



DEPARTMENT OF
HERITAGE & ARTS

NEWSLETTER

Quarter 2 : November - January 2019/2020

Welcome to another edition of the Department of Heritage and Arts Newsletter!



In this issue, the Department of Heritage and Arts wish to highlight some of the planned activities and achievements with reference to the Ministry of Education, Heritage and Arts Strategic Plan:

- The 14th Intergovernmental Committee Meeting for the Safe guarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.
- The Workshop For Educational Resource Kit Development - Indigenous Fijian Language And Culture [UK]
- Capacity Awareness Programme at Marist Brothers High School.
- The 1972 World Heritage Convention

Happy Reading!





The 14th Intergovernmental Committee Meeting for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage

The Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage met from 9 to 14 December 2019 in Bogotá Colombia. Ms Maria Claudia Lopez Sorzano, Secretary of Culture, Recreation and Sports of the city of Bogotá chaired the Committee meeting. The committee was privileged to have the President of the Republic of Colombia Mr Ivan Duque and the Director - General of UNESCO, Ms Audrey Azoulay during a welcoming ceremony displaying the colourful Carnival of Barranquilla.

The Agora Bogotá Centro de Convenciones welcomed over 1400 participants representing 134 countries. The participants had the opportunity to attend many stimulating and exceptional side-events, such as the sound exhibition featuring indigenous languages or discussions with experts from all over the world sharing their experience on how to safeguard intangible cultural heritage during crisis beside the plenary session.

Since the inception of 2003 Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage Convention, the committee made some historic decision on the Convention as highlighted below:

- Five new elements needed urgent safeguarding,
- Thirty-five new elements are representative of humanity,
- Two new elements were selected as programmes, projects and activities that best reflect the principles and objectives of the Convention,
- An element was removed from the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity because it does not comply with Article 2 of the Convention.
- Granted two International ICH Funding Assistance requests.
- Listing mechanisms and the participation of NGOs in the work of the Convention.

- The endorsement of the new operational principles and modalities for safeguarding intangible cultural heritage in emergencies.
- The revisions of the Operational Directives for the implementation of the Convention were proposed to be examined by the General Assembly in June 2020.



Mr. Taitusi Arhelger at the meeting in Bogota.



Participants of the 14th Intergovernmental Committee Meeting for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage



Participants at the Educational Resource Kit Development Workshop

The Workshop For Educational Resource Kit Development – Indigenous Fijian Language and Culture[UK]

The iTaukei Trust Fund Board facilitated a one week Workshop from the 4th to the 8th of November 2019 for the development of a "Teaching & Learning Educational Resource Kit "that will be used in the teaching of language and culture to the Fijian community in the United Kingdom(UK). There are 3 phases to this "Fijian Cultural Program UK (FCPUK)" and Phase 1 is the development of the Teaching and Learning Educational Resource Kit. This Education Kit incorporated the following 4 Pillars of the Fijian Cultural Programme:

- Fijian Language - Vosa Vaka-Viti Cultural Practices – iTovo Vaka-Vanua (Traditional ceremonies/protocols/veiqaravi vakavanua)
- Kinship - Veiwekani
- Heritage & Arts – Yaunivanua

The one week workshop was officially opened by former Fiji's Roving Ambassador to the Pacific Mr. Esala Teleni. Participants in the

workshop included representatives from the Fiji Arts Council [FAC], Curriculum Development Unit [CDU], Fijian Teachers Association [FTA], Peace Corps Organization, Fiji Museum, iTaukei Trust Fund Board, and Ministry of iTaukei Affairs – Language Unit and the Department of Heritage and Arts.

The participants worked on identifying elements to be taught in each of the 4 Pillars, the pedagogies to be used, materials needed and was compiled in a Template. Presentations and "Peer Teaching" was also part of the activities undertaken during the one-week training.

The steering committee of the FCPUK comprises the Sainsbury Research Unit, University of East Anglia, the Fiji High Commission, London and the stakeholders of the UK based Fijian community. Therefore, in alignment with the iTaukei Trust Fund Boards' strategic objectives, the educational resource kit de-

velopment project provides a sustainable platform to educate the iTaukei in diaspora on appropriate customs and traditions using interactive tools and methodologies.

