

Annex 2 | *Report on National
Workshop*
28-30 June 2010

REPORT

Introduction

The meeting commenced with a traditional Karakia performed by the staff of the Ministry of Cultural Development, signifying the importance of the occasion as well as the presence of dignitaries from government, from overseas and from within the land.

The Prime Minister, Hon. Jim Marurai made a welcome speech on behalf of government as well as giving a brief outline on the support they give towards the work of the Ministry in enhancing the culture and tradition in the Cook Islands.

He was followed by an Opening Speech by the Director of UNESCO Apia Office emphasizing the need and urgency of safeguarding ICH in this most culturally diverse region and expressing UNESCO's strong commitment to working together with the Pacific Member States in their efforts in this field. He said that by educating our people today, the chances of them understanding each other will take place otherwise it will all be lost. He said that culture is alive and living in the Pacific today and is our identity as people and will define our future generation.

He also said that we are the custodians of our environment and we are to look after the environment for the sake of our children. It is our duty to live ethically to give our future generation a chance to grow up, enjoy it and be part of a living testimony of who we are and our culture must not be exploited. He went on to say that by promoting culture and development in tourism has brought economic returns as it has become a pillar of development in the promotion of that industry. He ended his speech by cautioning all those present that what is required now is putting the legal foundation of ownership on our Intangible Cultural Heritage in order to safeguard it for the future generation.

Hon Sir Geoffrey Henry, KBE, (former Prime Minister and first Minister of Culture in 1990) was given the honour of being the keynote speaker for this Workshop. He gave a very informative and detailed rendition of how culture was on the verge of being lost after the infiltration of the Missionaries into the Cook Islands, along with the colonial era that transpired after that period. The dominance of foreign language and the introduction of new cultures almost wiped out the intangible cultural heritage of the Cook Islands. Fortunately, however, with the introduction of self-government in 1965, it

stopped this cultural erosion. The power of self determination was huge in the Cook Islands people and this helped with their recovery.

This new administration gave the people of these islands the chance to rule their own affairs and gave the new government of Sir Albert Henry (the first Premier of the Cook Islands) the opportunity to revive the cultural heritage of these islands. This was the rebirth that the Cook Islands needed to safeguard its intangible cultural heritage and brought to life in the dance, music, language and traditional legacies that were partially alive. He then emphasized the importance of holding this Workshop as it would give the Cook Islands people an opportunity to evaluate and safeguard their identity as people of these islands.

In his parting comments, Sir Geoffrey quoted: *“Nature is not a harbour but a voyage. Culture is a voyage into Eternity. We have to determine the direction that it takes. The challenge is for us to take the Voyage and Plan where it takes us.”*

Overview of UNESCO's work in the Pacific

After the meeting resumed, Dr Pongi, gave an overview of the work of UNESCO in relation to ICH. He said that about 6% of a country's GDP comes from culture, however, it is roped into tourism; it is huge especially in developed countries. He said that we have to make our culture relevant to us and differentiate only to ourselves. Culture evolves in such a way that it is relevant for future generations to uphold and appreciate. He said that UNESCO supports the Pacific Festival of Arts and that everything that we do contributes towards the Pacific Plan.

He spoke about the 3 pillars – economic pillar, social pillar and environment pillar. Culture is the source of diversity and it also contributes towards development. It is recognized globally and this Workshop will look at how UNESCO can help to recognize towards a creative industry. It must look at how each sector can contribute and safeguard our culture otherwise it will be marginalized by the developing world. How to create jobs and have an economic value; e.g. In Vanuatu, a piece of land was changed from an empty piece of land to one of the best cultural sites in the world – it is recognized and protected – recognized as a tourist contribution not a cultural contribution.

We must safeguard it first and then economic contribution next. We have to promote it at the national and at the regional level so it can be recognized as a pillar of development. We have to involve everyone – our leaders, our communities – we are the custodians. How do we strategize and include it in our development, and he ended by saying that we all have a part to play.

