



**Symposium on
"Indigenous Identities: Oral, Written Expressions and New
Technologies"**

(15-18 May 2001)

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Oral, Written Expressions and New Technologies
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REPORT

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1. Foreword

This report summarizes the key issues raised, experiences shared and conclusions reached by participants during the course of four days of speeches and debate. Consensus was facilitated by parallel meetings of the informal Indigenous Caucus working group, whose inputs were crucial to the concerted efforts of indigenous and non-indigenous experts to produce recommendations and guidelines for action geared to promoting the cultural development of indigenous communities.

2. Overview

The Symposium on “Indigenous Identities: Oral, written expressions and new technologies” took place at UNESCO (Paris) from 15 to 18 May 2001 within the framework of the Organization’s International Decade of the World’s Indigenous People (1995-2004). It brought together 64 indigenous and non-indigenous speakers—academics, experts, authors and publishers—from 18 countries worldwide. Some twenty indigenous communities from all five continents were represented. More than 200 people a day attended the various meetings and debates.

The Symposium was jointly organized by UNESCO and the French *Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique* (CNRS) via the intermediary of its Laboratoire d’Anthropologie Sociale in partnership, under an International Programme of Scientific Cooperation, with the Berndt Museum of Anthropology (University of Western Australia). CNRS is the largest scientific research organization in Europe, with 27,000 agents of different nationalities covering some 40 disciplines. UNESCO, which currently comprises 188 Member States, is the United Nations specialized agency devoted to developing international intellectual cooperation with a view to “building the defences of peace in the minds of men”.

Indigenous peoples, who now number some 350 million individuals around the world (4% of its total population), are crucial to the wealth of the planet’s cultural diversity. Safeguarding that cultural diversity and promoting intercultural pluralism and dialogue figure highly among UNESCO’s priorities. This Symposium set out to further those aims in accordance with the recommendations of the Towards A Constructive Pluralism conference (UNESCO, January 1999) and the workshop on Cultural Challenges of the Decade of the World’s Indigenous People (UNESCO, October 1999), as well as the objectives of the United Nations Year for Dialogue Between Civilizations (2001) and the International Year of Mobilization against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance (2001).

The first part of the Symposium (15-16 May 2001) focused on the safeguarding, transmission and mutation of indigenous cultures. The second (17-18 May) dealt with the potential benefits of new technologies, such as bringing those often-isolated cultures into contact with others around the world. All available papers will be published online, in their original languages. During the course of the proceedings, a number of participants announced their intention to work together on joint projects to produce CD-ROMs, publish books, gather data on traditional heritage, develop bilingual learning programmes and so on.

One original feature of the event lay in the fact that it was staged in conjunction with UNESCO's first Indigenous Book Fair, in an atmosphere of exchange between the various indigenous and non-indigenous authors and publishers invited to present their work and latest collections. The Fair showed how the ways in which indigenous cultures are presented have changed and brought out the power of new indigenous voices as expressed through essays, literature and poetry. The various publications on display covered a broad spectrum of subjects ranging from art and literature to international law. Publishers, including UNESCO Publishing, presented titles and collections designed to foster awareness of indigenous cultures and to safeguard indigenous peoples' memory and means of expression; and their meetings gave rise to new ideas for joint publications and cooperation in the field of language preservation. Indigenous writers took part in book-signing sessions and, together with storytellers and singers, were invited to join a series of meet-the-public exchanges. These literary events were accompanied by a programme of films that began, in the evening of 16 May 2001, with a screening of the Sami film, "Pathfinder", arranged with the support of the Permanent Delegation of Norway to UNESCO and attended by the director, **Nils Gaup**. The next day featured films showing aspects of contemporary life in indigenous communities (Aboriginal, Pygmy, Inuit, Kogi, Quechua and Yanomami); presenting the background of indigenous peoples' action on the world stage; highlighting the work of the photographer Edward S. Curtis devoted to the memory of the North American Indian and so on. Members of the public also had a chance to visit a range of exhibitions (photos, paintings and CD-ROMs) staged during the Symposium on the theme of indigenous culture.

3. Opening Session

Ms **Katerina Stenou**, Director of UNESCO's Division of Cultural Policies, began by welcoming everybody to the Symposium and thanking the many indigenous and non-indigenous experts who had travelled from far and wide for honouring the Organization with their presence and participation. Bearing in mind that linkages between identity, culture and development are especially strong as far as indigenous populations are concerned, her Division, she recalled, serves as UNESCO's focal point for action in areas affecting those populations.

Ms **Françoise Rivière**, Deputy Director-General of UNESCO, confirmed in her opening address that the Organization was in no two minds about the need to decolonize knowledge, a cause championed by committed indigenous intellectuals such as the Maori, Linda Smith. The infinite potential of indigenous peoples, she continued, will naturally gain recognition with the reappropriation of their languages and dialects, the safeguarding of traditional knowledge and the reintroduction of their history and literature (oral and written) into school curricula. Indigenous peoples embrace a holistic view of the world and humanity that is still intimately linked to the Earth and nature. Yet their cultures remain among the most vulnerable to the impacts of globalization. UNESCO and CNRS, each with its own methods and procedures, are allies in the action taken to protect them.

Speaking on behalf of Ms Geneviève Berger (Director-General of CNRS), Mr **Jean-François Sabouret**, CNRS Director of Scientific and Technical Information, paid

tribute to the indigenous peoples whose representatives had offered to join scientists and the general public in these four days of exchanges on culture, knowledge and communication. The CNRS, he added, was delighted to be pursuing its collaboration with UNESCO. Technological development and the globalization of communication platforms are creating new problems at the levels of both search and report protocols and the accessibility of data published online or on new interactive media. Mr Sabouret acknowledged that although the CNRS may well tackle the issue of the intellectual property rights of researchers/authors and the indigenous people concerned about how their knowledge is presented, that knowledge has long been underestimated for want of a multidisciplinary approach recognizing them as experts on their own environment. He recommended that they be seen as real partners who, “by voicing their views on the new media and through the interdisciplinary nature of their knowledge, are now actively participating in the scientific debate and in the teaching and enhancement of the intellectual and material fruits of human thought”.

The Pulitzer Prize-winning Kiowa writer, Mr **Scott Momaday**, began his presentation, as is customary at indigenous gatherings, with a prayer honouring the communities present and celebrating the sacred nature of all forms of cultural life. He underscored the value of language, the sacred power of words and their capacity to recreate the world, to appease and to heal. He recounted the myth of his people’s origins, their migration to Oklahoma and the main characteristics of their “Plains Culture” (also known as “Horse-” or “Centaur Culture”) ethics, which are rooted in courage, bravery, generosity and rectitude. He stressed the continuing importance of oral tradition within Kiowa society, despite the fact that many myths, legends and other facets of culture have already been recorded in writing. Oral tradition still serves to preserve certain traditional values and aspects of history. Storytellers remain crucial to the transmission and revitalization of the Kiowa’s living, collective memory. Mr Momaday concluded with the view that diverse forms of expression, both oral and written (stories, poetry, novels and plays, which, given the uniqueness of each performance, have the magic of oral culture), could be combined to revitalize endangered cultures.

