



UNESCO Director General in Nairobi for crucial Intangible Culture Meeting

The UNESCO Director General, Ms. Irina Bokova was in Kenya from 15 to 18 November 2010 to preside at the 5th Session of UNESCO’s Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage held at Kenyatta International Conference Center (KICC), Nairobi. The annual meeting, held for the first time in sub-Saharan Africa, brought together about 400 representatives of the States Parties to the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage, as well as civil society representatives and observers.

During her stay in the country, Ms. Bokova met with President Mwai Kibaki at Harambee House, Nairobi. She also held meetings with Mr. Achim



From left; Minister of State for National Heritage and Culture, Hon. William Ole Ntimama; UNESCO Director General, Ms. Irina Bokova; President Mwai Kibaki; and Minister for Education, Prof. Samson Onger

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Steiner, the UNON Director General and UNEP Executive Director, the UN Country Teams (UNCT) for Somalia and Kenya and the staff of UNESCO Nairobi Office.

The UNESCO Director General further held meetings with the Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs, Prof. George Saitoti; and the Minister for Education and Chairperson of the Kenya National Commission for UNESCO, Prof. Samson Onger. Ms. Bokova later held a round-table meeting with the Minister for Gender and Children Affairs, Dr. Naomi Shabani; Higher Education, Science and Technology Acting Minister, Prof. Helen Sambili; Education Minister, Prof. Sam Onger; Minister for Forestry and Wildlife, Dr. Noah Wekesa; Assistant Minister for Environment and Mineral Resources,

Prof. Margaret Kamar; and the Director of Information and Public Communication, Dr. Ezekiel Mutua. Ms. Bokova visited the Museum of Kenya in Nairobi; the Rabai Kaya Forest, a World Heritage Site in Kwale; Fort Jesus and Mombasa Old Town in the coastal city of Mombasa.

The opening session of the Intangible Cultural Heritage meeting was attended by the Vice President of Kenya, Honorable Stephen Kalonzo Musyoka; Education Minister Prof. Onger; Minister of State for National Heritage and Culture, William Ole Ntimama; Prof. Joseph Massaquoi, Director of UNESCO Nairobi Office; and Mr. Toshiyuki Kono, Chairperson of the Third General Assembly of the States Parties to the Convention.

“The Convention is one of the most innovative instruments that we have

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developed to address contemporary challenges,” said Ms. Bokova in her opening speech. “I see our commitment to intangible heritage as an act of solidarity, respect and understanding of others. Ratified by 132 States, 181 elements are currently inscribed on its lists. Each of these bears witness to humanity’s great diversity and its unity,” she added.

“The opportunity to redress intangible cultural heritage and to bequeath it the status of ‘national capital’, as it were, could not have come at a better time for Kenyans. I am convinced so because at this point in time, our nation is undergoing a renewal following the recent promulgation of a new constitution that recognizes the value of culture in national development. I have no doubt that Kenya has by far the best chance to further strengthen her cultural foundations and by so doing ensure a vibrant, prosperous and cohesive society,” noted Vice

President Kalonzo Musyoka.

Kenya was the 85th State party to ratify the 2003 UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.

The meeting agreed to inscribe four more elements to the Urgent Safeguarding List from China and Croatia, and 47 elements on the Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage. The List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding is composed of intangible heritage elements that concern communities and States Parties considered at risk of viability. Inscriptions on this list thus help to mobilize special protection measures to safeguard those elements. In Kenya for example, the culture of Mijikenda communities which once lived in the Kaya forests on Kenya’s coast were last year placed on this list because the communities are gradually losing links with the habitat and the habits of their ancestors. Their cultural practices are

disappearing quickly, accelerating social dislocation and worsening the threat posed by the uncontrolled exploitation of the forests. Yet these traditions provide the practical and ethical framework that guides most aspects of their lives, including the rituals marking major steps along the way. The knowledge transmitted from their ancestors guides them in managing their natural resources.

The 2003 Convention recommends the protection of elements such as oral traditions and expressions, performing arts, social practices, rituals and festive events, knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe, and information related to traditional handicrafts. In order to be inscribed to the Urgent Safeguarding List, States must pledge to implement special protection plans and may also benefit from financial assistance from a fund managed by UNESCO.