Operational Directives

The first afternoon of the Workshop was given to Akatsuki Takahashi, Programme Specialist for Culture, UNESCO Apia Office who explained the different Conventions that led to the ratification of the 2003 Intangible Cultural Heritage by the different countries around the globe:

UNESCO Mission:

- o Education – enables people to make own decisions for themselves without fear of exploitation or take advantage of;
- o Culture- people appreciate who they are and respect themselves as well as those around them and beyond. Also respect that we are different yet we are one;
- o Sciences – appreciate who we are and the environment we live in and the need to ensure sustainability of our environment for future generation;
- o Communication – ensure everyone is allowed to express their own feelings and beliefs (freedom of expression and have access to quality information (Communication) She also explained the meaning of ICH to the participants as countries became aware of the importance of their environment, their interaction with nature, their history which provided them a sense of identity as to who they are and their continuity.

National Presentations:

The second day of the Workshop started off with representatives from the Ministry of Education speaking on the revitalisation and growth of the Maori language in schools and in various sectors of the communities. They asked for the government to reinstate and reinforce the Language Commission as well as be leaders in parliamentary debates to be conducted in Maori. They felt that as a way forward for safeguarding and growth of the Maori language was for partnerships across the government Ministries and policies and guidelines to be set in place.

This was followed by the traditional leader from Mauke speaking about the “Are Korero” and its importance in safeguarding the knowledge of the people within a community. The foreign influences that had merged into the lives of the community had helped with the erosion of traditional knowledge and he asked for the Are Korero to be reinstated and given the importance that it deserves.

The next speaker spoke about the art of making tivaivai and how it has been accepted into the way of life of the Cook Islands and the pride that the women have in showcasing their skills. However, there was a notable decline in interest from the young generation of today in learning these skills.

The speakers that followed talked about environmental practices and the legal mandates that have assisted them in their work with environment. With that comes the challenges and issues that they face, such as differences in understanding of traditional practices; the approaches to obtain these traditional knowledge vary from island to island; respect of traditional environment practices such as the ra’ui is challengeable due to generation gap and lastly, the documenting of these oral history is not a norm as knowledge was passed down from generation orally eg traditional medicine.

Others talked about traditional carving and boat building as well as the investitures of traditional leaders in various communities. These were followed by lively discussions by the participants on their own experiences in their various islands or communities.

After a short break, the Workshop reconvened with the presenters sharing their knowledge on performing arts, traditional hymns and the importance of education, culture and identity as people. The discussions that followed were very interesting as each speaker gave their viewpoints and understanding of the various subjects.

The final day of the Workshop filled up with participants speaking on Art and Craft in the Cook Islands; Land and Tradition and Seafaring and Traditional Navigation. The personal experience of this presenter, in sharing and learning from a master craftsman in traditional navigation captured an audience who had just recently witnessed the arrival of five traditional vakas into Rarotonga from Raiatea in May this year. He spoke about the whole sky at night becoming a navigation chart or stars; the moon being the beacon; the rising sun in the morning being the compass to what the day has to offer. The participants were mesmerised by his story and realised the importance of maintaining this intangible gift that will be truly lost with time as has been

the stories of the great navigators of the Pacific that were travelling the great Ocean before others knew of the vastness of the world around them. The final speakers spoke about Traditional Knowledge and the legal aspects required to safeguard the ICH in the Cook Islands.

Conclusion:

The Workshop demonstrated the awareness about the importance of safeguarding the Cook Islands ICH especially with statistics offered by the educational sector regarding “Te Reo” as well as traditional navigation as shared by one of the participants, and other sectors of the community. Noticeable also was the common facts shared by other Pacific countries as shared by the Director of UNESCO in his speech and raised in the region during the past twelve months through efforts being made by each country.

