



7<sup>th</sup> DIVERSITY MATTERS  
*a forum on preserving culture and heritage*  
Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University  
Istanbul, Turkey  
11-14 May 2014

# Preserving Culture and Heritage Through Generations

## FORUM OVERVIEW

(Speakers to be confirmed)



The Statesman

# Forum Overview

<b>Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> May</b>	
6.30pm	<b>Forum Reception and Welcome for Delegates and Speakers</b> Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University
<b>Day 1: Monday 12<sup>th</sup> May</b>	
8.45am – 9.00am	<b>Registration</b>
9.30am – 9.45am	<b>Introduction and Welcome</b>
9.45am – 10.30am	<b>Keynote Address</b> <i>Preserving culture and heritage through generations (1 speaker)</i>
10.30am – 11.00am	<i>Morning tea</i>
11.00am – 12.00pm	<b>Plenary Session 1</b> <i>The importance of preserving heritage, tradition and race (2 speakers)</i>
12.00pm – 1.00pm	<b>Plenary Session 2</b> <i>How do you preserve heritage, tradition and culture in culturally diverse societies? (2 speakers)</i>
1.00pm – 2.00pm	<i>Lunch</i>
2.00pm – 3.00pm	<b>Plenary Session 3</b> <i>Preservation of culture and heritage through education (2 speakers)</i>
3.00pm – 3.20pm	<i>Afternoon tea</i>
3.20pm – 4.00pm	<b>Plenary Session 4</b> <i>How do the arts strengthen cultural values? (2 speakers)</i>
4.00pm – 4.30pm	<b>Summary of the day</b>
4.30pm	<b>End of the day</b>
7.00pm	<b>Forum Dinner at Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University</b>

<b>Day 2: Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> May</b>	
9.45am – 10.30am	<b>Keynote Address</b> <i>Protecting culture and heritage (1 speaker)</i>
10.30am – 11.00am	<i>Morning tea</i>
11.00am – 12.00pm	<b>Plenary Session 1</b> <i>Cultural rights and freedom (2 speakers)</i>
12.00pm – 1.00pm	<b>Plenary Session 2</b> <i>The preservation of cultural heritage in times of conflict (2 speakers)</i>
1.00pm – 2.00pm	<i>Lunch</i>
2.00pm – 2.40pm	<b>Plenary Session 3</b> <i>Preserving our heritage and improving our environment (1 speaker)</i>
2.40pm – 3.30pm	<b>Panel Session</b> <i>The role of civil society in preserving heritage and culture (6 panellists)</i>
3.30pm – 3.50pm	<i>Afternoon tea</i>
3.50pm – 4.30pm	<b>Forum Summary</b>
4.30pm	<b>End of the day</b>
<b>Day 3: Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> May Optional</b>	
Optional half day tour of the city	

# Forum Theme Summaries

## ***Preserving culture and heritage through generations***

**Cultural heritage** is the legacy of physical artefacts and intangible attributes of a group or society that are inherited from past generations, maintained in the present and bestowed for the benefit of future generations. Cultural heritage includes tangible culture (such as buildings, monuments, landscapes, books, works of art, and artefacts). It also includes intangible culture traditions or living expressions inherited from our ancestors and passed on to our descendants, such as oral traditions, performing arts, social practices, rituals, festive events, knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe or the knowledge and skills to produce traditional crafts intangible culture (such as folklore, traditions, language, and knowledge), and natural heritage (including culturally significant landscapes, and biodiversity). Whatever shape they take, these things form part of a heritage, and this heritage requires active effort on our part in order to safeguard it.

They may be significant due to their present or possible economic value, but also because they create a certain emotion within us, or because they make us feel as though we belong to something - a country, a tradition, a way of life.

The best way to preserve your cultural heritage, whatever it may be, is to share it with others.

## ***The importance of preserving heritage, tradition and race***

Cultural heritage and natural history of a nation has a very high value and is unique. It is an identity that can be introduced to the world.

Cultural heritage affirms our identity as a people because it creates a comprehensive framework for the preservation of cultural heritage including cultural sites, old buildings, monuments, shrines, and landmarks that have cultural significance and historical value. Culture and its heritage reflect and shape values, beliefs, and aspirations, thereby defining a people's national identity. It is important to preserve our cultural heritage, because it keeps our integrity as a people.

The importance of intangible cultural heritage is not the cultural manifestation itself but rather the wealth of knowledge and skills that is transmitted through it from one generation to the next. The social and economic value of this transmission of knowledge is relevant for minority groups and for mainstream social groups within a State, and is as important for developing States as for developed ones.

