

Declaration of Asunción

On the Importance of Intangible Heritage for Food Security in the Context of Climate Change Of CRESPIAL Focal Points

We, the Focal Points of CRESPIAL, gathered in Asunción for the nineteenth session of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, express our gratitude to the Government of Paraguay for hosting this meeting. Asunción exemplifies the principles of the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, drawing inspiration from the rich cultural practices of indigenous peoples, Afro-descendants, and local and rural communities, whose knowledge systems have long contributed to food security and ecological balance.

This declaration is informed by and draws upon relevant international instruments, including:

- The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), which affirms the right to food and cultural identity.
- The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966), particularly Article 11, which recognizes the right to an adequate standard of living, including adequate food.
- The Convention on Biological Diversity (1992), particularly Article 8 J, which promotes preservation and maintenance of knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous and local communities embodying traditional lifestyles relevant for conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity.
- The International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (2001), which aims to promote the conservation and sustainable use of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture and their fair and equitable benefit-sharing, in harmony with the Convention on Biological Diversity.



- The Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003), which emphasizes the importance of intangible heritage in cultural identity and community cohesion.
- The UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (2005), which highlights the need to protect cultural heritage as a means of promoting sustainable development.
- The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007), which reaffirms that indigenous individuals are entitled without discrimination to all human rights recognized in international law, and that indigenous peoples possess collective rights indispensable for their existence, well-being and integral development.
- The Paris Agreement (2015), which addresses the need for global cooperation in combating climate change and adapting to its impacts on communities, including cultural practices and traditional food production systems.
- The UN Sustainable Development Goals (2015), particularly Goal 2 (Zero Hunger) and Goal 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), which underscore the importance of cultural diversity in achieving sustainable development.
- The 2023 Seoul Vision for the Future of Safeguarding Living Heritage for Sustainable Development and Peace, which establishes the role of intangible cultural heritage as a driver of sustainable development.
- The Lima Declaration (2023) on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of UNESCO's Convention for The Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage, which recognizes the significant role of intangible cultural heritage in promoting and protecting community human rights.

We recognize the vital role of intangible heritage bearers in food security worldwide, particularly in the face of climate change. Intangible heritage encompasses the traditions, knowledge, skills, and cultural practices that have been passed down through generations, shaping the relationship between communities and their food production systems.



In acknowledging the interconnectedness of food security, cultural identity, and human rights, we affirm that access to culturally appropriate food is a fundamental aspect of the human right to adequate food. The right to food encompasses both food availability and the means to acquire food that reflects cultural heritage and traditions. We understand that protecting intangible cultural heritage enhances resilience and strengthens food security.

Furthermore, climate change threatens both agricultural productivity and the cultural practices and knowledge systems that have sustained communities for centuries. As we confront these challenges, it is essential to harness the wisdom embedded in intangible heritage to foster resilience and sustainable practices. By integrating traditional knowledge with modern approaches, we can develop adaptive food production systems that honor cultural diversity and promote ecological sustainability.

In this context, we call upon all stakeholders to recognize and protect the invaluable contributions of intangible heritage bearers to food security and climate resilience, ensuring that all communities and individuals can enjoy their right to food in a manner that respects and celebrates their cultural identities.

Acknowledging the Significance of Intangible Heritage:

1. **Cultural Wisdom:** Traditional food production systems and ecological knowledge of indigenous, Afro-descendant and local communities offer invaluable innovative inputs for sustainable food production, landscape management and environmental conservation, enhancing biodiversity and climate resilience.
2. **Community Resilience:** The preservation of cultural identity and community cohesion fosters collective action, empowering communities to address food security challenges exacerbated by climate change.
3. **Traditional Production Systems:** Sustainable traditional harvesting methods in agriculture and fishing actively contribute to cultural and biological diversity preservation while ensuring food security.