Ms **Roma Potiki** (Maori) and Ms **Kimberley TallBear** (Dakota) brought this opening session to a close with readings of their poetry.

4. Part One: Oral and Written Expressions (15-16 May 2001)

Introduction

Globalization is a source of both opportunities and risks, for although it opens up new spaces for the creativity and expression of indigenous cultures, it also threatens to weaken or marginalize more vulnerable cultures, hinder their freedom of expression and create new fault lines within and between States. With the new factors in play and indigenous people affirming a cultural identity rooted in tradition yet open to modernity, however, their values, cosmogonies and world-views have a good chance of gaining recognition.

The first part of this Symposium sought to highlight the diversity of contemporary forms of indigenous expression. The thinking carried out on “oral and written expressions” should help raise awareness as to the value of indigenous cultures and the importance of their contribution to universal civilization.

Session 1: Supports of indigenous memory

Chair: Ms María Eugenia Choque
 Rapporteur: Ms Pierrette Birraux-Ziegler
 Speakers: Ms Marcia Langton, Mr Enrique Florescano and Ms Birgitta Leander

Ms **Marcia Langton**, an Aboriginal anthropologist and Professor at the University of Melbourne (Australia), opened the session with a paper entitled *From sand signs to digital data*. She began by underlining the urgent need to safeguard indigenous culture in a country where 60% of the population is aged under 30 years and 40% is under 16. Aboriginal communities have already begun exploiting the capacity of new technologies to enable them to interpret their culture, pass it on to their youth and open it up to others, thereby arousing the interest of communities both in Australia and abroad. Using multimedia has also helped them demonstrate how their culture, far from being static, is in a state of constant change. It has also drawn attention to the originality of the Aboriginal approach within the realms of cultural retention and the selective dissemination of cultural elements that indigenous people themselves would only wish to see displayed in a manner respectful of their sacred nature. The new technologies, in enabling indigenous people to represent, interpret and disseminate their culture, have given them a great deal of autonomy. After citing a number of examples where information has been safeguarded through the use of those technologies in the fields of museology, cultural data-gathering, education, school curricula and so on, Ms Langton went on to point out that they have also served to bolster intergenerational links and intercommunication among indigenous communities. Network-building is a fundamentally democratic process, she stressed, but the fact is that it is still too costly for the communities concerned. Introducing new technologies into community schools and libraries, however, has been conducive to cultural and social development within indigenous communities and to fostering a better understanding of their culture on the part of the outside world.

Mr **Enrique Florescano** (historian and Director of Mexico's Fondo de Cultura Económica) then spoke on the subject of *Indigenous memory: A new interpretation of the past*. Mesoamerican peoples (Maya, Mixtec, Quiche and Mexica) have historically recorded their memory in pictures and manuscripts. They continue to perpetuate it to this day through songs, dances and ceremonial rites. Their myths share a common narrative structure and purpose: relating the creation of the universe, the earth, humankind and kingdoms; and seeking to celebrate the emergence of those kingdoms, to bolster their power, forge an identity for their people and secure transmission to their lineage. Cosmological symbols are enshrined in the very structure of pre-Columbian towns. Colonization gave rise to a struggle between the memory of the various cultures and the creation of the nation-state. It proved even more effective than Christianization in its efforts to wipe out the oral and visual forms of memory transmitted through myths. Mr Florescano ended his paper with a tribute to the anthropologists, ethnologists and linguists who have helped safeguard, rebuild and transmit the ancient memory whose key components have been preserved.

The Sami anthropologist, Ms **Birgitta Leander**, brought this session to a close with a paper entitled *Oral and written Náhuatl: Literature from ancient and modern Mexico*. She reminded participants that specific forms of writing and an extremely rich oral literature linked to agriculture (and expressed through songs, dances and religious ceremonies) had existed long before the Europeans arrived. Indeed, cultural output was highly prolific. The Náhuatl language managed to survive colonization and a million people continue to speak and even write it to this day. Thus safeguarded, Náhuatl is now attracting fresh interest.

Discussions

A number of participants brought up the financial and technical problems concerning the use of new technologies. With 80% of African people lacking access to a telephone, for instance, the digital divide is widening the gap between rich and poor. That gap must be bridged as soon as possible. They also called upon the CNRS, the World Bank and others to take account of future decisions reached on the use of portals, not least with respect to indigenous know-how, by the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (recently established by the United Nations Economic and Social Council). The CNRS representative let it be known that it was the Centre's policy never to act without first of all considering the will of the populations concerned.

Session 2: The Earth is our book: Safeguarding indigenous cultures and memory

Chair: Mr Scott Momaday

Rapporteur: Ms Birgitta Leander

Speakers: Mr Feliciano Sánchez Chan, Mr Mohamed Aghali-Zakara, Mr Ivan Omruvié and Mr Charles Weinstein, Ms María Eugenia Choque, Mr Bernard Saladin d'Anglure, Mr Mike Barns and Mr Merv Tano.

The Mayan (Mexico) writer, Mr **Feliciano Sánchez Chan**, outlined the history of Mayan poetry from ancient times through to the present day. He spoke of his people's age-old oral tradition and writing system (whose origins stretch back to the very dawn of Mayan civilization). He cited such works as the ancient *Chilám Balám* and referred to a more recently published forty-volume collection of Mayan literature, *Colección de Letras Mayas* (Barrera Vásquez, 1965). In the annals of collective memory, human history and knowledge have been recorded through rupestrian paintings and inscriptions, glyphs, low-relief carvings and a wealth of other forms of expression. Oral tradition, as a means of sustaining memory, represents a key component of Mayan society. Mayan-language writing, on the other hand, is currently accessible to but a minority of people. Mr Sánchez Chan stressed that transcribing the collective memory is crucial in that it serves to bring out the value of and restore the oral tradition, thereby securing cultural continuity. Wider dissemination of Mayan-language publications and the development of reading workshops would, he concluded, do much to revitalize this culture.

Mr **Mohamed Aghali-Zakara** (Niger), Professor at the *Institut National des Langues et Civilisations Orientales* (Paris), delivered a paper on traditional writings and oral traditions in Tuareg society. The earliest recorded observations on this nomadic Berber people, whose territory takes in parts of Algeria, Burkina Faso, Libya, Mali, Mauritania and Niger, date back to the work of Roman historians in 146 BC, just after the destruction of Carthage. Tuareg writing constitutes a remnant of the ancient consonantal Lybic writing system. The characters, known as *tifinagh*, can be written and read vertically, horizontally, from left to right or right to left. Oral tradition, meanwhile, occupies an important place in the culture, with poetry (which can be sung, accompanied by a single-stringed musical instrument, or recited) playing a key role as a medium for expressions of identity.

