



# Edinburgh International Culture Summit

24 to 26 August 2016

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## Thursday 25 August 2016 (Morning): Culture and Heritage Plenary

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## Culture and Heritage Plenary

*Thursday 25 August 2016 (Morning)*

*[The Presiding Officer opened the session at  
09:33]*

**The Presiding Officer (Ken Macintosh):** Good morning, and welcome back to the Scottish Parliament. I hope that you enjoyed the first evening of the Summit.

The first plenary session this morning will focus on culture and heritage. I invite the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization's assistant director general for culture, Francesco Bandarin, to join us.

From 2000 to 2010, Francesco Bandarin was director of the UNESCO world heritage centre and secretary of the world heritage convention. Since 2010, he has served as UNESCO's assistant director general for culture.

09:35

**Francesco Banderin (Assistant Director-General for Culture, UNESCO):** Presiding Officer, honourable ministers, dear colleagues and friends, I express UNESCO's thanks for inviting us to the Summit. It is really a pleasure and an honour to be with you to exchange experiences and opinions on the role of culture in all its manifestations and forms in the development of societies, which we think is a critical element of our lives and our society. I thank Jonathan Mills, who is an old friend, for extending the invitation to us.

As I have the task of opening the plenaries and round tables, please allow me to put on the table two elements for discussion, which I think should attract the public's and the international community's interest and concern at the moment. Those two items may seem a bit different, but in our view they are convergent and definitely have to be considered and worked together.

The first is the policy to place culture at the core of international development, which UNESCO, many other member states and many other public and private bodies are developing and have supported in the past, with an acceleration in recent times. I will elaborate on that a little bit, and I hope that we will be able to exchange further views on that issue during the rest of the plenary and the discussion.

The second item is the protection of heritage in areas of conflict. As you know, that is an area of concern for our organisation and in general for the

member states of UNESCO and public opinion that has, unfortunately, taken a very important role in our daily work.

Let me briefly give some elements of the first of the two items.

Since the 1980s, UNESCO has come up with an idea about culture in all its different manifestations. I will use that term as a synthetic one to summarise elements that concern heritage and creativity, including, of course, the cultural institutions and many other cultural dimensions that have been somehow developed along the years and decades by our organisation through the introduction in the international system of a number of treaties and conventions that deal with different types of heritage.

In the 1990s, we joined hands with the World Bank, which was led at that time by Mr Wolfensohn, to have culture as an important dimension of development. In 2005, the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions was adopted by the member states. It seals the system of conventions that UNESCO has put in place since its origin to protect cultural heritage. For your information, we have six of those treaties. Some, such as the world heritage convention and the intangible heritage convention, are very famous; others, such as the 1954 Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict, which I will come back to, and the 1970 convention for the fight against the illicit traffic of cultural heritage, are also very well known.

We have tried always to say to our own system—the United Nations—and the other agencies that deal with development that culture should be put at the core of the development process and that no development can be effective and effectual unless it considers the cultural dimension. I think that we have been partially successful until now, but in recent times—especially since starting a campaign that we have strongly pushed in the past three or four years—we have been able to achieve some important results. Those results are visible in agenda 2030, which is the current international development agenda that was adopted by the United Nations in September last year. It took many years to convince our own system, which is sometimes a little hard to convince. The member states voted that that dimension should be present in the system of goals and indicators that have been approved and adopted.

You will find that culture is a somewhat transversal dimension; although you will not find a goal called culture, you will find it in many of the goals that were approved last year such as, for example, those concerning environment, health,

economic development and so on. Culture perhaps finds its strongest expression in goal 11, which relates to cities, and we are happy about that, given that cities are definitely the future dimension where everything will happen, particularly as far as culture is concerned.

We have an opportunity in the coming two months up to October, when, as you know, the United Nations will convene the Habitat III conference. That conference takes place every 20 years, and it is really forward looking and considers the long-term dimension of development. If you have had the opportunity to read the draft text that has already been proposed and somehow finalised, you will have seen that culture will play a prominent role in the way in which the United Nations conceives and proposes the development agenda for cities over the next 20 years. We are very happy about that, not just because we have been part of the process, but mostly because we think that this is the right way to go. If there is an area or dimension where culture can express its power, it is certainly the urban environment.

I will not go into too much detail about this just now; instead, I invite you to read our big global report on culture for sustainable cities, which we will issue in Quito in October when the Habitat III conference convenes. One specific area that I should highlight is heritage; we have more than 300 world heritage cities in the world heritage list. Another area relates to more creativity, and we now have 120 cities in the creative cities network. By the way, Edinburgh is both a world heritage city and a creative city—indeed, it was one of the first in the literature category. We have other networks that relate to the UNESCO mandate with regard to education, science and social sciences, and we see this urban dimension as a very important strategic area for the development of the regional idea that culture is a pillar of the international development framework.