Language and culture are recognised as important tools for migrant communities around the world to maintain links with their countries of origin. They are effective means of reinforcing their heritage and identity while strengthening the relationship with other ethnic communities. They are also recognised as vehicles for communicating cultural values, principles, and norms for addressing social issues and concerns.

From this perspective, cultural actors in the UK established a Fijian Cultural Program [FCPUK] to meet the need for a sustainable program of activities that focuses on maintaining and enhancing knowledge and understanding of the Fijian language and culture.

Cultural Awareness Programme at Marist Brothers High School



Marist Brothers High School Teachers during the Cultural Awareness Programme

The School Principal of Marist Brothers High School with his staff and Department of Heritage taking a photo session after an outreach and awareness program to promote the importance of Culture at Marist Brothers High School. At this awareness program, the Department of Heritage and Arts highlighted the importance of cultural teachings in school by the teachers and inculcating it in the students. Teachers appreciated the initiative of the Department towards safeguarding the cultural values and practices

Also, this meeting set the pace for future collaboration on cultural initiatives. In the presentation, Senior Cultural Officials reflects on the importance of providing cultural programs in school to help students learn and appreciate each other's culture in a multicultural school.

The Department of Heritage and Arts aims to strengthen this cultural programs and awareness at school level. It is also a platform whereby teachers can learn and acquire necessary cultural knowledge and skills for teaching students in the classrooms.

Such cultural programs if taken seriously can positively contribute to increase in the chance of creating a positive and peaceful environment at the school level with students immersed in such school programs consistently.



Group photo after the awareness session



The 1972 World Heritage Convention

Fiji as a State Party ratified the 1972 World Heritage Convention in 2013 after passionate collaboration effort spearheaded by the Department of Heritage and Arts of the Ministry of Education, National Trust of Fiji and the culture sector stakeholders. As a result, Levuka historical colonial capital of Fiji was inscribed as Fiji's First UNESCO World Heritage Site.

According to the United National Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), the most significant feature of 1972 World Heritage Convention is that it links together in a single document the concepts of nature conservation and the preservation of cultural properties. The Convention recognises how people interact with nature and the fundamental need to preserve the balance between the two.

What the Convention contains

According to the United National Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), the Con-

vention sets out the duties of States Parties in identifying potential sites and their role in protecting and preserving them. By signing the Convention, each country pledges to conserve not only the World Heritage sites situated on its territory, but also to protect its national heritage. The States Parties are encouraged to integrate the protection of the cultural and natural heritage into regional planning programmes, set up staff and services at their sites, undertake scientific and technical conservation research and adopt measures which give this heritage a function in the day-to-day life of the community.

Also, it explains how the World Heritage Fund is to be used and managed and under what conditions international financial assistance may be provided.

Furthermore, the Convention stipulates the obligation of States Parties to report regularly to the World Heritage Committee on the state of conservation of their World Herit-

age properties. These reports are crucial to the work of the Committee as they enable it to assess the conditions of the sites, decide on specific programme needs and resolve recurrent problems.

It also encourages States Parties to strengthen the appreciation of the public for World Heritage properties and to enhance their protection through educational and information programmes.

Brief History of the World Heritage Convention

The idea of creating an international movement for protecting heritage emerged after World War I. The 1972 Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage developed from the merging of two separate movements: the first focusing on the preservation of cultural sites, and the other dealing with the conservation of nature.

Preserving Cultural Heritage

The event that generated particu-

lar international concern was the decision to build the Aswan High Dam in Egypt, which would have flooded the valley containing the Abu Simbel Temples, a treasure of ancient Egyptian civilization. In 1959, after an appeal from the governments of Egypt and Sudan, UNESCO launched an international safeguarding campaign. Archaeological research in the areas to be flooded was accelerated. Above all, the Abu Simbel and Philae temples were dismantled, moved to dry ground and reassembled.

The campaign cost about US\$80 million, half of which was donated by some 50 countries, showing the importance of solidarity and nations' shared responsibility in conserving outstanding cultural sites. Its success led to other safeguarding campaigns, such as saving Venice and its Lagoon (Italy) and the Archaeological Ruins at Moenjodaro (Pakistan), and restoring the Borobudur Temple Compounds (Indonesia).

