

20th Session of UNESCO's Intergovernmental Committee for Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage Successfully Concludes in New Delhi

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20th Session of UNESCO's Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) successfully concludes at Red Fort New Delhi today. Shri Vivek Aggarwal, Secretary, Ministry of Culture in his address expressed India's deep satisfaction at hosting the prestigious global meeting and reaffirmed the country's sustained commitment to the protection, promotion, and celebration of living heritage.



Shri Vivek Aggarwal stated that the past days of deliberations and interactions allowed delegates not only to engage with the working mechanisms of the Convention but also to experience India's cultural richness, inclusiveness, and diverse traditions. He underscored India's long-standing civilizational view of culture as a collective inheritance, guided by the ethos: "संस्कृते: रक्षणं, लोकस्य रक्षणम्" in protecting culture, we protect humanity.

One of the highlights of this year's Committee session was the inscription of Deepavali on UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. The Secretary noted that Deepavali, celebrated widely across India and beyond, symbolises light, hope, and renewal, and its inscription further

reinforces the global recognition of India's vibrant living traditions. He congratulated all Member States whose elements were approved for inscription during this cycle.

Reflecting on the discussions held during the Session, Shri Aggarwal emphasised that intangible cultural heritage plays a vital role in sustaining communities, strengthening social bonds, and ensuring continuity of traditions, especially during times when globalisation, conflict, and climate-related pressures are impacting cultural ecosystems worldwide.

The Secretary noted that many countries expressed concrete interest in multinational intangible heritage nominations, acknowledging that numerous traditions naturally transcend national borders. India welcomed this collaborative spirit and affirmed its readiness to jointly develop transnational nominations in the coming years.

Shri Aggarwal extended India's gratitude to UNESCO, including Director-General Dr. Khaled El-Enany, India's Permanent Representative to UNESCO Shri Vishal V. Sharma, Secretary Ms. Fumiko Ohinata, Member States, accredited NGOs, cultural practitioners, and experts for their active participation in making the Session impactful. He also acknowledged the efforts of institutions under the Ministry of Culture including Sangeet Natak Akademi, Archaeological Survey of India, IGNCA, Sahitya Akademi, Lalit Kala Akademi, National School of Drama, and Zonal Cultural Centres for their vital role in planning and executing the event.

Concluding his address, the Secretary urged all Member States to continue nurturing the spirit of global cultural unity, quoting the Atharva Veda: "समानि वः वृणुते हृदयानि" May our hearts choose the path of unity. India, he said, looks forward to advancing shared goals and strengthening cooperation in safeguarding intangible cultural heritage worldwide.

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