The participants requested UNESCO’s technical and financial assistance in supporting national capacity building for ratifying and implementing the Convention. Furthermore, they requested UNESCO to organize national consultation meetings in order to achieve the goals being set at this Workshop as well as to understand the procedures to follow prior to the ratification of the convention.

The National Workshop closed with a speech by Hon. Cassey Egelton, Minister of Cultural Development and Environment, thanking UNESCO for the opportunity of holding this Workshop and encouraging participants to share and communicate the outcome of the Workshop with other community members, colleagues and friends. She gave her firm assurance that government is behind this Workshop and gives it their full support.

□ PROGRAMME

Rarotonga, Cook Islands, 28 to 30 June 2010

NATIONAL WORKSHOP ON
SAFEGUARDING OF THE INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE
IN THE COOK ISLANDS

1st Day – Monday 28th June 2010

8:00 – 8:45 Registration

9:00 – 10:30 KARAKIA TUROU: George Paniani (Taunga Akamou Korero)

Tangi Pu: Sound of a Conch Shell: Sonny Williams

Tangi Ka'ara: Joe Rae...(-Taunga Marae-).... Vivo: Noo

Tuiravakai Pe'e: Karakia

OPENING CEREMONY: Sonny Williams, Secretary General, CookIslands
National Commission for UNESCO

Prayers - Pastor Ngarima George

Welcome address by Hon. Jim Marurai, Prime Minister and Chairperson of
the Cook Islands National Commission for UNESCO

Opening remarks by Dr Visiesio Pongi, Director of the UNESCO ApiaOffice and
Representative of UNESCO in the South Pacific States

Keynote Speaker: Hon Sir Geoffrey Henry, KBE, First Minister ofCultural
Development in 1990

10:30 – 11:00 Photo session and tea break

11:00 – 12:30 Session 1: Introduction to the meeting: Sonny Williams -
Introduction of participants:

Overview of UNESCO's work in the Pacific in relation to Intangible Cultural
Heritage by Dr Visiesio Pongi, UNESCO Apia Office
General discussion

12:30 – 13:30 Lunch

13:30 – 16:30 Session 2: UNESCO's Programme for the Safeguarding of the
Intangible Cultural Heritage (Moderator :Ngatuaine Maui)

Introduction to the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage by Ms Akatsuki Takahashi, Programme Specialist for Culture, UNESCO Apia Office

Operational Directives of the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage by Ms Akatsuki Takahashi - General discussion

16.30 Closing Prayer

17.00 Cocktails.

2nd Day Tuesday 29th June 2010

8:30 – 10:30 Session 3: National Presentation (Moderator: LIZ PONGA)

Opening Prayer: Pastor Ngarima George

1. “Te Reo Maori” dual presentation by Ina Herrmann (CEO SchoolSupport Service) AND Henrica Marona (Reo Maori Adviser for Secondary Schools) - General discussion

2. “Are Korero” by Mapu Taia, Speaker of Parliament and Member of the Are Korero of Mauke

General discussion

3. “Tivaivai” by Vereara Maeva-Taripo , former President of CIANGO

10:30 – 10:45 Tea break

10:45 – 12:30 National presentation – continued (Moderator: N. MAUI)

4. “Rau And Environmental Practices” by Vaitoti Tupa Director of National Environment Service

General discussion

5. “Traditional Medicine” by Teariki Rongo, Taunga Vairakau Maori Association

General discussion

6. “Traditional Carving and Boat Building” by Michael Tavioni, Local Artist and Traditional Craftsman

General discussion

7. “Investitures and Chiefly Titles” by Upokoina Teiotu, Traditional Orator of Enuamano

General discussion

12:30 – 13:30 Lunch

13:30 – 16:30 National presentation - continued

8. “Performing Art” by Gina Williams Dancer and Choreographer

General discussion

9. “Traditional Hymns” by Nga Mataio, Secretary General of the Cook Islands Christian Church