This is therefore a major piece of work for us, and we will continue to work on it. I see in many of the statements that have been made in the summit that there is a large consensus on the matter, and I must thank you for that, because it is very important that we have the support of other bodies, other meetings, other forms and expressions of civic society and, of course, public policy itself.

In the same vein, I seek support for the other item that I have mentioned and which is at the core of our concern: the destruction of our cultural heritage. I will not go into too much detail on this matter, given that our friend Maamoun Abdulkarim is with us today, and he lives this drama on a daily basis. However, I will say that, in the 70 years since the creation of UNESCO, this has been an

agenda for action. UNESCO has always been active in areas of conflict, because that is our mandate—after all, we are a UN body—although our function relates more to what could be called post-conflict reconstruction. Our work in Angkor, Afghanistan, Iraq and many other countries has taken place after the conflict has left its marks and made its signs of destruction.

We have, of course, a number of tools, including the two treaties that I mentioned: the 1954 Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict and the much broader 1970 convention on the illicit traffic of cultural heritage, which is wider in scope and becomes very important in areas of conflict. We have used those tools to do our work in all the areas that we have been involved in.

I mentioned Angkor. You will certainly remember the destruction of the Bamiyan Buddhas, which was a major shock for international public opinion. Here in Europe, 20 years ago, we had the destruction of the bridge at Mostar and the library of Sarajevo. Now we have what we see today.

The problem today is that we do not see a war here and a war there; instead, we see 10 conflicts—we see a very extended unmanageable front of destruction, in the middle east, Africa and central Asia. Unfortunately, this has become a critical and widespread phenomenon. That brought us to some reflection, and we saw that the tools that we have available—I mentioned the conventions, but there are other tools—are not sufficient to address the issue. We are therefore currently working with the member states to try to improve our capacity to deliver support and to prevent the damage of cultural heritage in areas of conflict.

In November last year, the general conference of UNESCO adopted a strategy for the reinforcement or protection of cultural heritage during conflicts. We are now implementing the strategy, which in essence has a three-tier structure. We are trying to improve the capacity to prevent damage to certain sites and museums. We are trying to do something more during conflict, which as you can imagine is very difficult, because it is hard to intervene in areas where combat is taking place. Of course, we are trying to improve our capacity to help and support post-conflict reconstruction.

Some of those activities are very new for us, especially intervention during conflict. We see three areas for that. We would like to improve our capacity to support those who are on the ground, because there is always somebody on the ground, even during a conflict. The experience of Maamoun Abdulkarim will certainly be illuminating in that regard. We have the possibility of

supporting peacekeeping operations that are mandated by the United Nations. Two of the current UN missions—in Mali and Congo—already have in their mandate a specific component of cultural and natural heritage protection. Of course, we can also work with humanitarian operators. In particular, we have just signed an agreement with the International Committee of the Red Cross, which is an extremely important body—it is the one that goes into the conflict when everybody else goes out.

In about a month, we will present our action plan to our body and we hope that, with the support of member states, we can move forward and be enabled to deliver a better service to those who are in charge of protection of cultural heritage in the critical zones. I am sure that the issue, which has already been raised during the Summit, will be discussed further. I look forward to co-operating with the member states that are attending the Summit, and all the other ones, to try to define a system that is more effective at international level to support the protection of cultural heritage.

Those are the two elements that I put on the table, both of which are quite big beasts. I hope that, during the discussions in the Summit, we will be able to deliberate and elaborate on them. Thank you very much. [*Applause.*]

**The Presiding Officer:** Thank you very much, Professor Banderin.

It is now my pleasure to welcome Prince Ayn Aga Khan. Prince Ayn is a member of the board of the Aga Khan Fund for Economic Development and a director of the Aga Khan Foundation and the Aga Khan Trust for Culture. He has been actively associated with the Aga Khan award for architecture and the historic cities support programme.

09:49

**Prince Ayn Aga Khan (Aga Khan Development Network):** Presiding Officer, honourable ministers, ladies and gentlemen, I hope that you will allow me to begin by expressing a couple of personal views and opinions, since they probably colour my attitude to our institutional activities at the Aga Khan Development Network, which is known as AKDN.

My educational background was largely literary and musical. I believe that all art is essentially a reflection of our hearts, our dreams, our fears, our experiences and our regrets. In that sense, the arts are universal—something that we all share as an expression of our common human condition. They bind us and unite us, from prehistoric cave paintings to the abstract, from the half tone to the quarter tone. Our challenge is to see and not just to look—to listen and not just to hear.

