BANQUITAS ACTION PLAN

National Workshop on Community-based Inventorying of Belize's Intangible Cultural Heritage held at Banquitas House of Culture in Orange Walk Town, Belize, 1-9 October 2013

Given the urgency of safeguarding the intangible cultural heritage (ICH) of all cultures in Belize;

Given that we are in the process of drafting a Cultural Policy for Belize as well as amending the NICH Act to include various responsibilities associated with implementing the ICH Convention;

Given that Belize has joined other CARICOM member states in seeking reparations for the injustices of colonialism and slavery;

Given the progress made on the implementation of the ICH Declaration of Belize 2012, drafted at the previous UNESCO workshop on implementing the ICH Convention in December 2012;

Recognizing the support given to this workshop by the Japanese government to the series of workshops conducted in three countries in the Caribbean – in Belize, Trinidad & Tobago and Jamaica; and recognizing also the support given by the UNESCO Kingston Cluster Office for the Caribbean, the Belize National Commission for UNESCO, NICH, the Banquitas House of Culture and the Orange Walk community;

Recognizing the important role that community-based inventorying can play in safeguarding the ICH in Belize, raising awareness about the importance of culture, promoting social cohesion and harmony in society, and building self-esteem; and

Recognizing that communities have taken ownership of the safeguarding of their cultural forms for generations and should be supported where necessary to continue safeguarding them into the future.

We, the participants of the National Workshop on Community-based inventorying of Belize's ICH held at Banquitas House of Culture in Orange Walk Town, Belize, 1-9 October 2013, hereby propose the following action plan:

- Raise awareness about ICH and the inventorying process through various media and other means (responsible agency: all);

- Develop an inclusive strategy for involving a broad range of different cultural and ethnic community representatives in the planning process for the ICH inventory as well as in creating the inventory (NICH / ICH network);

- Strengthen the ICH network by providing mechanisms for regular communication at national and district levels, and ensuring the inclusion of other stakeholders, including representatives from the Ministries of Education, Foreign Affairs, Rural Development, Health, Forestry, Tourism, Finance and Economic Development, as well as NGOs, members of the media, the Institute of Creative Arts committees, community organizations, individuals and local authorities, and other relevant stakeholders (NICH);

- Strengthen district level ICH networks to help coordinate ICH activities, such as fundraising, inventorying and training, involving local cultural and other stakeholder organizations and individuals, libraries and museums (NICH);

- Form a representative working group out of the UNESCO workshop participants to develop a strategy to engage in the inventorying planning process with NICH (ICH network);

- Update the NICH database of contacts and ICH practitioners (NICH);

- List existing ICH-related archives both inside and outside Belize, including National Library and Belize Archives and Record Service, university archives, church records, Great Belize Productions and Love FM archive, community projects and private and individual collections (NICH / National Library);

- Identify key existing collections of ICH-related data that need to be protected, archived, made accessible and drawn into the inventorying process (NICH);

- Develop guidance on managing intellectual property rights issues relating to ICH inventorying, including how to protect community IP rights, copyright and use agreements, and the relationship between researchers and communities (NICH);

- Identify training needs for inventorying (both within communities and in other agencies) (NICH / ICH network), including:
  - How to engage communities in the inventorying process and ensure they benefit from the inventorying process (including safeguarding of their ICH and the development of self esteem);
  - Oral history (attentive listening skills, interviewing techniques, counselling skills)
  - How to create awareness among researchers about psychological aspects of ICH where it is linked to a history of trauma or discrimination;
  - How to engage with the media;
  - AV documentation including using and maintaining AV equipment;
  - Preparing for documentation;
  - Teamwork in the inventorying process;
  - Cultural competence and sensitivity;
  - Creating an inventory entry out of the research data.

- Form a working group out of the ICH network to compile a training manual for community based inventorying in Belize (ICH network working group);

- Ensure that researchers (in NICH and communities) are regularly debriefed in the inventorying process (NICH);

- Help develop mechanisms for culturally appropriate psychological support within communities that reengage communal strategies lost through colonialism and traumatic histories (NICH and other agencies);

- Ensure that the inventorying process is adequately resourced as far as possible (NICH / other agencies):
  - Share skills and resources within and between communities, organizations and institutions;
  - Provide training and write grants to support funding of inventorying; explore a wide range of funding possibilities including those within communities;
  - Develop approaches to compensating people for their time in contributing to the inventory (NICH / working group ICH network);
  - Ensure suitable equipment is available for use in community documentation and in the general inventorying process (cameras, storage facilities, etc.);
  - Provide technical and other support to ensure ICH-related data is properly archived and made accessible within communities (National Library network / Archives).

- Develop a strategy for managing the inventory data as part of the cultural heritage management strategy (NICH / National Library);

- Develop an outreach and communication strategy to provide different ways in which communities concerned and Belizeans in general can access and use the inventory for safeguarding and awareness raising – explore access online, in libraries and through AV and print media (NICH / ICH network).