10. “Education, Culture and Identity” by Dr Jon T.M. Jonassen, Professor of Political Science and Pacific Island Studies in Brigham Young University, Hawaii – General discussion

16.30 Closing Prayer.

3rd Day – Wednesday 30th June, 2010

8:30 – 10:30 Opening Prayer:

National presentation continued

11. “Art and Craft” by Mahiriki Tangaroa, Member of the Cook Islands Art Association and an Artist

General discussion

12. “Land and Tradition” by Lynnsay Francis, Land Agent and Researcher
General discussion

13. “Seafaring and Traditional Navigation” by Tua Pittman, Traditional Navigator and Member of the Cook Islands Voyaging Society

10:30 – 13:00 Tea break

Session 4: Strategy and Action Plan for Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage in the Cook Islands (Moderator :GEORGE PANIANI)

14. “Traditional Knowledge” by Repeta Puna, Consultant

General discussion

15. “Copyright and Intellectual Property Rights”
By Tingika Elikana, Solicitor General, Crown Law Office
General discussion

13.00 – 13.30 Lunch

13:30 – 14:30 Discussion on Draft Strategy and Action Plan by Dr Visessio Pongi, Director of the UNESCO

Strategy for ICH Safeguarding in Cook Islands by Sonny Williams

Summary discussion – by Participants

Closing addresses:

1. Dr Visessio Pongi, Director of UNESCO
2. Hon. Minister Cassey Eggelton, Minister of Cultural Development
3. Mr Sonny Williams, Secretary General, Cook Islands National Commission for UNESCO

17:00 Free Afternoon & Evening

□ NATIONAL WORKSHOP ON SAFEGUARDING OF THE INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE IN THE COOK ISLANDS

Keynote Speaker: Hon Sir Geoffrey Henry, KBE, First Minister of Cultural Development in 1990 In his Keynote Address at the Opening of the Workshop, Sir Geoffrey Henry, said that Culture and economic development has been seen differently but not jointly, however, that has all changed. He gave an example of the Cultural Village in Laie, Hawaii, where cultural performance has brought a great deal of money that has enabled the funding of the University there. As for the Cook Islands, ask tourists what is it about the Cook Islands they rate highly and they say the people – it is the culture that makes the people.

In 1964, the Cook Islands was moving towards a Constitutional change and as a result, in 1965 it became a Self Government State. The power of self determination was huge in our people as they pushed for change. At that time culture was not even considered of any importance in the Cook Islands. However, at that time also, there was a euphoria of nations pursuing and giving identity to themselves. It was the Constitution Celebrations that brought back the pride of whom we are. Culture has been part of ourselves until we celebrated our independence. As a nation, we have our own culture, and the power of self determination; and the wellbeing of the whole country was at stake. This is when we started the youth clubs, and gave birth to our National Council, which in turn built up a lot more pride in the things that were Cook Islands. At one point education diverted our way of thinking to accept another foreign culture and some of our own culture were probably lost as a result. It was only in the 1960s that we recognized ourselves as people. We have a language of our own that has made us special.

The highlight of all of this was when we were invited to celebrate the Opening of the Opera House in Sydney, Australia – CINAT (Cook Islands National Arts Team) was the only group along with the aborigines that were invited to be there at the opening of this prestigious building. National pride escalated as a result of that memorable event.

In 1981, the Culture division was stopped; that happened with the change of government; we were more like New Zealanders rather than Cook Islanders; simply because the Education Department ordered us to follow their curriculum than addressing us as a people. The pursuit of being a Cook Islander came to a standstill.

However, that all changed in 1987 when the Cook Is put its hand up to host the Festival of Arts. Now at that time also, the history of showcasing our Constitution Celebrations in performing arts, was one of being held in the ramshackle building that hosted these magnificent cultural events.