Against this common background, for me, culture is by definition evolutionary, whether the dialogue between people and places ensued from education, as it did in the grand tours and as it should nowadays; from commerce, as it did along the historical trade routes; from war and conquest, as was so often, alas, the case; or whatever. Culture is thus something that we share—a human global heritage that binds us and in no way divides us. The dialogue of cultures has existed since time immemorial; the conflict of cultures is a modern and, I hope, temporary oxymoron.

The Aga Khan Development Network has been engaged in culture as part of its development activities in the third world since 1977 and the creation of the Aga Khan award for architecture. Our action stemmed from our realisation that, in many places where we work, their cultural heritage is the only asset at the disposal of the communities that we seek to assist. We considered that it was important—indeed, often essential—to activate such cultural assets as intellectual, economic and aspirational generators of ideas and actions that could positively shape the quality of life of those communities.

Contrary to earlier prejudices and preconceived notions in many areas of the developing world—which are, incidentally, still all too often alive nowadays in the west—we took the position in those areas of unmet economic and social need in which we work that culture is not a luxury or something that is, by definition, elitist and unfair but is, on the contrary, a major potential source of economic and social development. Culture is not just the awareness of a proud, memorable and exclusive past but something that can and should be made a commitment to a just, progressive and inclusive future.

The challenge was how to make historic buildings and public spaces of recognised cultural significance, as well as sounds, colours and shapes of recognised cultural meaning, become the sustainable basis for economic and social progress. Contrary to the public assumption at the time, culture must be seen to be, and must become, an asset to development rather than a further unwanted drain on already limited resources.

The activities of AKDN in the realm of culture are implemented by the Aga Khan Trust for Culture—which, with our mania for acronyms, is known as the AKTC. There are many AKTC projects that I could present as examples of the path that we have sought to trace. In Cairo, we took a mountainous, centuries-old urban dump by the historic old town in an area of Cairo that was less well known to tourists, being essentially Muslim not pharaonic, and we turned it into a public park—the Al Azhar park. The park looks

across the historic city towards the citadel and measures some 28 hectares. It includes a lake, a couple of restaurants employing more than 200 local persons, a children's area, a small amphitheatre for theatrical, musical and other presentations and a number of recreational areas. It has, these past years, welcomed on average 2 million visitors per annum in times of peace and in times of public stress.

Lo and behold, the park generates an average annual financial surplus of some \$1 million, which has not only ensured the upkeep of the park and its facilities but has permitted us, since 2003, to finance and execute the restoration of 1.5 km of the historic 12th century Ayyubid wall that runs along the park and that had fallen into ruin.

More than that, it has permitted us to complete a comprehensive urban regeneration programme in the neighbouring Darb al-Ahmar district on the other side of the wall, where several AKDN agencies working together have been able to implement health, education, micro-finance, housing and sanitation programmes as well as arts and music programmes while rehabilitating five historic monuments and smaller urban open spaces. We are even debating the creation of a small museum in Darb al-Ahmar to exhibit the historical objects that were discovered and excavated during the restoration of the Ayyubid wall, thus presenting to the public the history and arts of ancient Cairo.

Al Azhar park is not only financially self-sufficient but has created economic and social benefits and a vastly improved quality of life for a catchment area peopled by some 200,000 citizens who are neighbours of the park. It is hoped that, in the years to come, the history and culture of Muslim Cairo will take their place alongside the more commonly known pharaonic culture of Egypt, thus offering—partly, one would hope, through increased tourism to that part of Cairo—further jobs and economic and social benefits to the population of the area. In Darb al-Ahmar, the creation of a green space has resulted in the restoration of significant monuments and an entire area's development.

Further away, in Mali, we restored the three significant earthen mosques in Djenné, Timbuktu and Mopti. In Timbuktu, several sufi mausolea attached to the mosque have since been damaged by the soldiers of prejudice during occupation of the city, but one of the very good consequences of our original restoration work is that we have precise architectural drawings of the mausolea, which provide the necessary basis to accomplish the restoration of these small buildings after the departure of the occupying forces.

Further, as part of the restoration work in Mopti around the Great Mosque, we entered into a close

working relationship with the local population. We discussed with them how to improve that area of the city and simultaneously how to ensure the longevity of the just-restored historic monuments, thereby ensuring the availability of the funds that would be required for their maintenance without it being necessary to call upon public finances.

The local population responded enthusiastically and collaborated fully with us in that endeavour, giving freely of their time and abilities so that, with our help and technical advice, the neighbourhood was greatly upgraded through an extensive programme of street improvements, sanitation programmes, training programmes for masons, recycling programmes, the creation of clean toilet and bath facilities attached to a public cafe, and a new Centre for Earthen Architecture. The centre's aim is to inform the public about the techniques of building in mud and to perpetuate those techniques, and it has a permanent display of objects, samples and images that highlight that rich tradition.