The Chukchi (Siberia) writer, Mr **Ivan Omruvié**, assisted by his translator, the French specialist in the Chukchi language, Mr Charles **Weinstein**, introduced the culture of the far north of Russia. Indigenous Arctic peoples, who traditionally raise reindeer and hunt sea mammals, are experiencing situations of severe hardship at both the material and cultural levels. Unable to resist the forces of deculturation, their ancient oral traditions are in danger of dying out. Yet Chukchi people remain attached to their language and culture. They have kept their traditional names and certain ancestral customs, such as a man being duty-bound to wed a dead brother's wife and take care of her children. Chukchi written literature is rarely published in Russian, and Chukchi mother-tongue authors writing in Russian hardly ever see their work translated into other languages. Mr Weinstein pointed out that his translation of Mr Omruvié's work was an exception to the rule and an example of the new initiatives being taken to safeguard indigenous cultures. He went on to suggest a range of

measures that would serve to protect the language of Chukchi people and revitalize their ailing culture: creating newspapers and meeting places, upgrading means of communication, encouraging radio broadcasting and film-making, etc.

The Aymara (Bolivia) writer, Ms **Maria Eugenia Choque**, introduced the activities of her Workshop of Oral Andean History (TOA). TOA was originally set up to address the need to decolonize a teaching of history that had for centuries been defined by the very destroyers of indigenous culture. Technology has made it possible to video-record authentic rites and dances and, hence, to pass their traditions on to younger generations. As such, indigenous people are gradually reconquering and restoring their culture after centuries of attempts to "disindigenize" them. Ms Choque concluded with the point that beyond crystallizing a people's memory, history provides the foundations upon which it can build its future.

The anthropologist, Mr **Bernard Saladin d'Anglure**, recalled that the Inuit people inhabiting a vast area spanning Greenland (Denmark), the far north of Canada and Alaska (USA) all speak a language with the same linguistic roots. Notwithstanding dramatic changes in their traditional habitat and daily life, Inuit culture has managed to withstand the forces seeking its elimination. As an illustration of endeavours to revitalize indigenous memory, Mr Saladin d'Anglure spoke of his collaboration with the self-taught Inuit writer, Ms Mitiarjuk Salomé Nappaaluk, which has resulted in a bilingual work that is currently being prepared for publication. Furthermore, his use of Inuktitut syllabic script enabled him to establish a network of writers across ten or so Nunavut villages in the late 1960s. That network has in turn allowed him to transcribe interviews with elders on major themes from their traditional cosmology and religion. He underscored the need to "de-demonize" shamanism and to foster its revival among the youth. Safeguarding and enhancing traditional knowledge, he concluded, have become a policy priority.

The Maori (New Zealand) architect, Mr **Mike Barnes**, described his people's oral tradition and their special relationships with the landscapes of the Pacific island where they have been living for some 1,200 years: Aotearoa (Land of the Long White Cloud, the Maori name for New Zealand). He went on to speak about the profound link between indigenous people and the environment. Maoris believe that Mother Earth (*Papatuanuku*) takes care of all living creatures. Their devotion to her is expressed through prayer, singing and ceremonies; and reified in masks, ritual paintings and house decorations. The Maori people's collective memory has been preserved in folklore, which serves as a means of transmitting their profound values and special relationship with nature from one generation to the next. Those values, Mr Barnes was keen to stress, are still shared by Maori youth, notwithstanding their frequent fascination for Western trends.

The final speaker of the session, Mr **Merv Tano**, a Hawaiian environmentalist and President of the Denver (United States) based International Institute for Indigenous Resource Management, highlighted the links between traditional values, as expressed in oral literature, and natural resource management. He condemned the improper use of indigenous lands for industrial and military purposes since the American Civil War. He pointed out that the effects of modern technology are not always beneficial and that the indigenous concept of harmonious balance between humanity and nature should be seen as the living heritage of the entire human race.

Session 3: Transmission of indigenous cultures: "It is from our memory that we retain our power"

Chair: Mr Aqqaluk Lyngé

Rapporteur: Ms Joëlle Rostkowski

Speakers: Mr Reuter Orán, Ms Veronica Tiller, Ms Michèle Therrien, Ms Aaju Piita, Mr Greg Young-Ing, Ms Anna Aenki Kassie, Ms Magdalena Kassie and Mr Nigel Crawhall.

Mr **Aqqaluk Lyngé**, President of the Inuit Circumpolar Conference (Denmark), stressed that it was vital for indigenous peoples to share information, experience and skills in order to be able to pinpoint parallels between the various actions undertaken within the realm of culture transmission. International forums such as this Symposium, he added, gave members of an indigenous people whose communities are spread over several countries (as in the case of the Inuit) an opportunity to meet one another.

The Kuna (Panama) writer, Mr **Reuter Orán**, turned attention to the issue of the means of transmitting indigenous cultures. He stressed that his culture thrives on—and is transmitted through—its own forms of expression (singing, poetry, stories, legends) that have proven capable of changing, adapting and renewing themselves. Traditional Kuna culture, with its unique dynamism, has managed to develop its own survival and transmission tools. Kuna communities are successfully passing their culture on to younger generations via an education system that recognizes the role of oral tradition in teaching. While their cultural references and values are also conveyed through monuments, paintings and written texts, oral tradition remains the main means of transmitting knowledge, safeguarding memory and disseminating the wisdom of the elders.

The Apache historian, Ms **Veronica Tiller**, a chronicler of her Jicarilla community in New Mexico (United States), then explored the issue of transcribing endangered traditions. Currently available sources, she recalled, are poor and marked by stereotypes that have served to distort the image of American Indian communities in the teaching of American history. She has set out to rewrite her people's history, drawing on oral tradition and the living memory of elders (with a particular emphasis on cultural, ceremonial and spiritual features). Her paper highlighted, *inter alia*, the importance of such rites of passage as the puberty feast (vital stages in community life) to social cohesion and cultural identity. Building on her experience in transcribing endangered traditions, she has continued seeking to change perceptions of Indian cultures by entering into collaboration with major publishers and the handful of newly established indigenous ones. It is essential, she stressed, to ensure that the new data are incorporated—as educational tools—into the public education system.

Ms **Michèle Therrien**, a Canadian ethnolinguist, Inuit specialist and Professor at the *Institut National des Langues et Civilisations Orientales* (Paris), presented a joint paper on the transmission of indigenous values and bilingual education with the Inuit artist and writer, Ms **Aaju Piita** (Nunavut Artic College), who also performed a selection of Inuit songs. Their paper accentuated the fact that by prioritizing writing, the school system was doing a great injustice to oral tradition and, hence, memory, both of which have been forced into a state of latency. A project carried out by the

Inuit Studies Programme at Nunavut Arctic College, in which they had taken part, has led to the publication of a recently released collection of books in Inuktitut. These books provide accounts of interviews between Inuit students and elders on major culture-related topics. The success of this groundbreaking initiative has brought out the key role of oral traditions in maintaining intergenerational links, not to mention the Inuit people's desire to ensure that those traditions are preserved and rendered compatible with writing. It amounts to a meeting of two mindsets, two forms of cultural expression. The knowledge of elders, whose memory risks disappearing with them when they die, therefore needs to be gathered and transcribed for use as educational tools within the mainstream education system.