The Festival of Arts was to be held in 1992 and we needed \$NZ15M and no one was prepared to give us that money, except Nauru. We needed \$NZ12M towards the building of a proper venue and \$NZD3M towards the Rarotongan Hotel where we were hosting the visitors. There was an uproar about this and people saying that we will not be able to pay the loan that we are asking. I am happy to say that it has been paid and we have a beautiful complex to mark that historical event.

To us as Cook Islanders, the Intangible feeling of being a Cook Islander is when you spend on yourself. You realize how important you are. No one is going to build it for yourself but yourself. Jon Jonassen was the First Secretary of the Ministry of Culture – then with Tamarii Tutangata, Secretary of the Prime Minister’s Office – staged the Festival of Arts.

The double-hulled canoes became a symbol of that Festival. It signified the voyaging

canoes; the canoes that traveled the length of the Moana-o-Kiva without breaking. Our ancestors who took those voyages without navigational skills; no one else was traveling around the Pacific at that time, only us as Pacific people. I remember a lecturer of mine, Prof Andrew Sharpe at Auckland University. He said to me that our ancestors could not have travelled 200 miles on the ocean. He said that they made landfall by accident. Well, all I can say at this point is that I would have loved for him to be here to see how these people travelled purposefully for 6,000 miles from Hawaii to Rarotonga, without sextant to guide them. Their map was the heavens - they looked at the skies for guidance - the stars, the wind, they sensed the undercurrents and they studied the birds of the air. The 6th Festival of Arts in

1992 was symbolic of this Journey through the past to rediscover ourselves – to learn about the skills of our forefathers – the Cook Islands Vaka Society is a result of that. Our people looked and lived with Nature – the symbiotic relationship with our forefathers who learnt from understanding nature, what it offers, the signs of being at peace with it; its temperament – being a provider of food or devastation if we don’t understand the signs. Our people travelled every crook and cranny around the Pacific, they travelled all over the Pacific, even to Australia; the celebrations by the aborigines of a landfall in their country of a voyage that took place long time ago, which proves our

point that our ancestors were all over the Pacific. They learnt to survive on the Vaka; they embraced the elements; and they knew when to have a communion with Nature. In ending, Sir Geoffrey quoted: *“Culture is not a Harbour but a Voyage. Culture is a Voyage into Eternity. We have to determine the direction that it takes. The challenge is for us to take the Voyage and Plan where it takes us.”*

Thank you.

□ PARTICIPANT LIST

Rarotonga, Cook Islands, 28 to 30 June 2010

NATIONAL WORKSHOP ON
SAFEGUARDING OF THE INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE
IN THE COOK ISLANDS

NAME	ORGANISATION / TITLE
01 Hon Cassey Eggelton Environment	Minister Of Cultural Development and Environment
02 Tama Tuavera	Minister Eggelton's Office Staff
03 Mrs Nono Rangī	Ruaau Community
04 Joan Gragg Artist,	Member of the CI Art Assn
05 Terry Utanga	Ministry of Education staff
06 Ian George	Ministry of Education - Visual Arts Advisor
07 Nancy Fulford	Ministry of Education – Performing Arts
08 Vereara Maeva Taripo	Cook Islands Music Association
09 George Cowan Chairman	Cultural and Historic Places Trust – Chairman
10 Mita Soatini	Tongareva Island Representative
11 Temu Hagai	Rakahanga Island Representative
12 Pae Tuteru	Manihiki Islands Representative
13 Tere Tangauru	Pukapuka Island Representative
14 Taputukura Mariri	Mauke Island Representative
15 Toka Mariri	Atiu Island Representative
16 Ake Lewis	Mitiaro Island Representative
17 Paddy Walker	PPSEAWA
18 Matilda Tairea	PPSEAWA
19 Aneru Tautu	Office of the Minister for Cultural Development
20 Piritau Nga	Oire Nikao Dance Group Representative
21 Marthalina Makimare	CI Association of NGOs
22 Terangi Karotaua	Private - cultural expert
23 Matariki Wilson	Cook Island News
24 Tokerau Munro	CI Tivaivai Association
NAME	ORGANISATION / TITLE
25 Numa MacKenzie	Private
26 Tereapii Pita	Onu Recording Studio
27 Teaturangi Nepia	Clamp CI Voyaging Society – Navigator
28 Theresa Noovao	Childhood Education

