

Summary

Mongolian intangible cultural heritage have evolved through increasingly challenging historical periods, such as socialism and globalization, yet managed to preserve main context, characteristics and values up to date so that they still play a major role within social life of Mongolian people. As a result of Mongolia opened itself to the world and embarked on a new path of new development since 1990, national pride has been revived and so as favorable circumstances created to safeguard and maintain traditional cultural heritage. The Mongolian Government has directed serious attention in this regard and Mongolians have also demonstrated initiative and efforts to develop their traditional identity features so that substantial measures have been taken to performing arts, social practices, rituals, traditional craftsmanship, knowledge and techniques promote, safeguard and maintain cultural heritage, including oral traditions and folklore respectively.

There is still no specific national law or act particularly focusing on the intangible cultural heritage in whole, there are national laws regarding the protection of cultural heritage. The fundamental legislative act on the given theme is the “Law on the Protection of the Cultural Heritage, approved by the Parliament of Mongolia in 2001 and amended in 2014. This law is based on the other previous legislative instruments, such as The Constitution of Mongolia (1992), the State Policy on Culture (1996), the Law on Culture (1996), and in connection with the other laws in the field of culture, education and arts. And international agreements to which Mongolia is a ratified state party.

The Mongolian Government endorsed and ratified in 2005 UNESCO Conventions on Safeguarding Cultural Heritage, the Mongolian President issued a Decree on promoting and developing traditional culture of Morin Khuur, Folk Long songs, Art of Khöömei and Music of the Tsuur while the Government has effectively and fruitfully implemented during 1999-2016 following action plans: ‘National program for promoting traditional culture’ and other initiatives, such as ‘Morin Khuur and Folk Long songs’, “Mongolian Traditional Art of Khöömei”, “Mongolian Biyelgee: Mongolian Traditional Folk Dance”, “Mongol Tuuli: Mongolian Epic”, “Traditional music of the Tsuur”.

Activating its close cooperation with UNESCO, Mongolian regional experts have actively participated in UNESCO and national programmes and activities focused on capacity building and safeguarding intangible cultural heritage: one of the major project was organized with the generous financial contribution of the Government of Japan to implement the project in the Asia-Pacific region, Mongolia has benefited since 2012 through a cycle of capacity-building activities including implementation, community-based inventorying and elaboration of nomination files, developing safeguarding plans for intangible cultural heritage for the effec-

tive implementation of the 2003 Convention. The workshop is aimed at enhancing capacities of Mongolian stakeholders in elaborating safeguarding measures for intangible cultural heritage under the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. Also thanks to the financial support of UNESCO, Mongolia implemented projects on the “Safeguarding and Revitalizing of the Mongolian Traditional Epics”. These activities are considered as crucial and important.

Moreover, MECS started to organize regularly National and International Festivals and Competition on Epic, Khuumei, Tsuur etc., and rewarded the best winners respectively, in addition to strengthening roles of ICH and organizing apprenticeship trainings on various ICH elements in all provinces and the capital city so that those activities have contributed significant impact in those areas. Many other activities include organizing, promoting, teaching ICH elements under initiatives and efforts of civil society and professional associations, unions, foundations, ensembles, schools, training courses, enterprises, firms and companies. They have implemented numerous activities with significant impacts and outcomes.

Mongolia is characterized by its nomadic culture and richness of its tangible and intangible expressions which have been transmitted throughout hundreds of years from generation to generations. As it recognized the fact that Mongolian traditional culture, oral and intangible heritage are strongly challenged in the face of the waves of globalization, industrialization and modernization.

The urbanization taking place in Mongolia has different attributes from the urbanization taking place in other countries with sedentary civilizations. The change of urbanization taking place in Mongolia is considered not only as a shift from one place to another, but also from one lifestyle to another, from one civilization to another. Thus, the diversity of intangible cultural heritage created from nomadic lifestyle, associated rituals, customs, traditional knowledge, harmonic co-existence of human with nature, and such traditions are in grave danger of perishing.

Mongolian language and speech, dialects particularly space for practicing intangible cultural heritage of national minorities diminished, and so causing negative impacts to Mongolian traditional intangible cultural heritage, mother tongue, cultural and social particularities, oral traditions and performing arts, social practices, rituals, festive events as endangered.

Even though deciding location to reside and work is individual rights and freedom, internal migration and unintended influx to urban centers have caused to shrink the number of bearers and transmitters of traditional social practices, rituals, folklore performing arts, traditional knowledge base and technology in rural areas. It is truly concerning that the trend might even to continue further.

There is still a lack of awareness-raising on the guiding principles of the ICH and its relevant notions for general public, especially in rural area, as well as decision-makers.

To face the above mentioned challenges the Mongolia needs to implement following actions and measures:

- Develop lists of intangible cultural heritage within the regions and provinces;
- Develop and implement a comprehensive National and Provincial program on safeguarding and maintaining intangible cultural heritage;
- Establish the Regional Cultural Heritage Offices under the CCH /Center of Cultural Heritage/, by ethnicities and their ICH elements. Establish the training centers at regional level
- Establish a new system that ensures the decent living standards of ICH bearers, providing them with favorable incentives.
- Take relevant measures to promote and popularize the bearers in the board-level public, and ensure the social and financial assessment.
- Raise the ICH holder individuals, groups and related organizations' involvement and their role and responsibility in safeguarding of ICH
- Involve ICH holder individuals, groups to a system of responsibility for transmitting their knowledge, skills and techniques to younger generation.
- Restore and develop the traditional apprenticeship method and combining it with contemporary training methods.
- Revive the traditions in households, in connection to its livelihood and traditional customs and rituals of each ethnic group.
- Raise and promoting the community involvement, their opinion and initiatives for safeguarding the ICH
- Organize various activities among general public in order for deeper understanding the importance of safeguarding the ICH, especially among younger generation
- Provide and develop the scientific level for development of ICH research, and revival of ICH in danger of disappearing
- Create the system that provides incentives to succeeding individuals and organizations in the activities for safeguarding of the ICH
- To improve the accessibility of the research reports, ICH inventorying and Documentation to the public, it would be essential to digitalize them.
- Networking of the relevant agencies (CCH) and academic institutions collaborate with communities to produce more multimedia materials (films, websites) showcasing ICH safeguarding efforts, challenges, and successes in Mongolia.
- Establish ICH based mapping and database fund