

VI. Pending Issues & Urgent Needs

Like other forms of intangible cultural heritage, globalization poses significant challenges to the survival of traditional forms of crafts. Many artisans struggle in a competition with industrial production of casual goods at a lower cost. Environmental and climatic pressures affect traditional artisanship too, with deforestation and land clearing reducing the availability of key natural resources. The goal of safeguarding, as with other forms of intangible cultural heritage, is to ensure that the knowledge and skills associated with traditional artisanship are passed on to future generations so that crafts can continue to be produced within their communities, providing livelihoods to their makers and reflecting creativity. The ratification of the Convention (2003) in December 2011 by the Kazakhstan Parliament is the only legal document in which ‘intangible cultural heritage’ was included as a term so far. In broader terms, the national legislation protects the intangible national heritage in the number of legal acts and regulations. Hence, there is an urgent need in design and adoption of the national strategy on safeguarding and strengthening the intangible heritage.

Starting with a countrywide inventorying of the ICH objects will ensure an awareness-raising function in regards to the communities, groups and individuals concerned. It will facilitate the acknowledgement the Convention by these groups, communities and individuals. It will create opportunities to introduce the terms and the conceptual framework into the heritage field and into society. Inventories and international lists are thus not a target in themselves, but a means of achieving the Convention’s objectives:

- to safeguard the intangible cultural heritage;
- to ensure respect for the intangible cultural heritage of the communities, groups and individuals concerned;
- to raise awareness at the local, national and international levels of the importance of the intangible cultural heritage, and of ensuring mutual appreciation thereof;
- to provide for international cooperation and assistance.”

In May 2012 the Kazakhstan National Commission for UNESCO and ISESCO in cooperation with ICHCAP started with the development of a website with a database in which communities, groups and individuals can register intangible cultural heritage, link the phenomenon to a heritage community and a set of safeguarding measures. This will also provide the opportunity for ICH experts to supervise the programs and local activities for safeguarding intangible cultural heritage.