Within the revived area, an array of shops, handicraft outlets and small commercial activities came into being. An entire MIAD—a multi-input area development—had in fact occurred as a result of the restoration of some monuments. That MIAD was largely realised and made operational by self-help.

Our experience shows that the local population must be centrally involved in any such project. Their buy-in is, and must be seen as, part of the asset base that is being developed. Their sense of how the project in question will affect their futures is necessary for them to show the pride and confidence in the project that ensure its resilience. Indeed, the planning of cultural interventions that are aimed at development must involve centrally, from the outset, the local population, just as it must consider issues related to the quality of life of those local populations. In a nutshell, the development scenario should have at its very heart the economic and social sustainability of the local population, recognising that local confidence is a primary requirement.

As I indicated earlier, self-sustainability of initiatives in the cultural field is essential and must be at the heart of the planning exercise: eventual income streams must be projected and later realised that are sufficient to sustain the project—or maintain it, for instance, if it is a building—on a long-term basis, not just in the development stage but on an on-going basis thereafter. The goal should be an income stream that will produce in the longer term a surplus that can be reinvested in the project or can—as in the case of Darb al-Ahmar—make other projects possible. That the project should turn into a net drain on the local population, let alone on the national Government

or local government, should be avoided as a fundamental error.

Of course, where historic buildings are concerned, reutilisation to give them a new purpose and a new life that can generate the necessary income stream can frequently become something of a conundrum and a challenge. Hotels, restaurants, cultural centres, display areas, meeting spaces and a thousand other possibilities present themselves. Here again, local wisdom combined with careful thought about, and study of, the characteristics of that particular neighbourhood and of the general area are required. Cultural centres and mini-museums tend to lose money for many years. Restaurants require kitchens that are sometimes costly and preferably a good cook, and meeting spaces have to be promoted, which can be expensive; the pitfalls are many. The role of culture in development has more facets that one might think at first sight.

I have mentioned Mali and Cairo, but we have a similar project in Delhi, where in Humayun's Tomb, the Sunder Nursery and Nizamuddin Basti we have one of the densest ensembles of monuments in the country—there are 45 of them, including nine Mughal-era tombs, spread over 250 acres of heritage in central Delhi. Urban renewal is again being implemented, green space is being restored and created, vegetation is being identified and categorised, and a plant nursery is being revived, while master craftsmen in stone carving, plaster work, masonry, carpentry are being trained, creating new employment. In this project, too, we have sought to improve the quality of life of the resident communities by attending to the local requirements in health, education and sanitation, urban improvement, vocational training, waste collection, housing improvement, landscaping and madrasa improvement.

As in Mali, many of these project responsibilities will be or have already been taken over by the residents themselves. We have similar projects in Kabul and Herat in Afghanistan and earlier initiatives included those in Hunza, in the northern areas of Pakistan. Even our music initiative is designed not only to protect and continue traditional music on traditional instruments with the great poetic works of the past, but to promote new musical creations and new musical careers of different kinds, stimulate and revitalize the arts and handicrafts related to music, create new young teachers and new scholarly institutions, expand local curricula and ensure—for local populations—increased jobs and incomes from sources such as tourism and musical events.

In those many initiatives, we have come to judge the true value of public-private partnerships, which have proved flexible alliances and are often long term. They are capable of numerous

combinations, as they can include partner development agencies, foundations, corporations, Governments, universities, faith communities, individual donors and, of course, local communities. Our experience shows that public-private partnerships can often prove to be the keystone.

In summary, we believe that cultural activities in the field of development can and should aim to have a positive impact on both environments and public policy, setting aside as appropriate traditional concepts of separate public and private domains. They can and should promote good governance and strengthen civil society, recognizing that civil and private institutions have unique capacities for spurring economic and social progress while simultaneously having the intrinsic ability to meet the challenge of diversity by giving diverse constituencies effective ways to express their distinct identities within a collaborative framework.

In high mountain or coastal areas, in urban or rural environments, in peaceful or post-conflict situations, the role of culture in development not only effectively combines the unique with the global but shows that, in the world of culture, globalisation can mean expansion and inclusion rather than homogenisation, and can inspire and unify rather than divide and burden. Such cultural initiatives tend also to anchor civil society where it has been disrupted by civil disorder or conflict.

Cultural heritage, both material and intangible, is our common shared heritage, simultaneously the roots of our identity and an expression of our pluralism. My hope is that all our efforts to see culture aid and contribute to development will result in areas that are now developed producing in their turn new culture, so that culture begets culture, through time and place, and the eternal dialogue continues.