Mr **Greg Young-Ing**, representing the British Columbian (Canadian) indigenous publishing house, Theytus Books, focused on the role of indigenous publishers in the transmission of knowledge. A significant proportion of output on Indian cultures, he recalled, is full of caricatural, stereotyped imagery. What is more, books by indigenous authors, which have only really begun being released over the past couple of decades, remain relatively few and far between. Yet Indians, Mr Young-Ing pointed out, now have their own, increasingly influential, written literature. Indigenous publishers are best placed to produce works that accurately convey the complexities and cultural particularities of Indian peoples. Within the realm of new technologies, they also need to secure access to new means of communication and to secure control over the integrity and authenticity of their publications.

The ≠Khomani (Southern Kalahari) researchers Ms **Anna Aenki Kassie** and Ms **Magdalena Kassie**, with the South African San Institute sociolinguist, Mr **Nigel Crawhall**, presented a cultural and linguistic conservation and restoration pilot project in a joint paper entitled *Sociolinguistic perspectives on the intergenerational transmission of endangered languages and cultures*. The project in question has involved youth and elders pooling their knowledge and working together to create an inventory (audit) of their endangered cultural resources. They have drawn up a series of cultural maps (including personal histories, place names, intangible heritage sites and historical natural resource use) with the community in question and transcribed their myths and traditional fables. One such fable concerns the springbok antelopes and the scarab beetles, which reinforces the intergenerational, identity-related link geared to fostering a sense of belonging to the community. Phase two of the project will set out to use the above-mentioned cultural resources audit as a basis upon which to develop a cultural resource management programme and, to revive intergenerational transmission of the N|u language and N||n≠e culture.

Discussions

Attention was drawn to similarities in the kinds of problems experienced by such geographically distant communities as the Inuit and Bushmen with respect to the safeguarding and transmission of their culture. Participants noted the importance of a sense of community within traditional cultures and the decline of social life in contemporary life. One speaker, from Canada, spoke of youth group activities where young people have been initiated into their ancient customs and, hence, have recovered their sense of identity and dignity. Questions were raised as to whether efforts to safeguard language aroused any interest among youth. These were met with the observation that in the case of the San (southern Africa), young people have

responded with great a deal enthusiasm to projects aimed at teaching the N|u language, traditional singing and storytelling. Another speaker made the point that among the Mayan people of Mexico, it amounted to a matter of rebuilding indigenous memory; and that the burden of responsibility on future generations would be considerable.

Participants questioned the chances of safeguarding a language spoken by just 21 people. The N|n≠e community representative responded by saying that an increasing number of San youth are growing aware of how important it is in order to re-establish their sense of identity, recover their dignity and continue learning and gaining a deeper understanding of the language of their ancestors.

Session 4: Indigenous cultures and globalization

Chair: Mr Reuter Orán
 Rapporteur: Mr Nigel Crawhall
 Speakers: Mr Aqqaluk Lyngé, Mr José Luis Moctezuma, Ms Veronica Tiller and Ms Marit Myrvoll, Mr Félix Tiouka, Mr Diego Gradis, Ms Pierrette Birraux-Ziegler, Mr Jean-Patrick Razon and Mr Didier Bertrand.

This session began with papers in which two experts—one from Greenland (Denmark) and the other from Mexico—introduced the issue of indigenous languages in the face of globalization. The role of publishers in transposing oral tradition to books and new forms of communication was then highlighted by an Apache historian and a Sami anthropologist. This was followed by a round table chaired by Mr **Félix Tiouka**, General Co-ordinator of the Working Group on the Kali'na Language and Culture (French Guyana), where INGO representatives debated the issue of indigenous and non-indigenous network action to protect cultural identity.

1. Cultural and linguistic identity and globalization

Mr **Aqqaluk Lyngé**, a poet and President of the Inuit Circumpolar Conference (Denmark), described the situation as regards the survival and modernization of an indigenous language (Inuktitut) faced with the effects of globalization. While endangered in Alaska, Russia and some parts of Canada, the Inuktitut language has flourished in Greenland since the introduction of self-rule and the adoption of a policy conducive to its protection and dissemination. Notwithstanding regional variations, explained Mr Lyngé, Inuktitut is a key component of Inuit culture across the Arctic. He went on to say that given the current context of globalization and the dangers threatening that culture, the Inuit (who now number some 152,000 individuals) are seeking to strengthen their cultural ties and are especially keen to develop their common language. One of the aims in setting up an Inuit Language Commission, he added, was to develop a common writing system that would serve as a means of combating the risk of Inuktitut's demise by facilitating its adaptation to new channels of communication (e.g. cable television and the Internet). Indeed, Mr Lyngé confirmed that a people can only assert—or even secure the survival of—its cultural identity if its language remains strong. Bilingualism, however, does not appear to be an obstacle to the survival of Inuktitut. On the contrary, it seems to be able to further interaction between the Inuit culture and the outside world.

Mr **José Luis Moctezuma**, researcher and Professor at the National Institute of Anthropology and History (Mexico), delivered a paper entitled *Mother tongue orality in indigenous social networks*. He pointed out that in Mexico, even though Spanish is the prevailing language used in the public sphere (schools, governmental institutions), existing indigenous social networks enable communities to communicate in their mother tongues in the private (families, neighbourhoods, traditional associations). The proliferation of indigenous writers may well be helping promote their culture in the eyes of the dominant society, but it has little impact upon the communities themselves. Mr Moctezuma went on to stress that more effort needs to be focused on the study of indigenous writing (grammar and vocabulary) instead of continuing to work on the alphabet alone, as has been the case for a number of decades. He confirmed that indigenous language-promotion policies are bound to fail

unless they recognize the importance of oral tradition. Safeguarding indigenous languages and cultures should be seen as a matter of concern not just to the indigenous communities but to Mexican society as a whole, for rather than amounting to a single monolithic cultural block, they contribute to the enrichment of the entire country's cultural diversity.

2. From oral tradition to literary forms and new modes of communication: The role of publishers

The chief issues raised by Ms **Marit Mirvoll** (Sami member of the Norwegian National Commission for UNESCO) and Ms **Veronica Tiller** (Apache publisher, Tiller Research Inc.) may be summed up as follows.

