

## IV. Meetings on Intangible Cultural heritage

---

### 1. National Workshop on the Safeguarding of the intangible Cultural Heritage in the Republic of the Marshall Islands-

Venue: Nitijela Conference Room

Date: June 14-16, 2011

Note: This workshop was organized by the RMI Historic Preservation Office in collaboration with the Ministry of Education. Josepha Maddison, the Deputy HPO was the organizer for this event.

**Pillar of the Land/Pillar of the Sea/Pillar of the Sky** (theme) – resources and sources of knowledge skills and livelihood. Our ancestors needed to have had the expertise to be able to grow food, weave/develop cooking and eating utensils, and be able to live in harmony with the environment. They were brave and skilled navigators they needed to be knowledgeable. Outside knowledge learned by our young are in conflicts with our Marshallese culture. It is therefore our responsibility to teach our young about our Culture so that they know and they are passionate as they live their lives, as they meet challenges from globalization and climate change. They have to be able to carry on and we can use modern tech to promote our own culture. We need to learn about other cultures as well, just as we are proud, knowledgeable and safeguard our heritage. What other nations are doing to safeguard their heritage will be shared. Need to recognize knowledge, skills, culture... Need to help of each Marshallese to safeguard our heritage.

All together there were twenty-six (26) whom majority came from the outer islands besides Majuro and Ebeye, the two most populated atolls in the Marshalls. These are the official participants and not including the observers totaling up to 53 in numbers. The observers are from other governmental agencies and non-government organizations.

1. Welcome Address – Majuro Atoll Local Gov Mayor Titus Langrine
2. Remarks – Council of Iroij Iroij Kotak Loeak, Chairman
3. Special Remarks – UNESCO Dr. Visesio Pongi - UNESCO Apia
4. Keynote Address – President, RMI H.E. Jurelang Zedkaia

## 5. Kamolol – National Commission, MOE Minister NidelLorak

As it's the custom, the mayor of Majuro is always present in any meeting, workshop, etc., to welcome participants from outside Majuro and outside the Marshall Islands. Majuro is the capitol city of the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and the mayor represents the *Iroij chief*, *alap* (*land manager or head of a clan*), and all the people of Majuro. Since the workshop was about culture, it was only fitting to have the Chairman of the Council of Iroij (traditional chief) speak on the subject of ICH. He emphasized the need and urgency of preserving the cultural heritage of the Marshallese people.

Dr. Pongi talked about how there is a need to empower people and their cultures, so they understand themselves and others. The Keynote Address came from the Acting President, Jack Ading, on behalf of the president who was out of the country. Mr. Jack Ading is also the Minister of Finance, elected by the people of his home atoll, and is a member of the President's Cabinet. The last speaker, Minister NidelLorak, is the Minister of Education and the National Commission for UNESCO in the Republic of the Marshall Islands.

RMI Context: globalization and migration – need to be careful of what we need to safeguard and how to safeguard them. *Jobwa* (the traditional sacred dance), *Maan Pa* (martial arts), birds, *bwebwenato* (stories), shells, etc., Support projects that safe keep and share the knowledge with the younger generation. Traditional sites attached to oral history. Safeguard legendary sites – landscape, fishing grounds, corals, lakes, etc.

Annual surveys of outer islands including archeological sites – list of registry. HPO Act – “*rikapeel*” can apprentice others to pass on traditional knowledge, and need to find these *rikapeel* to promote apprenticeships, and will be compensated. Legislation – resource officers who are partners from throughout the Marshall Islands. Cultural resources officers, CROs out in the communities. UNESCO and community resources to find new ways to transmit intangible cultural knowledge. Change happens. Task is to safeguard. Issues and breadth of intangible cultural heritage. Ratification of convention. Documentation, transmittal, and legislation strategies.