

In the Name of the One,
whom Taught the Soul to Think

Editorial

No society can flourish without culture – and no development can be sustainable without it. Culture holds answers to many of the challenges societies face today. Awareness of this connection between culture and development underscores the critical importance of intangible cultural heritage. (Irina Bokova, UNESCO Director-General, at 67th session of UN General Assembly, New York, June, 2013)

It is my honor as the Editor-in-Chief of the Journal of Islamic Studies on Human Rights and Democracy (IHRD) to present the second Volume of the Journal to the academics who are interested in the topics related to Human Rights law, especially Islamic Human Rights. The articles presented in this issue have been written to address the fascinating subject of “Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage for Environmental Sustainability” which highlights the importance of conserving Intangible cultural heritage for the promotion of human rights and, specifically, the right to environmental sustainability within global and local spheres. Human rights law includes, among the other rights, the rights of communities to identify, to access and to control their heritage. Together with peace and security, the economic, social, cultural and environmental dimensions of sustainable development are considered to be highly interdependent spheres of action. Achieving the high goal of sustainability requires holistic approaches to policies taken by governments and other actors in various fields, among them, the ones related to the decisive role of Intangible cultural heritage in sustainable development, therefore, its safeguarding is essential to realize the future we all strive for, a sustainable future.

Along with its main objective to promote human rights notions and theories, the Journal of Islamic Studies on Human Rights and Democracy seeks to promote awareness and knowledge on matters of human rights law, peace and policy. While the Journal’s main focus is on academic subjects, it also covers the wider human rights practices and approaches, including concerned with law, policy, and fieldwork, at national, regional and international levels.

The first article deals with the interaction between the ICH and the World Heritage Convention, but in a broader context that links between conservation of heritage and the matter of sustainable development through the Sustainable Development Goals.

The second article introduces two important and inter-connected discourses, human rights (including cultural diversity) and sustainable development, in particular, the policy framework within which the 2003 Convention for Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) was developed. These are considered to be vital contexts for ensuring sustainability of communities and of safeguarding their heritage. It considers the human rights/sustainability framework, within which participation, as a procedural human right, is regarded to be the primary focus, along with the right of access to and enjoyment of cultural heritage. It also focuses on the role of communities in safeguarding ICH that is perceived under the 2003 Convention.

The third article examines the blurry relationships between environmental sustainability and ICH. The article inspects the connection between sustainability and ICH in general, and then engages with two case studies that help highlight the dark sides of sustainable development in the context of ICH.

The fourth article deals with the multidimensionality of the work of safeguarding intangible cultural heritage (ICH) under the UNESCO 2003 Convention. It deals with a novel approach to safeguarding ICH that pursues localization of ICH safeguarding training materials and puts emphasis on methods as capacity-building in local communities.

The fifth article focuses on the meaning of ICH for indigenous peoples. While paying attention to the fact that the heritage belong to those people has been and continues to be appropriated, used without consent, commoditized or profaned, it reviews some of the actions taken internationally and nationally to protect indigenous peoples' intangible cultural heritage and their effectiveness, a subject which is of importance for Islamic countries too.

In the sixth article, the author deals with the concept of cultural landscapes which is relevant to several disciplines including cultural heritage law, economic development studies, environmental management, natural resources law, and international law. Considering this multidisciplinary feature of cultural landscape, the article looks with scrutiny at the relation between indigenous people and cultural landscape, since a peoples' identity with a particular landscape, as well as the character of that identity, may be fundamental in their lives and livelihood.

The seventh and eighth articles inspect from a close perspective the issue of environmental sustainability in Iran. The Seventh article investigate some of the GEF SGP UNDP Iran program experiences since its inception in 2001, by elaborating on a few case studies where local knowledge has contributed to environmental sustainability. The other one examines challenges and

opportunities of protecting Iran's cultural heritage by exploring policy and legal frameworks.

The final article digs into a key question: Can Communities be Sustainable without the SDG's? The author, while considering the contribution of intangible cultural heritage to environmental sustainability, discusses modern theories of environmental sustainability, together with the problems arising from local practices.

It is hoped that this collection of papers which is focused on the topic of "Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage for Environmental Sustainability" would contribute to the process of establishing a firm legal and policy framework towards the achievement of sustainability in environmental fields. I hope that this issue will stimulate colleagues to prepare more extensive articles in order to share their ideas or experiences with a wider audience.

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