

Foreword

The Silk Road, which acted as a conduit between civilizations in the past, is once again coming under the spotlight within UNESCO as well as the international community as a practical means to resolve the clash of civilizations and to advance the rapprochement of cultures. Along with this development, anticipation for the role of Central Asian countries as a collective platform for intercultural communication is higher than ever.

The nomadic culture of the Central Asian steppes was cosmopolitan as it accepted influences from Manichaeism, Islam, and Buddhism on top of indigenous shamanistic or animistic traditions. Such cultural wisdom and experience should be applied to great efficacy in the resolution of conflicts between civilizations in the world today.

Since the adoption of the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage in 2003 and the subsequent establishment of ICHCAP in Korea, we have worked to construct a cooperative network with Central Asian nations to safeguard intangible cultural heritage in the region.

In 2015, ICHCAP, IICAS, and the National Commission of the Republic of Uzbekistan for UNESCO co-organized an international symposium, gathering leading experts and scholars in the region, with the topic of 'oral traditions and epics' to uncover more profound issues on ICH in the region. As the nomadic tribes of Central Asia have always been migratory, oral traditions have been the core means of intergenerational transmission in their culture. Since ancestral cultural practices and wisdom have been transmitted across generations orally, it is crucial to discuss these issues for safeguarding living

heritage in Central Asia.

It is my pleasure to publish the papers from the symposium, which played a role in rediscovering the value of oral traditions and epics in Central Asia and the Silk Road, for people interested in this area. Also, it is my sincere hope that this activity will have positive effects on safeguarding and raising awareness on ICH in the region.

Once again, I thank the experts and scholars who contributed their papers to help raise pride in our heritage, and Dr. Pilho Park, Director of IICAS; Mr. Alisher Ikramov, Secretary-General of the National Commission of the Republic of Uzbekistan for UNESCO; and the dedicated staff members who worked hard to make this publication possible.

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