29 Imogen Ingram	Island sustainability alliance, Koutu Nui member
30 Giles Peterson	Curator & Lecture – Pacifica
31 Tungane Broadbent	O'ao'a fabric and fibre arts
32 Vai Henry	Te Rito o te Vairakau Maori
33 Apii Turua	Te Rito o te Vairakau Maori
34 Mouria Pokone	Te Rito o te Vairakau Maori
35 Travel Moeara	3 Bros Productions Company
36 Taokia Gill	Nth Western CI Early Childhood, NZ
37 Jane Taurarii	Ministry of Education – Science Advisor
38 Mona Matepi	Te Rito Enea – CEO
39 Charles Egretaud	Pae Tai-Pae Uta / Pro Science
40 Jane Lamb	Te Rito Enea – Chairperson
41 Eruera Ted Nia	Inanui Gallery
42 Tetika Mataiapo	President of the Koutu Nui

PRESENTERS

43 Dr Jon Jonassen	Brigham Young University, Hawaii
44 Upokoina Teiotu	Atiu Island Representative – Tumu Korero
45 Mapu Taia	Mauke Island Representative – Tumu Korero
46 Henrica Marona	Ministry of Education - Reo Maori advisor
47 Ina Hermann	Ministry of Education – CEO
48 Elizabeth Munro	National Environment Service
49 Vaitoti Tupa	National Environment Service – CEO
50 Mahiriki Tangaroa	CI National Visual Arts Society
51 Repeta Puna	Traditional Knowledge consultant
52 Tua Pittman	CI Voyaging Society
53 Lynnsay Rongokea	Land agent & Researcher
54 Teariki Rongo	Te Rito o te Vairakau Maori

PRESENTERS

55 Gina Williams	Performing Arts & Choreographer
56 Mike Tavioni	Carver and Tumu Korero
57 Tingika Elikana	Solicitor General - Crown Law Office
58 Nga Mataio	CICC General Secretary
59 Vereara Maeva Taripo	President of CI Tivaivai Association

MINISTRY OF CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

60 Sonny Williams	Permanent Secretary
61 Liz Ponga	Policy Unit
62 Ngatuaine Maui	Anthropology Division
63 Justina Nicholas	National Library

64 George Paniani	National Archives
65 Pastor Ngarima George	National Museum
66 Terai Joseph	Administration
67 Puna Teariki	National Auditorium
68 Phillip Tangi	Audio Visual Division
69 Henry Rennie	Foreign Affairs - VIP division
70 illie Tua	Minister Eggelton's Office Staff

□ News Articles:

Cultural heritage back in spotlight

Cook Islands News Tuesday 29 Jun 2010

Dancer of the year Uirangi Bishop entertains the guests at yesterday's national workshop opening.

10062811

Te Reo Maori, the art of tivaivai and the process of investitures and chiefly titles will be among the fascinating presentations and discussions at today's workshop on safeguarding the intangible cultural heritage of the Cook Islands. The three-day workshop officially opened yesterday and will run until tomorrow afternoon.

Among yesterday's keynote speakers was former prime minister and the first ever minister of culture Sir Geoffrey Henry. An orator in his own right, Henry spoke of the state of the Cook Islands culture before and since the declaration of the Cook Islands as an independent country 44 years ago. Henry became the first minister of culture in 1990 before the Cook Islands was set to host the 6th Pacific Festival of Arts in 1992. He says that when the Cook Islands became an independent country, the government's emphasis then was on other matters and that culture was a 'blip'. "We were still hanging on to the apron strings of the colonial regime." Henry spoke of the first Constitution celebration after becoming an independent country in 1965. "During the first Constitution celebration, we hoisted a flag, sang the New Zealand anthem, Cook Islands anthem and the Queen's anthem followed by a brass band!"