**The Presiding Officer:** Thank you, Prince Aryn.

I would now like to introduce Professor Dr Maamoun Abdulkarim, Director General of Antiquities and Museums in Syria. I am sure that I speak for all of us today when I say that the troubles in your country have touched us all and, for you and your citizens, I hope for a speedy and peaceful resolution to the conflict. I am especially grateful to you for travelling to Scotland to join us today.

10:03

**Professor Dr Maamoun Abdulkarim (Director-General of Antiquities and Museums in Syria):** Ladies and gentlemen, I thank the International Culture Summit and especially our colleague Sir Jonathan Mills for inviting me and

giving me this opportunity to meet you. Perhaps from this location in Scotland—this is my first visit to Scotland—and through my new English I can use my voice to tell international communities of the war and tragedies in Syria, and perhaps international communities can give us some warm feelings through our cold isolation.

Syrian cultural heritage has been experiencing violence and dangerous attacks during the recent crisis. Due to the absence of the cultural institutions, threats against heritage have increased and have included systematic illegal excavations, carried out by professional army groups. There has been increased smuggling of cultural objects through the Syrian border—all of the border has been very open during this time. Vast regions of Syria are now classified as distressed cultural areas, and the use of sites such as the city of Aleppo as battlefields today is a tragedy. Aleppo is one of the most important world heritage cities. Unfortunately, Aleppo is now like the city of Warsaw in 1944.

Another example is the ideological attack by ISIS groups of terrorists on Palmyra. You will know through the media about what has happened in the city and the number of buildings that have been destroyed by this barbarity; this is not just Syrian but our common and universal heritage. In all my time as director general—I accepted the invitation to work on this crisis four years ago as a professor at Damascus University—I have always declared that we cannot divide our cultural heritage into two, with one heritage for the Government and another for the Opposition. No—we have one heritage for all Syrian people; it is our collective identity and history, and we share it with the international community.

Through all this tragedy, however, our beautiful archaeology remains. Syria has more than 10,000 sites, 34 museums and many hundreds of thousands of objects and, despite all the tragedy, 99 per cent of the collections in all those museums has been saved. We started that programme in 2012; indeed, my first condition for accepting the post of director general of antiquities was that I would be able to close the museums directly. The minister of culture accepted that I should have that opportunity and one week later, at the end of the summer of 2012, we closed all the museums in Syria. It was fortunate that we did so; if we had not, it would have been a disaster.

Recently, we have undertaken several other measures. As well as closing museums in order to save their collections, we have found it necessary to keep touch with the local community in order to raise our worries. If the Government is not there, how can I save sites? My sole option was, with my colleagues, to contact the elites and the local community and tell them, “This is your identity. It is

like the honour of your mothers—you must keep touch with and defend your heritage.”

Given our co-operation with international actors to catalogue the damage to and loss of Syria’s cultural heritage, I want to use this occasion to thank UNESCO for the role that it has played throughout this crisis. It has refused to leave me in cold isolation. I want to especially mention Madame Irina Bokova and her assistant, our dear friend Francesco Bandarin, who have kept in touch with me through these four bad and sad years.

I have described myself to CNN and all the media as the saddest director general in the world, but how can you defend this heritage alone? The 2,500 people who work with us in the directorate are still working in an area that is under the control of the Government and the Opposition. We have refused to cut salaries, and we have pushed all employees to work without any politics. From the beginning of the crisis, our initiative at the Directorate-General of Antiquities and Museums was to bring people together by what united them, not what divided them. This situation invites all of us to do our best together to end the damage that is besetting human cultural heritage.

Although the dangers surrounding Syrian archaeological heritage are growing beyond our capabilities and limited resources, they cannot by any means defeat our will, and we call on the international community to recognise the validity of this effort and to provide assistance and support for our work to complete this international effort and the national effort that is taking place inside Syria. The international community needs to bear in mind that Syrian cultural heritage is part of the world’s heritage and humanity and that the loss of any of its components is a loss for all humanity.

In addition, we urge the international community to effectively stop extremists acquiring resources by trading antiquities and to put pressure on neighbouring countries to prohibit the illicit trafficking of Syrian archaeological heritage. The time has come to take action before it is too late to protect our heritage not just in Syria but in Libya, Yemen, Iraq, Mali, Afghanistan et cetera and the common heritage that we share with the international community. Again, that is a disaster that is painful for us all.

Thank you very much. [*Applause.*]

**The Presiding Officer:** Thank you, Professor Abdulkarim.

I now welcome to the floor Mr Xiang Zhaolun, Vice-Minister of the Ministry of Culture, the People’s Republic of China. I am very pleased to welcome China to our international summit and hope that we will all benefit from this mutual exchange.

10:10

**Xiang Zhaolun (Vice-Minister of Ministry of Culture, the People's Republic of China):**

(simultaneous interpretation) Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, good morning. It is my great pleasure to join you at the Edinburgh International Culture Summit and today's panel on cultural heritage.

