

# UNESCO APPROVED ST. KITTS AND NEVIS CAPACITY BUILDING INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE (ICH) PROJECT

SKN ICH NEWS [Monday October 22<sup>nd</sup> 2018]



St. Kitts and Nevis ICH Organizing Team: [L to R] Marlene Phillips – SKN ICH Lead Focal Point (St. Kitts) and St. Kitts Dept. of Culture – RDU Specialist, Pauline Ngunjiri – SKN ICH Secondary Focal Point (Nevis) and Nevis Historical and Conservation Society (Acting) Executive Director, Jerome Rawlins, C.E.O. Nevis Cultural Development Foundation

The Bureau of the Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage approved at its meeting on 2 October 2018, the International Assistance request submitted by St. Kitts and Nevis to implement the project, **“Strengthening Inventory Preparation Capacity for Implementing the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Saint Kitts and Nevis”**.

St. Kitts and Nevis is a State Party of the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage Convention, and one of the 177 member states who have ratified this convention in recent times. St. Kitts ratified the Convention in 2016.

The Secretary General for UNESCO National Commission St. Kitts and Nevis, Mr. Antonio Maynard has welcomed the project. He said, ***“The approval of this project to the tune of some \$100,000.00 US dollars, allows St. Kitts and Nevis to create institutional and professional environments for safeguarding our intangible cultural heritage by putting in place the proper infrastructures, and developing inventory methods, developing effective***

***safeguarding measures, including helping our local cultural groups like our masquerades and folklore to build capacity, and sharpens their craft. This is the first of many project approvals that St. Kitts and Nevis will have the opportunity to secure and, benefit from through the same UNESCO Convention”.***

Three institutions will oversee implementation of the ICH project: St. Kitts Ministry of Culture, Nevis Historical and Conservation Society (NHCS) and Nevis Cultural Development Foundation. The Lead ICH Focal Point in St. Kitts is Marlene Phillips, Research and Documentation Specialist – St. Kitts Department of Culture – Research and Documentation Unit (RDU), and Ms. Pauline Ngunjiri, (Acting) Executive Director (NHCS) is the Secondary Focal Point in Nevis.

Ms. Phillips, and Ms. Ngunjiri worked tirelessly to develop the proposal that was finally approved by the Bureau of the Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. Stanley Knight, Permanent Secretary – Ministry of Culture offered words of encouragement in addition to his ongoing support of the ICH project when he received the good news about approval of the funding, ***“Dear Marlene and Pauline the Ministry is proud of the diligence and dedication, which you have applied to this undertaking. Great job to both of you, and we look forward to bringing the entire exercise to fruition”.***

UNESCO offered technical support during the proposal development by sending Nigel Encalada ICH Expert, and Director – Institute for Social and Cultural Research (ISCR) Belize to guide the focal points through the process, and inform community stakeholder’s, and government official’s about the value of safeguarding St. Kitts and Nevis ICH. Mr. Encalada expressed his joy for St. Kitts and Nevis ICH success. ***“Congratulations!!! The major hurdle has been overcome. Congratulations to Pauline, Marlene, and your team!!! I am here happy with you. That is good news to know that the team effort did not go in vain. It’s quite amazing that you guys will be able to put ICH and Culture front, and centre for St. Kitts and Nevis”.***

Ms. Phillips has been doing extensive research on best ICH practices to make sure that St. Kitts and Nevis Communities learn about the opportunities made available through the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage. Ms. Phillips said, ***“I am elated that St. Kitts and Nevis ICH project has been approved by UNESCO. It was amazing to receive such great news in the presence of my esteemed colleagues: Pauling Ngunjiri, and Jerome Rawlins during a meeting we had to prepare an action plan for this very project. The funding will provide the necessary resources required to help St. Kitts and Nevis Communities identify cultural traditions manifested through oral expressions, social events, performance, visual arts, and natural practices important to them, which must be safeguarded in order to teach the next generation about their heritage. Nationals of St. Kitts and Nevis must take action to preserve their identity, and not loose it in the mix of globalization”.***

Ms. Ngunjiri said, ***“I learned about the ICH Convention when Mr. Maynard held a stakeholders meeting in 2016 at his office shortly after the Federation of St. Kitts and Nevis had ratified the Convention”.*** He invited willing institutions in the Federation to work together to develop proposals. Ms. Ngunjiri also stated that Nigel Encalada’s technical support when he visited the Federation in April this year was outstanding. ***“He enhanced the momentum. My passion is driven by the fact that Africans who were forcibly brought into the Caribbean through slavery have been able to protect the intangible heritage. I was born in Kenya in the motherland, and I was amazed when I relocated to the Federation in 2001 to find some of the traditions originating from Africa were intact. This***

*is what we aim to continue protecting through this project. Five hundred years is just an afternoon. I am very excited.”*

The project will be implemented in three phases namely, Training of Trainers to understand the content of 2003 ICH Convention, community based inventorying, a pilot inventorying exercise, and St. Kitts and Nevis awareness campaign.

The implementation strategy includes awareness creation workshops, and training in research and inventory skills, which will be provided by global facilitators recruited by the UNESCO Kingston Cluster Office for the Caribbean, training in video camera, and audio documentation skills, training on how to use archiving software, and data processing both provided by experts recruited nationally. The training will enable St. Kitts and Nevis to have an official Register of Intangible Cultural Heritage including ICH elements, while building human capacity to continue ongoing safeguarding practices within local communities.

The SKN ICH database will be accessible to the public through different mediums – a database, website, and printed materials. Government, organizations, stakeholders, and the public will be sensitized about ICH, the importance of protecting it, and methods of safeguarding it through the public awareness advertising campaigns.



### **PRESS RELEASE (22/10/18)**

For More Information: Contact a member of the SKN-OT  
Send All email Inquires To: [ichstkittsandnevis@gmail.com](mailto:ichstkittsandnevis@gmail.com)

### **ST. KITTS AND NEVIS ICH ORGANIZING TEAM (SKN-OT)**

St. Kitts Dept. of Culture – RDU:  
Marlene Phillips – SKN ICH Lead Focal Point (St. Kitts) Tel: 1(869) 467-1396

Nevis Historical and Conservation Society:  
Pauline Ngunjiri – SKN ICH Secondary Focal Point (Nevis) Tel: 1 (869) 469-5786

Nevis Cultural Development Foundation:  
Jerome Rawlins, C.E.O. Tel: 1(869) 469-5521

**SKN**  
St. Kitts & Nevis  
Intangible Cultural Heritage  
<https://www.facebook.com/stkittsnevisICHculture/>