Consequently, UNESCO initiated, with the help of the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), the preparation of a draft convention on the protection of cultural heritage.

Linking the Protection of Cultural and Natural Heritage

The idea of combining conservation of cultural sites with those of nature comes from the United States of America. A White House Conference in Washington, D.C., in 1965 called for a 'World Heritage Trust' that would stimulate international cooperation to protect 'the world's superb natural and scenic areas and historic sites for the present and the future of the entire world citizenry'. In 1968, the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) developed similar propos-

als for its members. These proposals were presented to 1972 United Nations Conference on Human Environment in Stockholm.

Eventually, a single text was agreed upon by all parties concerned. The Convention concerning the Protection of World Cultural and Natural Heritage was adopted by the General Conference of UNESCO on 16 November 1972.

The same General Conference adopted on 16 November 1972 the Recommendation concerning the Protection, at National Level, of the Cultural and Natural Heritage. By regarding heritage as both cultural and natural, the Convention reminds us of how people interact with nature, and of the fundamental need to preserve the balance between the two.

Benefits of Ratification

The overarching benefit of ratifying the World Heritage Convention which is belonging to an international community of appreciation and concern for universally significant properties that embody a world of outstanding examples of cultural diversity and natural wealth.

As States Parties to the Convention, by joining hands to protect and cherish the world's natural and cultural heritage, express a shared commitment to preserving our legacy for future generations.

The prestige that comes from being a State Party to the Convention and having sites inscribed on the World Heritage List often serves as a catalyst to raising awareness for heritage preservation.

A key benefit of ratification, particularly for developing countries, is access to the World Heritage

Fund. Annually, about US\$4 million is made available to assist States Parties in identifying, preserving and promoting World Heritage sites. Emergency assistance may also be made available for urgent action to repair damage caused by human-made or natural disasters. In the case of sites included on the List of World Heritage in Danger, the attention and the funds of both the national and the international community are focused on the conservation needs of these particularly threatened sites.

Today, the World Heritage concept is so well understood that sites on the List is a magnet for international cooperation and may thus receive financial assistance for heritage conservation projects from a variety of sources.

Sites inscribed on the World Heritage List also benefit from the elaboration and implementation of a comprehensive management plan that sets out adequate preservation measures and monitoring mechanisms. In support of these, experts offer technical training to the local site management team.

Finally, the inscription of a site on the World Heritage List brings an increase in public awareness of the site and of its outstanding values, thus also increasing the tourist activities at the site. When these are well planned for and organized respecting sustainable tourism principles, they can bring essential funds to the site and the local economy.

(Adapted from <https://whc.unesco.org/en/convention/>)



Beach street, Levuka



Intangible Cultural Heritage

Cultural heritage is not only about the buildings and monuments of the past – but it is also about the rich traditions that have been passed down the generations. As a vehicle of identity and social cohesion, this intangible cultural heritage also needs to be protected and promoted.

The Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, adopted in 2003, there is now widespread recognition of the importance of safeguarding the living practices, expressions, skills and knowledge that communities cherish and recognize as their cultural heritage, which must be achieved with the active and full involvement of these communities themselves.

