

I . Safeguarding system & policy

Papua New Guinea does not have specific provisions on the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage, however, there are pieces of legislations that generally cover intangible culture, such as the *National Cultural Commission Act 1994*, the *National Cultural Property (Preservations) Act 1965*, *National Museum & Art Gallery Act 1994*, *Environmental Act 2000*, *Organic Law on the Provincial & Local Level Government* and the new development of the *Draft Bill on Traditional Knowledge and Expressions of Culture* that is yet to be submitted to be National Executive Council for endorsement. For more information on other related legislations, please visit the following website; www.pacli.org

In June 2008, the Papua New Guinea Government has taken a step forward by ratifying the UNESCO 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage, essentially to preserve and safeguard Papua New Guinea's countless and vast wealth of intangible cultural heritage for generations to come. The timely ratification of this UNESCO Convention has significantly created a sense of recognition to the country's complex and diverse cultures and traditions that is evidently shown in its 850 distinct different languages.

Currently, the National Cultural Commission (NCC) with financial assistance from Pacific Island Forum Secretariat (PIFS) engaged a consultant from the University of Papua New Guinea, Dr. Eric Kwa, who has experience on Intellectual Property Laws. Both Dr. Kwa and the NCC have undertaken wide consultations with stakeholders at the national and provincial level on the National Traditional Knowledge Policy to generally change the way Papua New Guineans perceive traditional knowledge and furthermore, to urge them to utilize traditional knowledge to develop innovative ideas to create wealth that can be equitably shared amongst them.

This was basically initiated from the draft Model Law for the Protection of Traditional Knowledge and Expressions of Culture. The Model Law was essentially developed in close consultation with the SPC, UNESCO, the Council of Pacific Arts and Forum Pacific Island member countries and territories, to assist Pacific Island countries and territories to protect their traditional knowledge and expressions of culture as a result of increasing exploitation and inappropriate commercialization.

In this connection, a *Draft Bill for the Protection of Traditional Knowledge and Expressions of Culture Act 2010* has been developed, and it captures and gives legal effect to the *draft National Traditional Knowledge and Expressions of Culture Policy 2009* and the opening statement of the *Preamble of the National Constitution of Papua New Guinea*.

The *Draft Bill* has been taken out for two combined regional workshops in early October and a national workshop thereafter, which brought together experts from relevant stakeholders organizations and key state bodies to discuss the importance of traditional knowledge in Papua New Guinea and the need for Cabinet's endorsement of the *Draft Bill*.

Apart from the above-indicated scenario, the National Cultural Commission has a *National Cultural Policy* that was endorsed in principle by the National Cultural Commission's advisory body, the National Cultural Commission Board. However, the Commission is embarking on further stakeholder consultations for further review by the Board before it goes through the National Executive Council (NEC), the Cabinet, for proper endorsement.

Moreover, the National Cultural Commission has embarked on the Cultural Mapping Project where it conducted its preliminary consultations with the selected Local Level Government (Taure-Lakekamu in the Malalaua District of the Gulf Province of PNG) in early 2009, completing its first regional Cultural Mapping Pilot Project in December 2009.

With the same methodology conducted in the Gulf Province for the Southern Region, the National Cultural Commission is embarking on its next Cultural Mapping Pilot Project for the New Guinea Islands Region in the Hoskins Local Level Government of West New Britain Province with training and awareness, followed by research work in March 2011.

Following the New Guinea Islands Cultural Mapping Pilot Project, the Commission will conduct the Highlands Regional Cultural Mapping Pilot Project in the Eastern Highlands Province and Momase Region in the East Sepik Province thereafter due to the country's vast cultural diversity and geographical composition.