

## **I . Safeguarding system & policy**

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The Kingdom of Tonga commenced implementation of 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage on 26 April, 2010. The commencement date of the above-mentioned Convention indicated a lot of things in terms of the status of where things are at the meantime. There are no national laws/acts regarding the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage. In that case, Tonga is very much interested in receiving expert information from a consultant to establish a new system.

The Tongan culture is very rich on its own. Most of the social practices and rituals, knowledge and skills are not documenting but are orally transmitted from one generation to the next generation. This would be an opportunity for us to ensure documentation is one of the priority particularly in the process of reviving, revitalizing, preserving and safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage.

## **1. Cultural Policy**

- A. Title: Cultural Mapping, Planning and Policy: Tonga
  
- B. Purpose: To provide a framework to guide Government of Tonga and Non Government of Tonga (NGO), with the Ministry of Education, Women's Affairs and Culture (MEWAC) as the lead agency, in their work to preserve, maintain, support, promote and integrate Tongan culture and values into educational programmes and activities. This policy covers the five domains of culture that were identified in the cultural mapping exercise. These include the foundation of culture (ko hai ko au, ko momo, land (fonua), culture and education (kakai 'o e fonua), cultural industries (ngafa mo e fatongia), government (pule'anga).

The foundation of culture (Ko Hai, Ko Au mo Momo) elaborated more on what is considered valued to Tongan culture which includes cultural identity, social cohesion and traditional knowledge systems. It also touched base on cultural rituals, customs, values, religion and other beliefs that guide Tongans in their everyday life. This section of the policy covered a lot in pertaining to Intangible Cultural Heritage.

- C. Duration: 1 year (2010 – 2011)
  
- D. Relevant projects: There is no other relevant project being implemented in regards to cultural policy. As mentioned earlier on, the Kingdom of Tonga came into force the 2003 Convention of safeguarding the intangible cultural heritage on 26 April, 2010. This is the first ever project being formulated and implemented in

pertaining with safeguarding the intangible cultural heritage. The project was facilitated by the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC), and funded by the European Union and is being conducted in five other countries in the region. The participation of Tonga in this initiative was at the request of the Tonga Ministry of Education, Women's Affairs and Culture (MEWAC). As such, the cultural mapping planning and policy (CMPP) process for Tonga is collaboration between MEWAC and the Institute of Education (IOE) at the University of the South Pacific (USP).

The beneficiaries of this project will be the people of Tonga at large in both abroad, locally and whoever is interested to learn more about Tongan cultures and values.

E. Methods and Means are needed to enhance the process of developing safeguarding policies and systems? Please, be specific.

- The duration to do the cultural mapping exercise should be longer than 6 months. In order to have a quality data to assist in formulating such policy it would be better to spend 2- 3 years.
- Funding availability should also be increased should the duration of the cultural mapping exercise be increased.
- Public consultation on the draft policy should be done prior finalizing the policy. One consultation is not enough and the people at the outlying districts are also to be consulted and to raise their awareness of what is going on.
- Should have Tongan version of the draft policy prior doing the public consultation because it is better for the grassroots to

know what is going on and to have a thorough understanding of the policy is to be recommended

- Increase the number of the meetings of the National Task Force Committee; this is all depending on the funding availability to conduct such meetings.

#### F. Guiding Principles

- The NCP is based on the following principles that should be adhered to by all those responsible for its implementation:
- All cultural protection, promotion, and development activities should be underpinned by the Tongan core values of respect, loyalty, humility, and reciprocity.
- National solidarity and cooperation among families, villages/towns councils, churches, civil societies, the private sector, and government ministries are essential for the implementation of this policy.
- Ensure that all activities proposed in this policy are guided by the principle of sustainable development.

#### G. Goals & Objectives

- 1) Protect the foundation of Tongan culture:
  - 1.1) Support the development of a National Language Legislation for Tongan and Niuafo'ou languages.
  - 1.2) Strengthen the traditional Ha'a System.
  - 1.3) Preserve and reinforce the Traditional Knowledge Systems (TKS).

2) Protect the land:

- 2.1) Promote and develop the natural and cultural heritage of Tonga.
- 2.2) Protect the underwater cultural heritage of Tonga.
- 2.3) Protect the sky and air space of Tonga.
- 2.4) Promote international conventions signed by Tonga.

3) Protect and promote (safeguard) culture through education

- 3.1) Promote and develop culture through educational sectors (formal, informal, and non-formal)
- 3.2) Support the review of the Education Act and education regulation to strengthen the protection, promotion, and development of culture through education.

4) Protect and promote Tonga's cultural industries:

- 4.1) Promote and develop Tonga's cultural industries
- 4.2) Promote and develop trade and commercialization of Tonga's cultural industries.

5) Role of Government:

- 5.1) Support the development of national language legislation
- 5.2) Support the development of national cultural legislation.

Once the national cultural policy is finalised, then this would be an important document for us to use in terms of safeguarding ICH. Not only that, the availability of funding is another factor for us to have so that implementing a plan for national cultural policy can move smoothly.

## H. Cultural Issues

- 1) No national cultural legislation
- 2) Financial support is very minimal
- 3) Need to strengthen the cultural sectors
- 4) Interest of the young people in cultural development is seemingly eroding
- 5) Lack of teaching and learning materials and technical equipment
- 6) No database
- 7) Limited capacity building, short-term training programmes, and work attachments
- 8) Need to increase trained personnel in cultural arts management training
- 9) Despite potential of cultural industries to develop but no cultural economists
- 10) Lack of budget and shortage of manpower to meet the needs associated with National Cultural Implementation plan 2012 to 2015
- 11) The contribution of culture to economic development is not reported accurately (cultural statistics)
- 12) The Intellectual Property and Copyright Act to protect traditional knowledge is not well known by the people
- 13) Gradual loss of Niuafou language and traditional knowledge systems particularly in the areas of navigation, agriculture, fishing, and traditional medicine;
- 14) Lack of coordination amongst government and non-government agencies on cultural activities;

- 15) No focal point to which artists, cultural producers and entrepreneurs can turn to for administrative, marketing, and other sorts of assistance.

Despite these issues being identified, we still see opportunities to pursue, and we are striving to do our best to achieve our aims of preserving, developing, promoting, and safeguarding intangible cultural heritage at the national level. Suggestions have been made for a way forward.

#### I. Way Forward

- 1) Put culture as one of government priorities and mainstreaming all programmes
- 2) Improve coordination amongst culture sectors
- 3) Improve relationship among district and village communities (town officer to be trained and used for promoting and preserving culture at the community level; ease number of scholarships on cultural arts management training)
- 4) Ensure funds are available to implement the National Implementation Plan 2012 to 2015
- 5) Establish a focal point to administer artists, cultural producers, and entrepreneurs
- 6) Strengthen awareness of the Intellectual Property and Copyright Act
- 7) Establish a database
- 8) Identify, protect, promote, and develop different aspects of Tongan culture
- 9) Establish National Cultural Council as advisory board to Culture Division, Ministry of Education, Women's Affairs and Culture

10) Promote cultural industries as a vital strategy to address Millennium Development Goals about eradicating poverty

In conclusion, Tonga is striving to conduct various activities related to the 2003 Convention, even though we are facing many shortfalls and cultural issues. For us to achieve success in what we do, we must prioritise the activities to be performed according to the financial availability during the next fiscal year. In addition, the restructuring of the government ministries and departments will take effect on 1 July 2012. Hence, the Culture Division currently under the Ministry of Education, Women's Affairs and Culture will move to be under the Ministry of Internal Affairs. This will be another milestone, and we hope that the move is for the better.