China appreciates and actively supports UNESCO's role in safeguarding cultural diversity and sharing cultural assets across the world, and has ratified and been committed to several UNESCO conventions including the 1972 world heritage convention, the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage 2003 and the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions 2005.

The collaboration between the Chinese Government and UNESCO has been tangible. It has been marked by several exchanges and information platforms for cultural heritage safeguarding in the Asia and the Pacific region including a UNESCO category 2 centre—the World Heritage Institute of Training and Research for the Asia and the Pacific Region in Beijing—and the five-year-old Chengdu International Festival of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Sichuan province in China.

In order to respond to the pressure of urban development and industrialisation in China's remarkable socioeconomic transition in recent years, the Chinese Government has given the safeguarding of cultural heritage an important place in the national development agenda and adopted a working mechanism—supervised by the Government—that engages various social sectors.

Our work has a few highlights that are worth mentioning. The first is legislative and institutional progress. Promulgated in 1982 and 2011 respectively, China's cultural relics protection law and a law on intangible cultural heritage safeguarding provide a solid legal ground for cultural heritage safeguarding. The State Council of China appointed the Chinese State Administration of Cultural Heritage and the intangible cultural heritage department in China's Ministry of Culture to take particular care of tangible and intangible cultural heritage nationwide. Regulations, legal acts and specialised institutions have also been established at local levels. By the end of 2015, there were more than 11,000 cultural heritage safeguarding institutions across China, with more than 160,000 employees.

Secondly, the principles of cultural heritage and intangible cultural heritage safeguarding have been respectively identified as follows:

safeguarding as the focus, rescuing as the priority and avoiding excessive exploitation and negligence in management; and safeguarding as the focus, rescuing as the priority and avoiding excessive exploitation and extinction for traditions. By following those principles, we mean to make the most of cultural heritages in modern times, but not at the expense of their safety and authenticity, especially in the case of vulnerable ones. Generally, we focus on protecting tangible heritage from damage and urban erosion, and on encouraging the transmission, renewal and regeneration of intangible heritage.

Thirdly, based on wide-ranging surveys, we created an inventory system that contains several inventories at national, provincial, city and township levels. Since 1956, we have yielded one inventory of 767,000 heritage monuments and one of 40 million heritage properties. We have also spent the past 38 years documenting the folklore and arts of ethnic groups across China and have published a 318-volume, 417 million-word encyclopaedia on the subject, which was acclaimed as the equivalent of the great wall of China in terms of China's folk arts and ethnic cultural heritage.

During a national census of intangible cultural heritage that was carried out between 2005 and 2009, we collected 290,000 valuable properties and documents; took 200 million words' worth of notes; and made 230,000 hours of recordings. We published 140,000 booklets of the census. The census gave us abundant information on the demographics of China's situation and how to safeguard our cultural heritage, which we used to build a multilevel inventory system. At present, there are four levels: the national level; the provincial level; the city level; and the municipal level. There are 4,296 national heritage sites; 129 historic cities; 528 historic villages; and 30 historic neighbourhoods. We have also identified 1,372 representative national historic items.

In 2006, the Chinese Government designated the second Saturday in June each year as cultural heritage day in order to raise public awareness of China's cultural identity and traditions. So far, 11 cultural heritage days have been celebrated.

China adheres to the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage and the ethical principles for safeguarding intangible cultural heritage. Recently, we started a new round of training workshops on the use of the convention and the ethical principles so that workers in safeguarding institutions across China could better understand and act in accordance with the instruments when they deal with specific safeguarding cases in China.

I want to share with my international colleagues some of our ideas and practices around the

safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage. In recent years, we have followed certain principles. First, we are enhancing the capacity of people to convey and transmit intangible cultural heritage as living culture. We believe that people's safeguarding capacities should be constantly enhanced to keep those elements alive and kicking and make them more visible, popular and attractive in order to encourage more people—especially young ones—to engage in the sustainable safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage safeguarding and transmission.

Secondly, it is important to enable intangible cultural heritage to adapt to modern life. Fundamentally, it is about people and their lives, and safeguarding attempts should focus on making traditional elements more relevant to people's daily life in modern times. In order to safeguard and recreate intangible cultural assets in a productive way, we support the integration of modern design and expression of concepts with traditional craftsmanship, adding to the commercial value of such cultural heritage that could turn into tangible products.

Thirdly, our safeguarding measures focus on strengthening and reinforcing the diverse and varied circumstances—tangible and intangible—that are necessary for the continuous evolution and interpretation of intangible cultural heritage as well as for its transmission to future generations.

