the SYMPOSIUM.

Over the years the Forum has established a tradition to open the IGC sessions with the NGO Symposium. Yesterday, over 80 participants of NGOs, communities, researchers, state parties and members of national UNESCO Commissions from over 32 countries attended the Symposium..

The first topic of this year's Symposium highlighted '*Challenges for NGOs in the promotion of ICH values*'. The program offered room for presentations by important speakers active both outside as well as fully within the Convention's framework. NGO experiences from Ethiopia, Nigeria, Cameroon, and Uganda were shared.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> part of the symposium introduced the topic of the legal protection of ICH in the case of Armed Conflict, a subject in which expertise and research is being developed also amongst accredited NGOs. In the near future the topic of ICH in contexts of armed conflict, migration and emergencies will be further explored in the Forum's initiatives.

The key observations and insights raised yesterday were:

- *need for greater awareness on ICH and 2003 Convention in Africa*
- *challenges in access and ownership of ICH documentation*
- *importance of research in safeguarding and revitalisation*
- *how rituals and festivals celebrating ICH facilitate community interaction and dialogue*
- *urgency of safeguarding ICH as we are losing the present custodians – the elderly generation*
- *need for awareness and effective access to international legal instruments, adopting human rights perspective in situations of conflict*
- *the role of ICH NGOs in fostering peace*

The ICH NGO forum is also working for sharing of safeguarding ICH practices, The #Heritage alive online journal for sharing safeguarding keeps growing steadily. In 2016, following our call for articles on *'traditional medicine, and transmission of this knowledge* we received new article(s). They are published on the Forum's website and the editorial board of the work group welcomes your participation to the Open Workshop this Wednesday at lunch time (1.15 pm-2.30 pm) in Caucus room discussing these newly shared safeguarding experiences from field perspective.

We are also coming across emerging issues and challenges in safeguarding ICH. These may be topics for further research, policy and practice development and capacity building like ICH practices in contexts of diversity, digitization, urbanization, migration and conflict situations. This is part of the overall process of how through the implementation of the 2003 Convention- we works towards rollout of the universal, integrated and transformative' UN 2030 Agenda and for Sustainable development. We all intend to take it forward, considering ICH as both a possible driver and an enabler for these processes.

A meaningful next step we are taking as Forum, is to bring our work in 2017 to a higher level. Developing the outreach of the NGO work for the Convention, we are working on an international program of Capacity Building for accredited NGOs, launching and developing regional networks, and setting up good governance structures for the Forum's organization itself.

The communication tools of the ICH NGO Forum are also making effective outreach. We are delighted to share that the website and the social media (twitter, facebook) channels reach numerous interested stakeholders. In close coordination with the ICH section of the Secretariat, the Forum is currently developing database and information sharing, complementing and adjusting to the data present on NGOs on the UNESCO website.

The Forum in recent years is also regularly invited to support projects of NGO networks all over the world, through its expertise, networks and communication tools. Various interesting NGO based supranational initiatives, cooperation and conferences are being set up in all regions!

These range from regional and sub regional NGO meetings in Asia and the Pacific facilitated through ICHCAP, or regional networking efforts in Europe evolving to concrete cross border ICH safeguarding projects raising funds and multi-stakeholder involvement, to enthusiast NGO capacity building in Africa, ...

To strengthen these developments, the Forum sincerely invites States Parties for support, be-it in modest or larger contributions of funding and support to these important evolutions, by which NGOs may add progressively to the implementation of the Convention, through communication and sensitization, by raising capacities in civil society, through aiding to safeguarding actions for communities in need, and the development of regional and transnational cooperation. Any support from States Parties means one step more in capacity for taking forward specific objectives in the safeguarding objectives for ICH and fostering NGO cooperation.

At this time we especially request support to make the global capacity program for the ICH NGO Forum possible – through direct funding or if States Parties can request so through the Fund. In this regard, we wish to thank Indonesia, the Directorate General of Culture at the Ministry of Education and Culture Republic of Indonesia, through the Oral Traditions Association, an accredited NGO, for supporting the Forum on the occasion of this IGC and future initiatives.

The NGOs and their cooperation in the Forum wish to form a loyal and resilient partner in the flourishing of the Convention's spirit and practices. With vivid enthusiasm we go the road forward.

Wishing you all an intense Committee meeting, fascinating reflections and apt decisions for safeguarding ICH throughout the globe.