

FINAL REPORT OF SECOND COORDINATING MEETING OF THE COUNTRIES CELEBRATING NOWROUZ PREPARATION OF NOWROUZ MULTI-NATIONAL FILE

Tehran, 25-27 August 2008

Leila SAMADI RENDI*

Created by Resolution 23 of the 29th session of UNESCO's General Conference in 1997, the Proclamation of Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity marked a crucial step in UNESCO's strategy for safeguarding our living heritage. In this regards, Iran and the countries of the region decided to nominate Nowrouz, the traditional feast of the beginning of spring, as a Masterpiece of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity. A dossier was prepared by the countries pursuant to the agreement signed between the Governments of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, India, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkey, and Uzbekistan in the first Coordinating Meetings of Countries Celebrating Nowrouz, 7-10 August 2004, Tehran. Unfortunately the dossier was not accepted by UNESCO due to some shortages.

The experience acquired through the Proclamations of 2001, 2003 and 2005, especially through related safeguarding activities has proved to be of great importance for the preparation of the implementation of the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, which entered into force on 20 April 2006.

The Second Ordinary Session of the General Assembly of the States Parties to the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, 2003 took place from 16 to 19 June 2008 at UNESCO Headquarters and adopted the Operational Directives and set the deadline of 30 September 2008 for the first cycle of nominations. Therefore, Iran and countries of the region decided to complete the nomination file and nominate it to be inscribed on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. Second Coordinating Meeting of the Countries Celebrating Nowrouz was jointly organized by the Iranian National Commission for UNESCO and Iranian Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Organization from 25 -27 August 2008 in Tehran in order to prepare the Nowrouz multi-national nomination file to be submitted for inscription on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

The writer of this report, as World Heritage Specialist of Iranian Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Organization arranged the logistic and communicative issues of this meeting in cooperation with Iranian National Commission for UNESCO and Iran and

* World Heritage Specialist ICHHTO, leila.samadi@gmail.com

World Tour & Travel Co. Representatives from Azerbaijan, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkey, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan, including Intangible Cultural heritage Experts and Officials such as Secretary Generals of the National Commissions for UNESCO of these countries attended the meeting.

The meeting started with welcome addresses of Dr. Firouz Doulat Abadi (Deputy for Cultural Heritage, Iranian Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Organization), Dr. M. Reza Saeidabadi (Secretary General, Iranian National Commission for UNESCO), address by Mr Qunli Hun (Director and Representative, UNESCO Tehran Cluster Office) and keynote address by H. E. Mr. Esfandiyar Rahim Mashaei (Vice President and Head of the Iranian Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Organization). Then the Chairperson, Vice chairpersons and Reporter were elected and Provisional Agenda and Schedule were adopted. The next item of the schedule was "Discussion sessions" on the common features of Nowrouz in countries and representatives from Azerbaijan, Iran, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkey, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan elaborated on the background and the living tradition of Nowrouz in their countries.

The second day was dedicated to completion of the preparation of Nowrouz Multi-National File. Participants were divided into two groups and attended the two working groups on written document and audio-visual materials. In the first working group the participants from Azerbaijan, Iran, Turkey, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan edited the written document of Nowrouz Multi-National File drafted by Iran, focusing on the common features of Nowrouz in the nominating States Parties. The provider of this re-

port acted as translator and facilitator in this working group. In the second Working Group, representatives of Azerbaijan, Iran, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkey, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan chose ten photos among the several photos from nominating States Parties regarding Nowrouz and provided a guideline for preparation of the film of Nowrouz by Iranian film makers based on the films of the States Parties.

These sessions continued in the morning of the third and last day of the meeting and in the afternoon the chairperson of each working group provided all the participants with the report of the achievements of his/her working group. At last the multi-national nomination file for Nowrouz was adopted and signed by the officials of the nominating States Parties.

The responsible bodies for ICH in State Parties are obliged to sign and seal the final version of the Written Nowrouz Multinational file which will be sent to them by Iranian National Commission for UNESCO after some corrections. The responsible body in Iran (Iranian Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Organization) is obliged to prepare the film and photos of Nowrouz ceremony in the format UNESCO desires and to collect the signed forms and submit them to UNESCO before 30 September 2008. As the World Heritage Specialist of the mentioned organization, the management of these attempts is the duty of the writer of this report under the supervision of Mr. Hosein Ali Vakil, (Director, Historical, Natural and Cultural Heritage Registration Department, Iranian Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Organization).