Our work to safeguard intangible cultural heritage has been carried out in a spirit of the three principles that I have mentioned. So far, we have launched a salvage programme to record the knowledge, skill and craftsmanship of 571 national representative intangible cultural heritage bearers that were at risk of being lost. China's central budget grants 20,000 renminbi each to the national representative bearers every year to subsidise their safeguarding efforts. In the coming five years, the number of such facilities will also increase—we have currently invested in 96 of them. More than 8,000 workshop centres and exhibition centres have been opened across the country. In 2015, the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Education jointly initiated a training and capacity-building programme that invited practitioners to be trained and re-educated. So far, 4,500 practitioners have attended the programme in classrooms at 57 higher education institutions, and the programme has been very positively received. The programme provides an opportunity for communities and ethnic groups to work together and for higher education institutions to engage in cultural efforts.

Secondly, we foster the rejuvenation of traditional handicrafts, focusing on the preservation of production and skills. Through promotion and production, we bring new life to the

craftsmanship. Since 2011, 100 national pilot bases for commercialising intangible cultural heritage have been set up across China, and in 2015 we launched a programme to rejuvenate traditional craftsmanship that focused on both capacity building and matchmaking. We also work with universities and help them to partner with companies that are keen to regenerate and promote traditional culture and craftsmanship. The Chinese Government has written the rejuvenation of traditional craftsmanship into its working papers to further boost the transmission of such heritage.

Thirdly, we endeavour to promote the holistic safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage. Since 2007, we have set up 18 national pilot zones for cultural conservation, including areas of great historic significance, well-maintained heritage sites and distinct and valuable intangible cultural heritage. We support local government to safeguard heritage as well as cultural traditions, and our goal is to help each of the conservation zones to celebrate its own distinct heritage and cultural values. We thereby hope to enrich the cultural life of the people.

Moreover, the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development and the State Administration of Cultural Heritage of China have identified more than 2,500 historic and heritage villages. We aim to preserve the way of life in those villages; we want to stop them from becoming only commercial shops. We wish to preserve the soil of cultural heritage. In all that work, we always factor in the conducive role of tourism to publicise cultural heritage. In recent years, more and more tourists have become interested in experiencing culture and discovering heritage.

That is all that I wanted to share with you on China's efforts. It is a common task for us all to safeguard our national heritage and to promote cultural development. China is always ready to strengthen exchange and tangible co-operation on cultural heritage and its safeguarding with other countries, and we wish to promote further friendship and mutual understanding.

Thank you very much. [*Applause.*]

**The Presiding Officer:** Thank you, minister. I now move to our final speaker of this morning's session. I call to the floor Mr Alhaji Lai Mohammed, the Minister of Information and Culture, the Federal Republic of Nigeria. I very much look forward to hearing the Nigerian perspective on cultural heritage.

10:27

**Alhaji Lai Mohammed (Minister of Information and Culture, the Federal Republic of Nigeria):** Presiding Officer, your excellencies,

distinguished ladies and gentlemen, it gives me great pleasure to be in your midst today.

I have been asked to speak on an issue that is the central driving force of our economy in Nigeria: the diversification of our economy and the role of culture and what we now know as the creative industries in ensuring that we achieve our goals and the aspirations of the people.

Our Government came in at a time of dwindling earnings from crude oil, which hitherto has been the mainstay of our economy and the focus of previous Governments, and we quickly realised that we have no choice but to pursue quickly and wisely our diversification agenda. It is noteworthy that the current Administration, even before knowing that the price of crude oil was going to plummet, had promised Nigerians during its campaign that it was going to diversify the economy.

At my first meeting with the British Council, I posited that the diversification of our economy would not just be limited to agriculture or solid minerals sectors. I believe now—more than even then—that one industry on which we will focus will be the creative industries, because it is a major low-hanging fruit that is immediately available for exploitation.

All over the world, culture has been a unique symbol of identity that distinguishes a group of people with the same political history from other people. My country, Nigeria, the most populous black nation in the world, is endowed with such rich patrimony and cultural diversity in all spheres. Fortunately for us, that culture and creativity were already getting attention, despite the lack of Government attention and investment. The challenge now is how to harness the abundant cultural heritage and create an economy out of it.

We know that there is virtually no state in Nigeria today that cannot boast of three to five cultural industries, be it in pottery, painting, textile making or leather works, and there is very strong expression in film, music, theatre and so on. We are also motivated by the need to preserve our cultural heritage, which has informed our decision to revive a number of our dormant festivals, such as the Argungu fishing festival and the Durbar, as well as age-old traditional games such as ayo and traditional wrestling, or ijakadi.