Cultural and intellectual independence is a crucial issue hinging on autonomous publishing and the free flow of indigenous knowledge and know-how. The cost of producing indigenous-language books, however, hinders dissemination of indigenous writers' work. Publishers, whose mission is both cultural and economic in nature, should therefore make the safeguarding of cultural diversity—now regarded as a key factor of economic growth—part and parcel of their editorial policy. Major publishing houses must be encouraged to publish indigenous people's work and books dealing with subjects that are crucial to the safeguarding of their cultures. Norway has embarked upon a Sami cultural promotion policy that has significantly improved the situation as regards research and the dissemination of those cultures.

3. The activities of indigenous and non-indigenous networks in the protection of cultural identity

In a paper entitled *An NGO working hand-in-hand with indigenous cultures in Latin America*, Mr **Diego Gradis**, Executive Director of the Traditions Pour Demain organization, pointed out that the past ten years have seen the revitalization of indigenous identities world-wide, especially in Latin America. It is a phenomenon that has occurred spontaneously, affecting both academic and political circles, grass-roots movements and more "culturalist" groups. It has, save in a few isolated cases, managed to avoid the pitfalls of fundamentalism and intolerance. Traditions Pour Demain (established in 1986) supports indigenous peoples in their fight to assert their cultural identity against a backdrop of global Westernization and, in their efforts to gain recognition in the eyes of dominant societies throughout Latin America.

Mr **Jean-Patrick Razon**, President of Survival International (France), delivered a paper entitled *Action of publishing and websites*. He stressed that his organization defends indigenous peoples' right to decide their own future and helps them protect their lives, lands and human rights. Its core activities, he added, include the gathering and dissemination of information on regions of the world where those peoples' survival is threatened. In addition to emergency action bulletins, the French branch publishes a biannual journal (*Ethnies*) and newsletter (*Les Nouvelles de Survival*). Mr Razon concluded with a description of two ongoing projects to develop a teaching kit designed to make eight to eleven year-old children aware of the need to respect indigenous cultures, and an Internet website offering a wealth of documentary material.

Ms **Pierrette Birraux-Ziegler**, Scientific Director of the Indigenous Peoples' Center for Documentation, Research and Information (doCip) delivered a paper entitled *The territory, a place for memories, words and interactions: a testimony of research-action with the Yanomami of Brazil*. She spoke of that people's fight for survival (physical, cultural and intellectual). It was interesting, she said, to see how quickly Yanomami thinkers have incorporated the "new world" into their conception of the universe. Far from passively standing by as their people suffered a barrage of efforts to destroy and exploit them, they have striven to make sense of the events surrounding their "discovery of White People", structuring them in line with their culture's existing intellectual categories. She went on to highlight the remarkable contrast between their agile thinking and the rigidity of technocratic mindsets that are often incapable of embracing the human and cultural aspects of the territory whose potential they are meant to be assessing. She described the activities of doCip, which seeks to defend and promote the identity of indigenous peoples by archiving their representatives' speeches at the United Nations and helping younger generations to "walk in their fathers' footsteps". DoCip also publishes a newsletter and serves as an information office for indigenous people and the general public. It furthermore encourages use of the latest technologies and strives to give indigenous people a new voice in the world.

Mr **Didier Bertrand**, speaking in the name of the EthnicA team, stressed that culture is a living, dynamic and far from rigid creation. Efforts to safeguard a culture must serve to further its autonomous development, according to its own constituent parts, and not to dilute it. Anthropologists with a conventional educational background and taste for monographs have preferred studying sociocultures as non-evolving entities. They have believed themselves capable of helping them maintain a cultural identity that in actual fact amounts to a mere textbook definition which fails to reflect the wishes and perceptions of the populations concerned. Nowadays, however, the work being done by non-indigenous people to protect cultural identities can assume a variety of different forms aimed at raising awareness on the part of national authorities, financing endogenous projects, facilitating the "capitalization" and exchange of indigenous experience, encouraging the training and emergence of indigenous experts and so on. EthnicA is an NGO that strives to achieve such ends and, hence, enable indigenous peoples to withstand the shock of the new by supporting them in their efforts to enhance their cultural heritage and develop their ideas. Mr Feliciano Sanchez Chan, co-ordinator of the "Rescate de la literatura oral maya de Yucatan" project, concluded with a look at the issue of improving partnership between anthropologists and indigenous representatives for the implementation of cultural development projects.

Discussions

During the afternoon debates, participants recalled that education and cultural policies designed to address the needs of indigenous peoples had not always adequately responded to the demands of the populations concerned. Some indigenous language teaching programmes have actually been geared to disseminating the national language rather than to genuinely enhancing indigenous languages per se. Participants also underlined the need to establish educational

programmes to teach non-indigenous people about indigenous languages and cultures with a view to eradicating prevailing prejudices and stereotypes.

Attention was drawn to projects designed to promote quality bilingual education. It was pointed out, however, that the results so far have not always been satisfactory because, *inter alia*, of ambiguous attitudes towards bilingualism; a lack of any clearly defined status for indigenous languages; a shortage of qualified indigenous language teachers; a lack of teaching materials and means; and an absence of official alphabets or precise spelling rules. In many countries, it was stressed, the conditions for implementing bilingual education programmes could therefore do with improvement.

Meanwhile, a number of speakers underlined the importance of involving indigenous representatives in drawing up policies for the safeguarding and transmission of their linguistic heritage. Attention was drawn to the fact that if a formal education system fails to take account of cultural diversity and, hence, leads to the disappearance of any minority languages, it will only serve to impoverish knowledge and to hinder intercultural communication and understanding.

During the discussions that followed the round table, a number of speakers brought up the need to boost the powers of NGOs (especially those of the North) to lobby their Governments with a view to promoting adoption of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Others stressed that NGO efforts for the transcription and publication of oral traditions would only benefit indigenous communities if underpinned by genuine cooperation between elders (the keepers of the collective memory) and the younger generations wishing to preserve that heritage.

5. Part Two: New Technologies, Anthropology, Museology and Indigenous Knowledge (17-18 May 2001)

Introduction

Over 200 anthropologists, museologists, technologists and representatives of indigenous peoples attended this second part of the international Symposium on “Indigenous Identities: Oral, Written Expressions and New Technologies”.

The 30 speakers focused on the impact of new technologies (multimedia, the Internet) on research and teaching in anthropology and the museum world, examining current protocols for the reappropriation of the tangible and intangible heritage of indigenous peoples throughout the world, and acknowledgement of their intellectual property rights. Four sessions were organized followed by a general synthesis of the whole symposium.

Session 1: Protocols for collaboration between anthropologists, indigenous peoples and museums: examples from Australia and Canada

Chair: Prof. Marcia Langton

Rapporteur: Dr Rosita Henry

Speakers: Dr Barbara Glowczewski, Dr John Stanton, Prof. Marcia Langton, Dr Laurent Dousset, Ms Jill Rachel Baird

The coordinators of this part of the Symposium, Dr **Barbara Glowczewski** (anthropologist, Laboratoire d’anthropologie sociale, CNRS) and Dr **John Stanton** (Director of the Berndt Museum of Anthropology, University of Western Australia) introduced the session, commenting on the broad themes to be discussed, as well as some of the specific issues facing anthropologists and others working with indigenous peoples within the contemporary setting.

