



**Message to celebrate 20 years of the 2003 Convention ¹:
Intangible Cultural Heritage, Solutions to present and future problems.
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The concept of “*Intangible Cultural Heritage* ” was officially recognized internationally by the adoption in 2003 by UNESCO of the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.

It expresses the contemporary cultural dynamics of a community which undergoes various influences, reappropriates the heritage passed down from generation to generation, adapts it, constantly renews it, reinterprets it and thus constructs its own identity.

Unfortunately, many Intangible Cultural Heritages are threatened with disappearance by multiple causes, namely: devaluation, neglect, abandonment of these cultural elements, the break in the chain of transmission from one generation to another, uniformist globalization. represented by the invasion of practices and values conveyed by globalization.

It is therefore urgent to safeguard these know-how and values for transmission to present and future generations. It is also an essential element to allow a people to show its difference from other societies, to demonstrate its own way of thinking about the world and its capacity for cultural creation because each

¹Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

²NGO Accredited by UNESCO to provide Advisory Functions to the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage.

culture is an original creation. It is contributing to better mutual knowledge between communities present in a territory, each carrying its own culture, which thanks to this can live better together. In short, intangible cultural heritage is direct access to the memory of peoples and a living source from which to find answers to the challenges of peace and Sustainable Development.

Intangible Cultural Heritage sometimes makes it possible, without us realizing it, to find solutions to a number of difficulties that a community and its members are likely to encounter. Some old solutions may prove to be better suited to current problems, the use of African medicine and pharmacopoeia in our country, proposed alternative medication solutions, in a situation of medical despair, agricultural adaptation to Climate change. Ultimately, heritage today is an instrument of territorial economic development and sustainable tourism. In short, intangible cultural heritage is direct access to the memory of peoples and a living source from which to find answers to the challenges of peace and sustainable development.

Paradoxically, 20 years later, our African continent is under-represented on the international scene despite the great wealth and diversity of African intangible cultural heritage in addition to the active intellectual involvement of Africa in the adoption of the 2003 convention of UNESCO.

I hope that the celebration of the 20th anniversary of the 2003 Convention is a time of awareness for humanity in general and Africa in particular because it is the Continent of the Present and the future.

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