"We have our own way of celebrating events! "Through the mid 60s we began to generate interest among the youth to perform and a cultural division as part of Internal Affairs was established.

"There became a movement among Cook Islanders to take a lot more interest in their culture. "People began to realise that our language, culture, customs and practices make us special, and national pride developed.

Henry recalls that between 1981 and 1989, change came to the Cook Islands with a new government and culture diminished in the schools, and the nation began to educate New Zealand citizens instead of Cook Islanders. "We were more Kiwis than Cook Islanders because of the education system."

"The pursuit of being oneself stopped and the pursuit of being a Cook Islander almost ceased." Change came again for the nation in the late 1990s when the Cook Islands raised their hands to host the 1992 Pacific Arts Festival.

Constitution celebrations were held at the grounds the National Auditorium stands on now – then called Constitution Park where dancers would perform in all weather conditions – usually in rain.

And with the nation to host the Pacific Arts – the building of the national auditorium became necessary although Henry recalls the huge public outcry over what people thought was an excessively large building and project at a cost of \$12 million. The hosting of the Pacific Arts Festival also saw the arrival of traditional navigation and vaka building.

“When I was prime minister I made a point that Cook Islanders knew who they were in order to know where they were going.” “The challenge is now for all of us to take the voyage and know where we are going!”

Today’s keynote speakers at the national workshop to safeguard the intangible cultural heritage of the Cook Islands are: Ina Herman (Te Reo Maori), Mapu Taia (Are Korero), Vereara Maeva Taripo (Tivaivai), Vaitoti Tupa (Raui and environmental practices), Teariki Rongo (traditional medicine), Mike Tavioni (traditional carving and vaka building), Upokoina Teiotu (investiture and chiefly titles), Gina Williams (performing arts), Nga Mataio (traditional hymns) and Dr Jon Jonassen who will be speaking on education, culture and identity.

Matariki Wilson

Safeguarding culture

Safeguarding the intangible cultural heritage of the Cook Islands is the aim behind a national workshop starting on Monday June 28. / 09091339

Thursday 24 June

The Ministry of Cultural Development in association with UNESCO invites the public at large to take part in the national workshop on ‘safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage in the Cook Islands’.

The invite is especially calling for traditional leaders, government and non-government organisations, musicians, composers, choreographers and anyone interested in Cook Islands cultural heritage to take part in this workshop to be held between June 28 and The workshop is seen as a national initiative to motivate and assist the international communities in working together to

build greater awareness, as well as safeguarding of our intangible cultural heritage, especially among the younger generations of today.

Intangible cultural heritage (ICH) is the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills as well as the instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces

associated to us as people that communities, groups and individuals recognise as part of their cultural heritage. ICH, transmitted from generation to generation, is constantly recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment, their interaction with nature and their history, and provides them with a sense of identity and continuity which also promotes respect for cultural diversity and human creativity.

The far-reaching impact of the activities of UNESCO in establishing normative instruments for the protection of the cultural heritage, in particular the Convention for the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage of 2003.

There are five UNESCO defined intangible cultural heritage domains in the Convention on Intangible Cultural Heritage and they are oral traditions and expressions including language as a vehicle of ICH, performing arts, social practices, rituals and festive events, knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe and traditional craftsmanship.

The Ministry of Cultural Development says that it is very important that the people of the Cook Islands take part in this national workshop and make your voice heard on how we can safeguard our intangible cultural heritage.

The national workshop will be held at the national auditorium with a number of speakers lined including Tua Pittman who will speak on seafaring and traditional navigation, Mahiriki Tangaroa who will speak on Cook Islands Art and Craft and solicitor general Tingika Elikana who will talk about copyright and intellectual property rights to name a few.

Matariki Wilson