## ***How do you preserve heritage, tradition and culture in culturally diverse societies?***

While fragile, **intangible cultural heritage** is an important factor in maintaining cultural diversity in the face of growing globalisation. An understanding of the intangible cultural heritage of different communities helps with intercultural dialogue, and encourages mutual respect for other ways of life.

There is a risk that certain elements of intangible cultural heritage could die out or disappear without help, but how can we safeguard and manage a heritage that is constantly changing and part of 'living culture' without freezing or trivialising it? Safeguarding them is about the transferring of knowledge, skills and meaning. In other words, safeguarding focuses on the processes involved in transmitting, or communicating intangible cultural heritage from generation to generation, rather than on the production of its concrete manifestations, such as a dance performance, a song, a music instrument or a craft.

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### ***Preservation of culture and heritage through education***

The appreciation of cultural heritage should be communicated through an integrated education approach in this global society. Sustainability in the preservation of cultural heritage through education should be encouraged. It is a way of how tangible and intangible cultural heritage can be safeguarded.

### ***The role of media in preserving culture and heritage***

Digital storage has played a large role in the preservation of cultural heritage. It has enabled the sharing of cultural and historical heritage around the world. Digital storage is not only the most popular method of preservation, but it is the trend for the future.

### ***How do the arts strengthen cultural values?***

People pursue artistic and creative expression through a variety of outlets: formal theatrical performances, sculptures, paintings, and buildings; as well as the less formal arts, music and food festivals, celebrations and informal cultural gatherings, pickup bands, and crafts groups. Together, these formal and informal, tangible and intangible, professional and amateur artistic and cultural activities constitute a community's cultural assets. These activities – which encompass a diverse set of locations, spaces, levels of professionalism and participation, products, events, consumers, creators, and critics – are essential to a community's well-being, economic and cultural vitality, sense of identity, and heritage.

### ***Protecting culture and heritage***

To be kept alive, tangible cultural heritage must remain relevant to a culture and be regularly practised and learned within communities and between generations. Safeguarding measures to ensure that intangible cultural heritage can be transmitted from one generation to another are considerably different from those required for protecting tangible heritage (natural and cultural).

There is a risk that certain elements of intangible cultural heritage could die out or disappear without help, but safeguarding does not mean fixing or freezing intangible cultural heritage in some pure or primordial form. Safeguarding intangible cultural heritage is about the transferring of knowledge, skills and meaning.

### ***Cultural rights and freedom***

Cultural rights are human rights that aim at assuring the enjoyment of culture and its components in conditions of equality, human dignity and non-discrimination. They are rights related to themes such

as language; cultural and artistic production; participation in cultural life; cultural heritage; intellectual property rights; author's rights; minorities and access to culture, among others.

All persons with a particular cultural, religious, racial or linguistic background must not be denied the right, in community with other persons of that background, to enjoy his or her culture, to declare and practise his or her religion and to use his or her language.

### ***The preservation of cultural heritage in times of conflict***

Theft, war, civil disorder, terrorism, neglect and vandalism are human factors in the accidental or wilful destruction of our heritage (Teiggeler, 2001). Of these threats, armed conflict remains particularly intractable and disturbing. Regrettably, of late we have experienced more than once how shocking the effects of a violent struggle can be on the heritage of countries. Undoubtedly, the final decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was marked by destruction of heritage on a symbolic scale that has been unrivalled for the past several centuries.

Disasters need to be managed in order to control them, or at least to mitigate the effects. Disaster Management Cycle should address issues relevant to all phases of the disaster cycle: preparedness, response, recovery, rebuilding, prevention and mitigation. Yet, it should be realised that each collection, each building and each situation is unique and that every institution has to prepare for disasters with its own unique plan.

### ***Preserving our heritage and improving our environment***

It is recognised that the retention of heritage buildings has environmental sustainability benefits. Conserving heritage buildings reduces energy usage associated with demolition, waste disposal and new construction, and promotes sustainable development by conserving the embodied energy in the existing buildings.

Cultural heritage is under attack – from environmental degradation and climate change, from socio-economic pressures and the accelerating pace of urbanisation, from the strains of global tourism.

### ***The role of civil society in preserving heritage and culture***

This panel session will explore how the active involvement of civil society is the best way to safeguard heritage and create opportunities for human and economic development. The session will explore best practice on experiences.

It will involve state-of-the-art theories, methodologies and good practice in mobilising civil society around cultural heritage, and their impact on its healthy development.