4. **Nourishing Traditions:** Culinary practices and local food traditions preserve biodiversity while promoting nutrition and health, ensuring access to diverse and culturally relevant foods.
5. **Education and Skill Preservation:** Intergenerational transfer of knowledge, skills, and cooking techniques reduces food waste and encourages sustainable consumption patterns, respecting linguistic diversity in adapting to climate-related challenges.
6. **Sustainable Practices:** Traditional practices such as crop rotation, seasonal harvesting, permaculture, and traditional fishing methods must be safeguarded and integrated into modern food production systems to enhance sustainability and mitigate environmental impact.
7. **Crisis Adaptation:** Communities rooted in their intangible heritage demonstrate remarkable capacity to adapt to crises, maintaining food security amid climate uncertainties.
8. **Sustainable Development Integration:** The outcomes of the Seoul Vision, Naples Call for Action, and Lima Declaration highlight intangible heritage's potential to generate synergies between sustainable development, human rights, and peace.
9. **The Global Alliance against Hunger:** A strategic component in our efforts, tasked with mobilizing resources and promoting policies that integrate intangible heritage into food security initiatives. This alliance can facilitate knowledge sharing and collaborative projects that empower communities and enhance their resilience to hunger and poverty.
10. **The Group of Friends of Culture-Based Climate Action:** Promotes the inclusion of cultural practices in climate action strategies. Platforms like this can play a significant role in ensuring that policies recognize and utilize the strengths of intangible heritage in building resilience and food security, encouraging partnerships that amplify local voices and solutions.



11. The UNESCO Framework for Culture and Arts Education: Emphasizes education's role in preserving intangible heritage and protecting linguistic diversity, fostering cultural literacy and creativity to enhance food security and climate resilience.

Call to Action:

We urge governments, organizations, and communities to:

- Recognize and value intangible heritage as a crucial component of food security strategies in the context of climate change.
- Implement measures that effectively harness the potential value of intangible cultural heritage for managing natural resources and informing development planning and environmental assessments.
- Acknowledge the need to further enhance capacity-building programs that promote community leadership and participation in the safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage associated with environmental conservation, species preservation and food security.
- Recognize the essential role of marine and inland traditional fishing, shellfish gathering and harvesting of aquatic organisms in supporting the livelihoods of local communities and serving as a crucial source of protein that enhances food security and plays a significant role in addressing food scarcity.
- Support the documentation and promotion of traditional agricultural, fishing, and culinary practices that demonstrate climate impact resilience.
- Promote the safeguarding of sustainable traditional practices as a standard guideline for biodiversity conservation initiatives.
- Foster collaboration between traditional knowledge holders and scientific researchers to enhance sustainable practices addressing climate challenges.
- Actively engage with the Global Alliance Against Hunger and Poverty to mobilize resources and implement programs highlighting intangible heritage's role in addressing hunger and poverty.



- Foster collaboration with initiatives and platforms, including the Group of Friends of Culture-Based Climate Action to advocate for policies that integrate cultural practices into climate adaptation strategies, ensuring that local knowledge informs global actions.
- Ensure the meaningful participation of developing countries, particularly those with economies rooted in agriculture, in shaping policies that integrate cultural practices and traditional knowledge into climate adaptation strategies.
- Incorporate the UNESCO Framework for Culture and Arts Education into educational programs to promote understanding and appreciation of intangible heritage, equipping future generations with the skills and knowledge needed to sustain food security and cultural practices.
- Support regional and international knowledge-sharing initiatives that scale the contributions of local, rural, indigenous and afro-descendant peoples in safeguarding intangible heritage and advancing sustainable development.

In conclusion, we reaffirm our commitment to safeguarding intangible heritage as a means to enhance food security, environmental conservation, and sustainability for present and future generations. We assert that protecting and promoting intangible heritage is integral to upholding human rights, particularly the right to food and cultural identity.

We acknowledge UNESCO's central role in advancing these issues globally and promoting best practices for integrating culture into strategies addressing hunger, poverty, and climate change.

We call on all stakeholders to support UNESCO's initiatives and work collaboratively towards a future where intangible heritage serves as a powerful tool for ensuring food security, promoting cultural diversity, and enhancing climate resilience.

Asunción, 7th December 2024.

