The Intangible Cultural Heritage
• UNESCO: International Intergovernmental Organization created on 16th November 1945

• Mandate: Promoting International Cooperation in Education, Science, Culture and Communication as a:
  – Laboratory of ideas
  – Clearing house
  – Standard normative action
Towards Recognizing ICH

- European nation building in 19th century: monuments confirm the promoted past
- Post WWII: peak of attention for material heritage
- 1960/70s: dominant and non-dominant communities, on supra-national and sub-national level, turn to living cultural heritage for confirmation of present-day identities
- 2003: ICH Convention

Il canto dei tenori, Italy
Conventions and cultural diversity


• 1970: Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property

• 1972: Convention on the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage

• 2001: Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage

• **2003: Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH)**

• 2005: Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions
The Sector of Culture

- World Heritage (monuments and sites)
- Intangible Heritage
- Museums
- Cultural Policies
- Cultural Industries
- Intercultural Dialogue

ICH: Two lines of action

- Legal texts
  - Recommendation on the Safeguarding of Traditional Culture and Folklore (1989)
  - Steps towards a new normative instrument, preferably a Convention (1997, 2001)

- Programmes
  - Living Human Treasures (1993-)
  - Endangered languages (1995-)
  - Traditional Music (1962-2005)
The ICH Convention

- Adopted: October 2003
- Open for ratification since November 2003
- Ratified by 30 States: 20 January 2006
- Entered into force: 20 April 2006
- Ratified now by 161 States (as of 15/05/2014)

The Al-Sirah Al-Hilaliyyah Epic, Egypt

Vietnamese Court Music Nha Nhac

The Cultural Space of Sosso-Bala in Nyagassola, Guinea
• Oral traditions and expressions,
• Performing arts
• Social practices, rituals and festive events
• Knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe
• Traditional craftsmanship

The Traditional Music of Morin Khuur
Mongolia
Defining ICH: expressions and practices, knowledge and skills that

- are in conformity with human rights
- belong to one or more of the relevant domains
- are recognised by communities, groups, and in some cases individuals, as forming part of their cultural heritage
- are living, rooted in tradition, and constantly recreated
- are crucial for the sense of identity and continuity of communities and groups

The definition also includes **objects and spaces** that are associated with manifestations of ICH
Goals

- Safeguarding ICH: ensuring its viability (continued enactment and transmission) within communities/groups
- Awareness raising
- Sharing and celebrating
- Dialogue, respect for cultural diversity
- International cooperation and assistance
Obligations of States Parties

States Parties are committed to safeguarding (= ensuring the viability of) the ICH present on their territory, starting by identification the elaboration of one or more inventories:

- Community, groups to be involved
- Access to be regulated
- To be regularly updated
Mechanism of the Convention

- General Assembly of States Parties
- Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage
- Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity
- List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding
- Fund for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage
General Assembly

- Sovereign Body of the Convention
- Will meet in ordinary session every two years, and in extraordinary session
- Elects the members of the Committee
- Approves the Operational Directives
- Meets for the first time 27-29 June 2006

The Al-Sirah Al-Hilaliyyah Epic, Egypt
Intergovernmental Committee

- 18 Members, 24 after 50 ratifications
- 4 year term, renewal of half of the members every 2 years
- Membership: determined by equitable geographical representation and rotation
- Members to send experts as their representatives

The Art of Akyns, Kyrgyz Epic Tellers
Kyrgyzstan
Functions of the Committee

- Prepare Operational Directives for implementation
- Implement the Convention
  - Examine requests for:
    - inscription on the Lists
    - international assistance
  - Make recommendations on safeguarding measures
  - Seek means of increasing its resources
  - Examine periodic reports of States Parties
The Lists

• Representative List of the ICH of Humanity
• List of the ICH in Need of Urgent Safeguarding

Criteria for inscription
• To be prepared by Committee
• To be adopted by General Assembly

The Garifuna Language, Dance and Music, Nicaragua
• Safeguarding of heritage inscribed on the List of ICH in Need of Urgent Safeguarding
• Preparation of inventories
• Programmes, projects and other activities in the States Parties (incl. capacity building)

Congos of Villa Mella
Dominican Republic
Work in progress

Preparation of the Implementation of the Convention:

– Organization of experts meetings
– Collecting good practices
– Preparation of info, including thematic manuals
– Preparation of meetings of the Statutory Bodies
Work in progress: Communities, groups, individuals

• How to define them?
• How to be involved in
  – Defining ICH
  – Inventory making
  – Preparation and management of safeguarding measures
Proclamation of Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity

- Created in 1997
- Proclamations in 2001, 2003, 2005
- 90 Masterpieces have been proclaimed in all
- No new Proclamations will be organised
- Masterpieces located in States Parties to the Convention will be inscribed in the List of the Convention

Zápara People, Ecuador-Peru
Features of the Convention

- Introduces List system; other main focus on programmes and projects
- Deals with heritage representative for communities (not of outstanding universal value)
- Emphasis on living heritage, enacted by people, often collectively, mostly transmitted orally
- Attention for processes/conditions rather than products
- Role of communities/groups
- Contribution to promotion of creativity and diversity, to well-being (of communities and groups and societies at large) and peaceful development
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