Dr Glowczewski stressed anthropologists’ responsibility to return recorded material to the communities concerned as well as their members’ right to control access to those records and the ways in which they are used. The key issues here include:

- how to preserve and protect the chain of transmission of indigenous knowledge without undermining its dynamism: questions have already been raised as to whether the transcription of oral cultures neutralizes the ever-changing nature of orality, but data in books will always remain open to reinterpretation and critique;
- recording cultural with multimedia technologies requires resources, and care must be taken to ensure that indigenous peoples have network access to their knowledge, and that this knowledge is protected from abusive exploitation;
- intellectual property is more than a matter of individual rights, for it concerns the inalienability of knowledge: artefacts displayed in museums and the knowledge attached to them must not be seen as commodities.

Dr Stanton raised the question of who will use information displayed electronically and how it will be used and interpreted. He stressed that:

- websites do not detract from, but enhance the desire to see the objects themselves;
- new technologies offer new ways of targeting audiences;
- the Western principle that knowledge is free is not universal and, plans to place things on Websites and CD-ROMs can give rise to conflicts of interest.

He then introduced the Chair of this first session, Professor **Marcia Langton** (Chair of Indigenous Studies, University of Melbourne), an Australian indigenous anthropologist and writer, involved with many Aboriginal organizations, who had spoken during the first part of the Symposium (15 May 2001) on the use of—and access to—new technology among Aboriginal people. Professor Langton presented a paper on behalf the absent Ms **Helena Gulash** (manager of the Australian Indigenous Cultural Network [AICN] programme at the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies) and demonstrated the Pitjantjatjara digital programme for the restitution of archives. The paper described the work of the AICN and highlighted a number of issues for its network, such as:

- how to provide Internet access to all indigenous peoples and, hence, bridge the digital divide: digital mobile service providers versus hybrid CB radio operators in remote communities where there is a problem of establishing fixed telephone lines;
- how to link indigenous communities to major museums that house indigenous cultural property and allow the peoples concerned to advise on appropriate management and care of collections;
- how to address the key issue of intellectual property rights as part of AICN network development.

Dr **Laurent Dousset** (Anthropologist, University of Western Australia) presented documentation on the development of his database on Australian Aboriginal languages and social groups (<http://ausanthrop.iinet.net.au/>) as well as the genealogical software he has developed for the Ngaanyatjatjara people of the Western Desert. He raised the question of “who owns the present” and a number of issues relating to the creation of electronic data records for indigenous communities:

- generalized knowledge, such as digital collections of available resources, has to be distinguished from local knowledge, which is not intended for the general public but for returning data to the community so that it can modify and add to the database;
- how to finalize the decision regarding the use of this material.

Ms **Jill Rachel Baird** (Curator, University of British Columbia), speaking on behalf of Debra Bird Sparrow, Musqueam Nation (Canada) weaver and educator, discussed and demonstrated the CD-ROM ‘*Weaving Worlds Together*’ that was developed with 20 Musqueam weavers at the UBC Museum of Vancouver, for the purposes of classroom work and Museum visitors. She explained the informed consent process developed in relation to the production of the CD-ROM (consent to interview and photograph, edit transcripts and use edited texts and photos) and provided a case

study of how the Museum handled cultural protocols associated with death. The whole process has resulted in the revival of Musqueam weaving and demonstrated that:

- digital programmes can represent ongoing work that may never finish and, hence, remain an ever-evolving dynamic resource;
- multiple collaboration is essential to this work;
- museums need to put the community's needs ahead of their own.

After the break, Ms Baird presented, on screen, a selection of North American Indigenous Websites and analyzed a number of the common points encountered:

- authorship (and authenticity) of those sites can be difficult to establish when the relevant credits are not indicated on every webpage;
- the Web is used as a calling card to initiate/raise social agendas and issues;
- communities have successfully managed to raise donations via requests on their webpages.

Discussions

Comments from the floor focused on the importance of not being seduced by technology (which can be intrusive), not forgetting that people still need to touch and hold the objects in question, being aware of owning a living culture and the role of museums in making sure that people share ownership. Several issues were raised for future recommendations:

- individual researchers have developed ways of recording genealogies digitally, and this information must be shared so that indigenous people have the best means of recording the genealogical information that they need;
- software programmes are sometimes more expensive than hardware—a matter of political will—and one needs to determine how to make sure that indigenous people have access to these technologies and use them;
- most of the Indian group names of Brazil have been copy-righted by Web predators, indigenous DNA lines are sold on the Web, too many Websites present false information. It was suggested that a Charter be established and a team of Wise Men check and authorize the use of indigenous names and advise on other issues;
- strategies need to be developed to support and give priority to indigenous gateways on the Web which allow the display of trustworthy links.

Session 2: Protocols for collaboration between anthropologists, indigenous peoples and museums: examples from France

Chair: Prof. Maurice Godelier

Rapporteur: Dr John Stanton

Speakers: Mr Roger Boulay, Mr Lorenzo Brutti, Ms Christine Hemmet, Dr Jean-Claude Rivierre, Dr Boyd Michailovsky, Dr Nicole Revel, Dr Suzanne Furniss, Dr Laurence Tabuteau Pourchez.

Seven French scholars working on multimedia projects revolving around indigenous museum collections, languages, music and other knowledge, gathered for this session to discuss scientific, technical and financial issues relating to their development.

Mr **Roger Boulay** (Curator, Musée National des Arts d'Afrique et d'Océanie, Paris) gave a presentation of the Bwenaado CD-ROM, developed with the backing of the French Government over several years for the Tjibaou Cultural Centre, Nouméa, New Caledonia (established 1998). This project involved 50 contributors and set out to bring together on a digital medium Kanak collections dispersed across the world, in order to enhance the experience of visitors to the Centre, as well as to contextualize exhibits on display at its temporary exhibitions. Due to a lack of available memory space on the computer, the CD-ROM could not be downloaded for this presentation, but the audience was invited to browse the programme after the session on a computer set up outside the conference rooms at the Indigenous Book fair.

Mr **Lorenzo Brutti** (anthropologist, CNRS) demonstrated the CD-ROM "*Chefs-d'œuvre et Civilisations. Afrique, Asie, Océanie et Amérique*", created for the recent display at the Louvre (Paris), "Arts Premiers", which is an example of what will be presented at the future Musée du Quai Branly (Paris). This multimedia catalogue of some one hundred masterpieces from Africa, Asia, Oceania and the Americas features four entries: aesthetics of the object, use of the object in the culture that has created it, description of the society that has created it, history of the object in Western collections. The presentation was commented by the Chair, Professor **Maurice Godelier** (Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales, Paris), who was the scientific adviser on this very expensive production.