As a ministry, we have identified three goals that we want to achieve as we pursue our diversification agenda. The first is the provision of key infrastructure that will encourage local and foreign investments in all the key aspects of the creative industries. The second is the mass creation of jobs and the development of skills and managerial abilities. The third is formalising and growing the export of all aspects of the industry so

that it becomes a significant foreign-exchange earner for the country.

The pipes of distribution of all of that creativity will be urgently developed and strengthened with international best practices and then wisely domesticated. With approximately 24 million television households, over 150 TV channels and a greater number of radio channels; with smartphone penetration edging over 40 million and over 100 million phone lines sold to date; with over 20 million diaspora Nigerians who are all primary consumers of the creativity that is located all over the world; and with our being the commercial bedrock of the last frontier of Africa, we are ready for business.

Against that background, I sought the support of the British Council in assisting the agencies that are under my ministry to rediscover their capacity and revive the cultural industry as a major source of revenue for the nation. I am happy to report that, on Wednesday, here in the great city of Edinburgh, we signed a memorandum of understanding with the British Council that will help to revive our moribund festivals and prevent our traditional games, which I referred to earlier, from dying.

While other nations are making money and building reputations on their invented games and sports such as yoga, judo, karate, Scrabble, chess and Monopoly, our traditional neighbourhood games and sports, such as ayo, arin and eke, have lost appeal among our youths. Together with our partners, including the British Council and the Tony Elumelu Foundation, we hope to reverse that trend.

It must be noted that a recent study in the USA revealed that film, TV and other copyright industries added \$1 trillion to the United States economy in 2012 alone. The California economy, which is one of the leading 10 economies in the world, is centred largely on motion picture, television, film and related entertainment industries, which are domiciled mainly in Hollywood.

Drawing from those international developments, I have identified the bane of the sector as being inadequate knowledge and capacity to translate the nation's abundant cultural heritage into a viable economy. I believe that the British Council can assist us in the area of capacity building, identification of infrastructure and, more important, in the area of organising how these things work in a co-operative manner.

Happily, in line with my position, the country director said that the diversification of the economy had equally been a huge challenge in Britain, because of that country's overreliance on industries. She noted that that had been an issue

in the UK until very recently, particularly in the north, where many cities were dependent on industries that have now closed down. She said that her country had turned its thinking away from mono-economic dependence by giving vent to its culture and creative industries, which are now contributing positively to the British economy.

We have identified some of the key creative industries that are thriving in Nigeria. The Nollywood film industry, which, according to UNESCO, currently stands as the second biggest in the world, is virtually home grown. Our music is beginning to find its way into major international markets, and our beats are now featured in chart-topping US hits.

We need to benefit from the abundance of our cultural resources, such as traditional medicine, music, food, cosmetics, performing arts, science and technology, oral expressions, costumes and body adornment. We are simply not awake to the fact that our cultural resources offer more lucrative alternatives to our oil deposits in the form of income that is derivable from entrance fees to facilities and exhibitions; copyright charges for the reproduction and use of collected rare objects, photographs and visual images; inquiry charges; sales of publications; and publicity materials and promotion licensing agreements—to mention a few. We need to be alert to harvest our many distinctive tangible and intangible cultural resources.

Nigeria is opening opportunities to boost tourism and the hospitality business through well-organised national and international carnivals and festivals. Each community celebrates its festivals at different times of the year in line with its customs. The Government has further created the enabling environment for the celebration of national festivals as well as upgrading them to international festivals. Some of the leading examples are the Abuja carnival, which is celebrated in November every year; the Calabar festival in December; the Osun-Osogbo festival in August; and the Argungu international fishing festival in March of every year.

We have so much to sell to the world that will create immense information and entertainment value, so many untold stories, and so many solutions to various problems. Although we may have seemed unprepared and confused as to what to do hitherto, going forward we are moving with a plan and clear objectives.

There is no doubt that the Nigerian Government is determined to reposition the creative industries in its quest for economic diversification, but there are indeed various challenges that impede the process that need to be overcome. We are mapping the whole industry as an intrinsic part of the way forward, and I must once again thank the

British Council for its role in helping us to overcome that critical foundational hurdle.

I thank the organisers of this forum for providing an important platform for a successful interface on culture and its many positive attributes. It has been very exciting to associate with this noble gathering. Today's event truly marks a new dimension in our relationship.

On that note, distinguished ladies and gentlemen, I hereby invite you all to invest massively in the untapped resources of Nigeria's cultural industries as the non-oil export alternative for economic growth and development.

Thank you for listening. [*Applause.*]

**The Presiding Officer:** Thank you very much, minister, and thank you for that final appeal.

I thank all our delegates for their thoughtful contributions. We will now break out into discussion groups for everyone to participate and engage on the ideas that we have heard. That will take us up to lunch at 12.30. The plenary session this afternoon will start at 2 o'clock.

*Session closed at 10:39.*