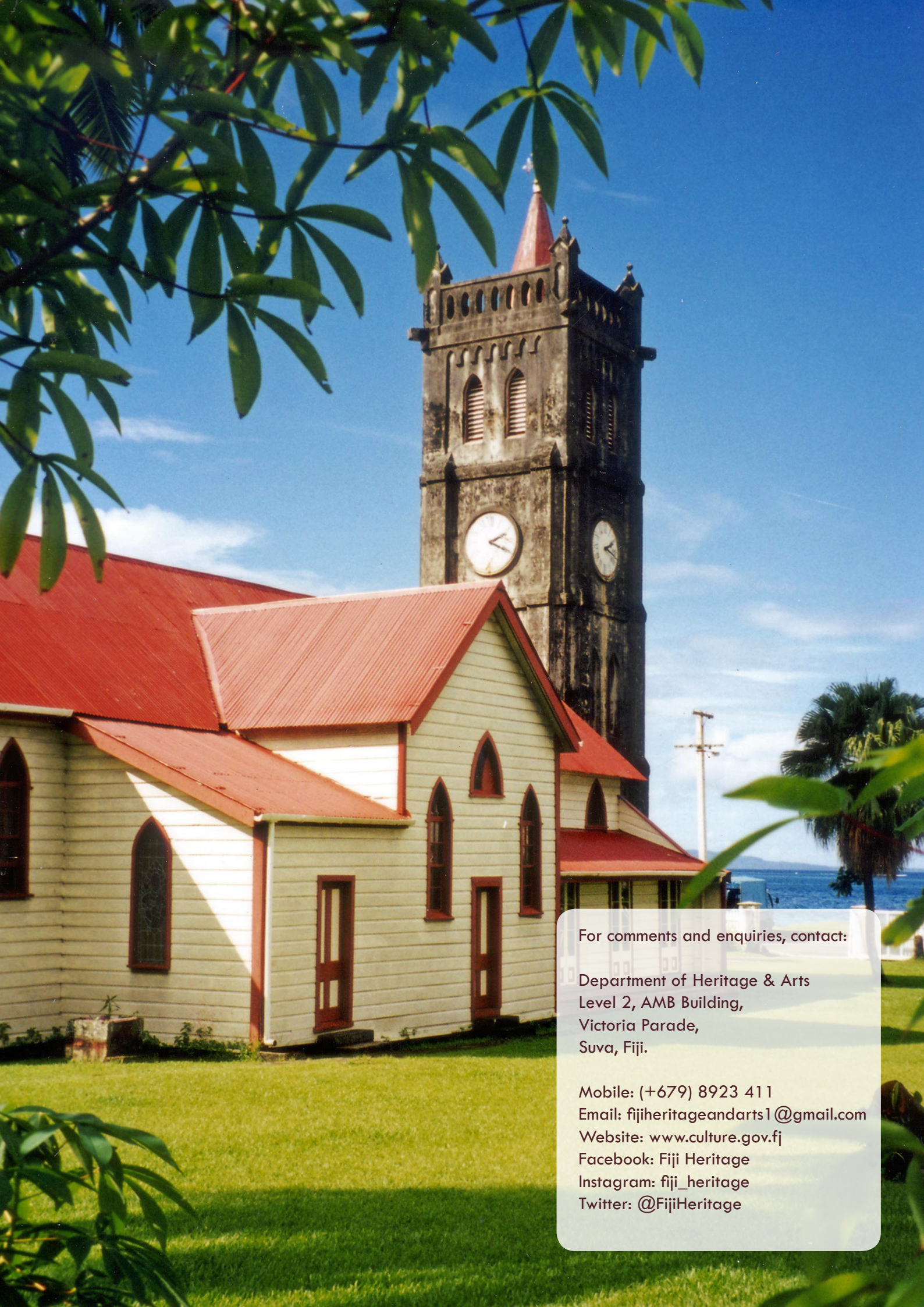
These living practices include oral traditions, performing arts, social practices, rituals and festive events, knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe, and the knowledge and skills related to craftsmanship. It is continuously recreated as it is transmitted from generation to generation and evolves in response to our environment.

Living heritage is important because it offers communities and individuals a sense of identity and continuity. It can promote social cohesion, respect for cultural diversity and human creativity, as well as help communities, build resilient, peaceful and inclusive societies.

The Ministry of Education, Heritage and Arts as the secretariat of the 2003 Convention, is encouraging in-line ministries and statutory bodies who implement the convention to develop necessary methods of communication other than face to face consultations and workshops on best safeguarding practices of intangible cultural heritage.

In response to the COVID-19 epidemic, the Secretariat of the 2003 Convention will continue to monitor and work closely with stakeholders in developing strategies to inform the wider public on best safeguarding practices.

We further reiterate the directives and restrictions in place and for adherence to these directives as issued by Government.



For comments and enquiries, contact:

Department of Heritage & Arts
Level 2, AMB Building,
Victoria Parade,
Suva, Fiji.

Mobile: (+679) 8923 411

Email: fijiheritageandarts1@gmail.com

Website: www.culture.gov.fj

Facebook: Fiji Heritage

Instagram: [fiji_heritage](https://www.instagram.com/fiji_heritage)

Twitter: [@FijiHeritage](https://twitter.com/FijiHeritage)