Ms **Christine Hemmet** (anthropologist, Musée de l'Homme, Paris) presented a CD-ROM on Vietnamese minority cultures that she is developing jointly with the Museum of Hanoi as a means of bringing together the oldest French colonial archives and the recent ethnographic data gathered by the Vietnamese Museum; the aim being to publicize the existing collections of these minorities and to repatriate relevant documentation from the colonial period. She highlighted the difficulty of finishing this multimedia resource given the lack of funding and the fact that the issue of the 53 indigenous minorities, which the Museum of Vietnam has yet to involve in the process, is highly sensitive.

Dr **Jean-Claude Rivierre** (linguist, LACITO/CNRS) discussed, on behalf of other linguists from LACITO, the development of a digital archive programme with a series

of nine CD-ROMs on Kanak languages created at the request of the Tjibaou Culture Centre (CCT), New Caledonia: a hundred texts in fifteen languages, with introductory material and illustrations, are available for consultation in the CCT multimedia library. He showed how visitors can listen to recorded text as the transcription (and, if so desired, its translation) is simultaneously displayed, and how they a segment of the transcribed text can be selected with the corresponding sound. Another linguist from LACITO, Dr **Boyd Michailovsky**, explained new ways of analyzing languages and disseminating information about them on the Web. He showed examples from the thirty text/sound documents in languages of Nepal, New Caledonia and Africa, which are freely available for consultation and interrogation (word-search, concordancing) on the project's Internet Website (<http://www.lacito.archivage.vjf.cnrs.fr>). The software used is based on the adoption of open, non-proprietary standards.

Dr **Nicole Revel** (linguist and anthropologist, CNRS) presented a CD-ROM on a Palawan Epic sung by Mäsinu Intaräy (Philippines). This document is another way to safeguard oral literature, more particularly, oral epics. It complements a book with a CD: "*La quête en épouse. Une épopée palawan chantée par Mäsinu. The Quest for a Wife. A Palawan Epic Sung by Mäsinu*" (Editions UNESCO/Langues et Mondes, L'Asiathèque) which, like the CD-ROM, is co-authored by the researcher and the singer of tales. The CD-ROM offers audiovisual records together with a film, an excerpt of a half night long singing performance, in an attempt to repatriate more authentically this Intangible Heritage to the Palawan people: the song can be listened to and read simultaneously with the translation either in English or French. In the book, the epic song is transcribed in Palawan and translated into French and English. It is followed by Mäsinu's narration of his own life, a synopsis and an interpretative poetic and sociological analysis, both in French and in English, by the researcher.

Dr **Suzanne Furniss** (ethnomusicologist, CNRS) examined the potential of new technologies in the field of ethnomusicology. First, she drew from her experience as co-author of the *Aka Pygmies* CD-ROM (Montparnasse Multimédia), presenting the interactive tool that was developed by a team of musicologists to analyze Pygmy polyphonic singing and make it accessible to a wider audience. She then gave a critical overview of Websites containing references to indigenous music:

- while there are many World Music type sites which draw on indigenous music, only a few address the issue of indigenous intellectual property rights;
- one famous band has created a foundation to raise money online for the benefit of a Pygmy group whose music they use in sampling their own tracks;
- ethnographic data relating to music presented on the Web is very rare, but a few digital tools can be found to analyze musical extracts and their performance (as in the case of Sulawesi choirs, for instance).

Finally, Dr **Laurence Tabuteau Pourchez** (Creole anthropologist and film-maker), talked about the creation of her CD-ROM, "*Anthropologie de la petite enfance en société créole réunionnaise*", on childhood and Creole society in Réunion that she developed alone during the course of her PhD thesis for the Creole community where she lives. The CD-ROM displays health practices of the four main populations inhabiting the island (from Europe, Madagascar, Africa and India). It was made with a \$35 software programme available on the Web and is now used by many schools, social and health workers and midwives as well as magistrates seeking a better

understanding of the local cultures still suffering from neo-colonial administration. Dr Tabuteau Pourchez regards this CD-ROM as an ongoing project thanks to the continuing input from the community members and organizations using it with a view to developing their own multimedia productions.

Discussions

Comments from the floor focused on the colonial aspect of most of the productions referred to in this session. Issues raised included:

- how these projects enhance indigenous expressions of identity;
- whether they are motivated primarily by academic principles or whether they hinge on the fostering of active indigenous participation in their development.

It was pointed out that although Dr Tabuteau Pourchez, for instance, had produced striking results with limited resources (having developed her CD-ROM on her own with very inexpensive software), many indigenous communities may be unable to do likewise owing, *inter alia*, to a lack of access to the basic services needed to participate in multimedia production (energy sources, means of communication). The case of the Maya (Mexico) was cited as an example. Attention focused on how such services can be secured. It was furthermore stressed that while hardware costs can be reduced, another challenge is to ensure that indigenous communities benefit from access to inexpensive software: some shareware can be downloaded from the Web but indigenous people need to be made aware of its availability.

Session 3: Use of multimedia for teaching and research

Chair: Dr John Stanton
 Rapporteur: Dr Laurent Dousset
 Speakers: Ms Carly Lane, Ms Donna Oxenham, Mr Brett Nannup, Mr Kim McKenzie, Ms Philippa Deveson, Mr Sebastián Lara, Mr David Zeitlyn.

Ms **Carly Lane**, Ms **Donna Oxenham**, and Mr **Brett Nannup**, indigenous staff of the Berndt Museum of Anthropology (Perth, Australia) opened the session with a 30-minute online videoconference. They discussed their “Bringing the Photographs Home” project and highlighted the policies of engagement established by the Museum. The team stressed the necessity to repatriate material both in a digital and hardcopy format, and the strong request of indigenous communities to access their own archives. This videoconference represented a successful implementation of modern communications technology, and gave the audience an opportunity to dialogue with the three indigenous members of the Museum. Issues raised included:

- the extent of repatriation in other regions of Australia;
- the repatriation of cultural objects as well as photos and recordings;
- cooperation between museums and Churches for the repatriation of archives;
- National Laws that do not allow repatriation of human remains and the responsibility of researchers in advising Governments on the need to amend them.

Mr **Kim McKenzie** (film-maker, National Museum of Australia, Canberra) invited Professor Emeritus **Les Hiatt** (Australian National University) to join him on the podium for his presentation of a prototype version of his CD-ROM “*People of the Rivermouth*”, on the teachings of Frank Gurrmanamana, an Anbarra-language speaking elder of Arnhem Land, Australia. This project, which brings together contributions from several anthropologists, including the author’s film, “Waiting for Harry” (about an Anbarra funeral ceremony). The aim of the CD-ROM is to provide a context for the original recordings made by Professor Hiatt some 40 years ago and, a contemporary commentary by Anbarra community members, especially Mr Gurrmanamana’s daughter, Betty Ngurrabangurraba who is an Anbarra-language teacher at the local school.

