Recommendations for Action Plans

1. *Reiterating* the principles proclaimed by the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity (2 November 2001) and referring to Points 5, 6 and 10 of the Action Plan accompanying this Declaration:

> Point 5. Safeguarding the linguistic heritage of humanity and giving support to expression, creation and dissemination in the greatest possible number of languages;
>
> Point 6. Encouraging linguistic diversity – while respecting the mother tongue – at all levels of education, wherever possible, and fostering the learning of several languages from the youngest age;
>
> Point 10. Promoting linguistic diversity in cyberspace and encouraging universal access through the global network to all information in the public domain;

2. *Recalling* the UNESCO programme 'Proclamation of Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity';

3. *Bearing in mind* the preparation of the international convention on the safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage;

4. *Also recalling* that the resolution on 'Implementation of a language policy for the world based on multilingualism,' adopted by the UNESCO 30th General Conference, states that linguistic diversity is threatened 'by the globalization of communication and by the tendency to use a single language' as the global world language;

5. *Referring* to Article 1 of the Final Communiqué of the Round Table of Ministers of Culture (Istanbul 2002)[1] and *reaffirming* the 'extreme vulnerability of the intangible cultural heritage, which is threatened by disappearance or marginalization' as stated in Article 4 of the above-mentioned text and specified in Article 7.3, which recommends to

> encourage research and documentation, develop inventories and registers, establish legislations and appropriate mechanisms of protection, ensure the dissemination, through education and awareness-raising, of the values and significance of intangible cultural heritage, foster the recognition and protection of custodians together with the transmission of knowledge and know-how;

and

> to consult and involve all the stakeholders, namely the governments, local and regional communities, the scientific community, the educational institutions, the civil society, the public and private sector as well as the media;

6. *Having established* that the following nine criteria[2] should be used together to determine the degree of endangerment of a language:
   1.   Intergenerational Language Transmission
   2.   Absolute Number of Speakers

3.   Proportion of Speakers Within the Total Population
4.   Trends in Existing Language Domains [3]
5.   Response to New Domains and Media
6.   Materials for Language Education and Literacy
7.   Governmental and Institutional Language Attitudes and Policies Including Official Status and Use
8.   Community Members' Attitudes Towards Their Own Language
9.   Amount and Quality of Documentation;

7. *Convinced* that, if outside linguists and other scientists are to be involved in projects safeguarding languages, at the earliest possible time teams of community members and linguists are to be formed, in which the working relationship should be primarily defined by the speech community, as this would ensure community participation and continuity;

8. *Considering* that language professionals should not merely study the cultural and linguistic resources of communities whose traditional languages are endangered, but should also, upon request, assist in devising documentation, maintenance and/or revitalization strategies;

9. *Cognizant* that, in order for a language programme to be sustainable, the active involvement of local language educators, advocates and specialists is crucial;

10. *Considering* that, in order to maintain, revitalize, or promote an endangered language, coordinated action is needed, including
   a. the determination of the current scope of language use and of attitudes towards the language;
   b. the identification of ultimate goals;
   c. the determination of an effective action plan;
   d. the identification of available and required human, technical and financial resources;
   e. the formation of teams consisting of community members, internal and external specialists, and representatives of regional or national authorities;
   f. the establishment of training programmes, including the use of ICTs, to build community capacity;

11. *Further considering* that cultural and linguistic diversity contribute to the quality and richness of life; and also cognizant that linguistic and cultural diversity and biodiversity are interdependent and may support each other mutually; therefore

We, the experts participating in the *International Expert Meeting on the Safeguarding of Endangered Languages*, 10–12 March 2003, call upon the Director-General of UNESCO to

1. *Suggest* to Member States that they

   a. *Survey and profile* those languages which are found to be endangered (bearing in mind the criteria in 3. above);
   b. *Actively promote* the recognition of endangered languages of their countries;

c. *Encourage* the documentation of endangered languages;
d. *Create* the conditions which facilitate the active use of and access to those languages, by, *inter alia*, assigning all relevant languages their rightful place in the educational system, media, and access to cyberspace, subject to the wishes of individual speech communities, respecting their commitments to linguistic human rights;
e. *Foster* speech communities' pride in their own languages and cultures, as well as secure equal prestige for all languages of a state;
f. *Explore* the economic and social benefits of linguistic and cultural diversity as a stimulus for sustainable development;
g. *Also provide*, where feasible and with assistance from the international community, funding for documentation, revitalization, and strengthening programmes for endangered languages as specified in 2. a–c below;

2. *Establish* a financial and administrative mechanism

   a. to support projects which document endangered languages, notably:
      - recording, collecting and publishing new materials;
      - safeguarding existing archives;
      - updating the UNESCO *Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger of Disappearing;*

   b. to initialize projects which strengthen and revitalize endangered languages, notably language training programmes which ensure intergenerational transmission;

   c. to produce and disseminate
      - training manuals for community-based documentation, teaching and curriculum development;
      - creative work in endangered languages;

3. *Enhance* UNESCO's role as a centre for resources on language diversity and endangerment by

   a. *Increasing* public awareness of language endangerment in the world, through such means as the media, the arts and public events;

   b. *Establishing* an international network
      - *linking* organizations and communities,
      - *providing* information about and access to archives, research, teaching and training projects and materials, sources of funding, and reference materials, referring to best practices;

   c. *Supporting* regional centres that design, implement and evaluate locally appropriate programmes and resources through
      - the building of local capacities for work on endangered languages;
      - education, including teacher training and transgenerational learning;

- the facilitation of the exchange of information and experiences between different indigenous groups and organizations;

d. *Coordinating* among policy makers, experts and NGOs in order to explore the correlation between globalization and language extinction and look for systematic solutions on a global scale.

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[1] Article 1: The multiple expressions of intangible cultural heritage constitute some of the fundamental sources of the **cultural identity** of the peoples and communities as well as a wealth common to the whole of humanity. Deeply rooted in local history and natural environment and embodied, among others, by a great variety of languages that translate as many world visions, they are an essential factor in the preservation of cultural diversity, in line with the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity (2001).

[2] See. UNESCO Ad Hoc Expert Group on Endangered Languages 'Language Vitality and Endangerment'. Under certain circumstances, these nine criteria may not be exhaustive.

[3] 'Language domains': areas of language use.