New Food Distribution Centres opened in Dadaab Refugee Camp



WFP Country Director Burkard Oberle and District Officer Bernard Ole Kipury unveil a plaque during the official opening of the new food distribution and expanded delivery centres at Dadaab Refugee Camp.

The World Food Programme (WFP) has opened new food distribution centres in one of three refugee camps at Dadaab in north-eastern Kenya to ease overcrowding and reduce the time it takes to distribute food to the 100,000 refugees, mainly Somali.

The camps at Dadaab have a population of about 300,000 refugees, three times the number of people they were designed to support when the camps were established at the start of Somalia’s conflict in 1991.

With new arrivals from Somalia daily, WFP’s food distribution centres were increasingly becoming overcrowded. In addition, the camps lacked the capacity to store the three-month stock of food needed to ensure that refugees would not go hungry

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even when seasonal floods cut-off roads to the camps.

WFP therefore has built a new food distribution point (FDP) and an expanded delivery point (EDP) at Ifo camp. The point will enable the 100,000 residents to receive their rations in five days compared to eight days previously. The new EDP can handle 5,500 metric tons of food, double the capacity of the old delivery point.

The European Commission's humanitarian aid department, ECHO, funded construction of the new distribution centres. "WFP is very grateful to ECHO", said WFP Country Director Burkard Oberle. "These more spacious facilities enable WFP to serve the people we feed in a more effective and humane manner."

Oberle also thanked the Government of Kenya and the local host community for donating eight hectares of land

for the new facilities. He said that this showed how the local community collaborates with the international community to support and host the refugees.

FDPs and EDPs in the other two camps at Dadaab, Dagahaley and Hagadera, are also being renovated and expanded to cater for the growing numbers of refugees.

UNHCR and the Government of Kenya jointly verify refugees in Kakuma camp



An Ethiopian refugee family goes through the verification process in Kakuma

Verification of refugees in Kakuma commenced on 22 November 2010 in an exercise that is jointly being conducted by UNHCR and the Government of Kenya through the Department for Refugee Affairs (DRA) and the National Registration Bureau (NRB). This is the first time UNHCR and the Government are simultaneously verifying refugee data since the camp was established in 1992. The exercise

is expected to weed out fraudsters; facilitate the issuance of Refugees Identity Cards to all adult refugees by the Government of Kenya; assist in planning efforts on infrastructure; improve service provision in the camp and entrench refugees' data sharing arrangements between UNHCR and the Government (DRA/NRB).

In 2004, UNHCR conducted their first general verification since the camp was established in 1992. For

the last 18 years, refugees in Kakuma have only been issued with alien cards in 2002 and 2004, which have since expired.

Hawa Bashow, a Somali refugee who arrived in Kakuma in 2002 says, "The Identification Card will make it easier for refugees to travel from the camp to other parts of Kenya for medical reasons, business or education without harassment". Joseph Garang, a Sudanese refugee who has been in Kakuma since 1992 affirms, "the identification cards issued in 2002 helped many refugees to open bank accounts thereby reducing insecurity and facilitate access to money sent from overseas".

However, a Government official intimated that refugees will have to wait for 30 days from the time of verification before they can be issued with the identification cards.

By 30 November 3,080 individuals had gone through the verification process. The exercise, which targets more than 80,000 refugees, is expected to be completed by the end of March 2011. UNHCR has conducted similar exercises in the three Dadaab camps (Ifo, Dagahaley and Hagadera).

Launch of a joint UN-University of Nairobi project in translation and interpretation



UN Under Secretary-General Shaaban M. Shaaban and the Principal of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences at the University of Nairobi, Professor Isaac M. Mbeche during a signing ceremony of a Memorandum of Understanding at the launch.

The University of Nairobi, in partnership with the United Nations in Nairobi officially launched the very first MA programme in translation and interpretation in this region. The launch took place at the University of Nairobi, on 9 November 2010.

This initiative dubbed the “African Project” is the culmination of joint efforts of many stakeholders, including other universities on the continent, the European Union institutions, the African Development Bank, the African Union, several African regional

organizations and the United Nations.

The project is in recognition that within the next four years, international organizations will lose close to 40 per cent of their language staff through retirement and that Africa will be the hardest hit, due to the lack of trained language professionals on the continent.

The MA programme at the University of Nairobi, which includes Kiswahili as one of the languages, is being perceived as a model which other universities on the continent are seeking to emulate. Already one university in Maputo (Universidade Pedagógica de Mocambique) and another in Port Elizabeth (Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University) have embarked on a BA programme patterned on the Nairobi model.

The launch was graced by the presence of Mr. Shaaban M. Shaaban, the United Nations Under-Secretary-General for General Assembly and Conference Management, several Directors-General from the European Union and a host of permanent representatives based in Nairobi.

Launch of the Least Developed Countries Report 2010

The United Nations Information Centre (UNIC), in collaboration with the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) launched on 25 November 2010 the Least Developed Countries (LDC) Report 2010 entitled “Towards a new international development architecture for LDCs”.

The Director of the Monitoring and Research Division in UN-HABITAT,

Professor Oyeyinka Oyebanji presented the Report and noted that despite strong growth, LDCs remained vulnerable with poverty reduction slow and with the number of poor people still rising.

According to the report, whatever their position in the boom-bust cycles that have historically affected their economies, the world’s poorest 49 countries won’t escape low living

standards if they do not improve what is called “productive capacity.” In fact, even during the 2002-2007 boom, when their economies grew an average rate of 7% annually, they did not diversify their productive outputs or substantially reduce poverty.

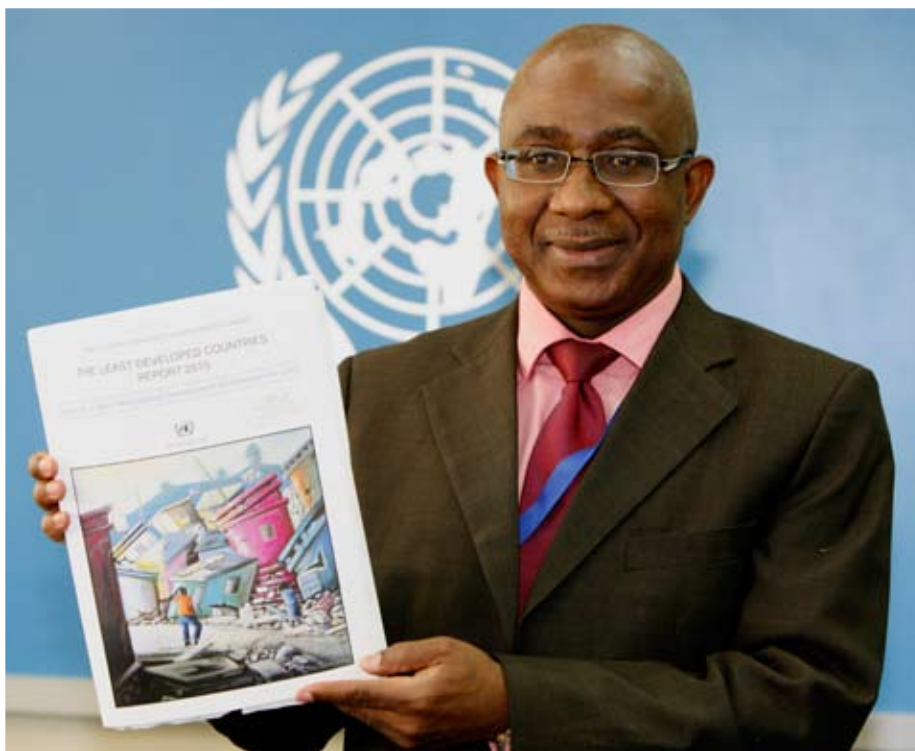
Productive capacity is the ability to efficiently and competitively produce an increasing range of higher value-added goods and services through

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expanding investment and innovation. The report says the governments of LDCs must organize themselves to support such a transition and should be backed in their efforts by a New International Development Architecture (NIDA) for LDCs. The NIDA, among other things, would address productive capacity problems; make helpful technology more easily available to LDCs; take steps to stabilize global commodity prices; and vastly increase financing for climate-change adaptation.

The Least Developed Countries Report 2010 will help to inform debate at the Fourth United Nations Conference on Least Developed Countries scheduled for May 2011 in Istanbul, Turkey. That conference will result in an international plan of action intended to address the needs of LDCs over the next decade.

For more information on the report, please visit http://www.unctad.org/en/docs/ldc2010_en.pdf



The UN-HABITAT Director for the Monitoring and Research Division, Prof. Oyeyinka Oyebanji launching the LDC 2010 Report

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