Ms **Philippa Deveson** (Curator, Australian National University) followed with a presentation of the CD-ROM she is co-developing with Professor **Howard Morphy** for a major installation at the recently opened National Museum of Australia: “*Encounters with Narritjin Maymuru, artist and cultural mediator*”. This digital biographical project contextualizes hours of films by Ian Dunlop featuring Narritjin—a prominent Yolngu man—and his people, who created a ceremonial sand sculpture and staged a funeral ceremony that was opened to the public and performed in the Museum as an act of reconciliation with the dominant society. Such an approach reflects the responsibility of anthropologists and museum professionals in using their experience and insights to explain these important cultural issues.

Mr **Sebastián Lara** (journalist, Bolivian representative, UNESCO Centre-Etxea) replaced the programmed paper of Mr **Ulrich Roters** of IWF (Goettingen, Germany) with an improvised speech on the Etxea project to promote the CIIDPI (Indigenous

Peoples International Information and Documentation Center), along with further international co-operation and concrete participation on the part of indigenous people with a view to providing the latter with a space within which to exploit the capacity of new technologies (<http://207.158.202.90/publications/CSQ/csqinternet.html>).

Mr Lara spoke with passion on the issue of “how to make sure that these technologies do not increase the divide but bring the two worlds closer”. He recommended efforts to:

- expand communication networks on hardware and software (copyleft vs. copyright), while seeking to implement a beneficial co-working relationship between indigenous journalists, and supporting institutions and individuals involved in indigenous causes;
- promote an international space that disseminates and returns information and documentation to indigenous communities via self-determination, while at the same time informing global public opinion about the concrete situations experienced by indigenous peoples (putting the findings in an accessible language);
- defend the collective Human Rights and environment of indigenous peoples, with the ultimate goal of promoting encouraging human equality, coexistence and biodiversity.

Dr **David Zeitlyn** (anthropologist, University of Kent, UK) discussed the use of the ERA CD-ROM and online network of programmes he developed with his colleagues for teaching anthropology. He gave the example of his webpage, “The Virtual Institute of Mambila Studies” (<http://lucy.ukc.ac.uk/dzl/>), which offers links relating to the Mambila people of Cameroon, including his own ethnographic data, and simulation models geared to explaining the complex social and cultural patterning involved in divination. The project was designed to encourage teachers to help students explore the relationships between field data and analysis as reported in monographs and journal articles. It aims to disseminate elements, methods and sample teaching materials based on existing field data.

Discussions

A Montagnais participant, Mr **Eddie Malenfant**, representing an indigenous American film company located on the N-W coast of Quebec (Les Productions Manitou), was invited to the podium to present the company’s “Planetary Tools” project (Outils Planétaires) based on over 300 hours of community videos and 4,000 photographs gathered over 15 years. The project involves:

- the construction of a website, “*La Vie en Innu*”, to accompany a television series of 13 hour-long films now being broadcast on APTN;
- the production of a television series and accompanying website entitled “The Earth’s Custodians”, in collaboration with indigenous people from North, Central and Latin America;
- the publication of a repertory with a DVD/CD-ROM version to be updated.

Meanwhile, comments from the floor highlighted the urgent need to maintain non-digital archive records, as the opportunity to handle original materials and direct

copies may enhance cultural experience for many indigenous peoples. Archives need to prioritize their programmes in order to facilitate indigenous access through both passive and, more importantly, active engagement with communities at both local and regional levels.

UNESCO has a clear mandate to make available to disadvantaged countries the information technology required for them to be able to participate fully in this process. Discussion needs to centre on five key questions: who for, what for, why, how and when? The emergent technologies should serve to bring people into closer collaborative relationships, rather than widening the divide. The research findings and data on which they are based needs to be made available in the most accessible format. As regards the protocols for safety and confidentiality (such as access to genealogies), the example of the “Guidelines for Ethical Research in Indigenous Studies” (developed many years ago by Professors Marcia Langton and Les Hiatt) was discussed. This protocol is available on the Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies website (<http://www.aiatsis.gov.au/>).

Session 4: Transmission of traditional knowledge and ethical issues

Chair: Dr John Stanton
 Rapporteur: Ms Gabriele Weichart
 Speakers: Mr Kenny Mianscum, Mr David Denton, Dr Laura Peers, Mr Jimmy Robertson Jampijinpa, Dr Barbara Glowczewski, Mr Peter White, Dr Jari Kupiainen, Dr Emmanuel Desveaux.

Mr **Kenny Mianscum** (singer-songwriter, Cree Regional Authority, Quebec, Canada) spoke as an indigenous representative of the Cree (Innu) people, whose traditional lands are located in the NW of Quebec. He underlined the Cree's desire to preserve their traditional culture and acknowledged their openness towards new Western technologies. He also addressed the issue of the "stolen generation" and their loss of cultural knowledge, which he himself has experienced. He painfully recalled that when he returned from a Western-type boarding school to his home country at the age of 17, he had to regain his vernacular language skills and acquire the appropriate cultural knowledge. He then introduced the Cree Cultural Institute project, which aims at assisting indigenous artists by providing a venue for their presentations: theatre and dance performances, art exhibitions, etc. The CCI will encourage and support intercommunity communication among the Cree by organizing traditional-style gatherings or symposia where representatives of the different communities can meet and discuss relevant issues.

Mr **David Denton** (anthropologist, Cree Regional Authority) then joined Mr Mianscum to discuss his involvement in the planning and organization of the future Cree Cultural Institute. He re-emphasized the Cree's acceptance of modern technology and its usefulness in research and, to illustrate the point, presented two CD-ROMs:

- "Notes from the Hudson Bay Company", which should help demystify the production of history, and can be used in land claims, genealogical research, and so on;
- a collection of Cree objects held in North American museums, which provides the local population with information on the number and types of cultural objects kept outside their communities; elders in particular can provide additional information on the meanings and functions of some items.

Dr **Laura Peers** (Curator, Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford, UK) discussed her Museum's programmes for the repatriation of visual material to indigenous American groups in Canada. She raised a number of questions regarding the aims and usefulness of ethnographic museums and new technologies: what such technologies are for; to whom they are useful; whether they merely amount to a new set of tools; what they are being used to create (i.e. their purpose) and for whom. When dealing with these questions, especially through her work in a museum environment, Dr Peers stressed that the collecting and archiving of indigenous knowledge has been inherited from colonial practices. She noted that the history of ethnographic museums is a shared history of indigenous and Western societies. Museums should educate the visitors about the places of origin of the respective artefacts, yet should also provide indigenous peoples with access to their collections. But they are unable, she noted, to exercise control over the production of indigenous images or make use of the finished products. In such cases, hard copies (paper, photos) are more appropriate

media and should be made available to the indigenous communities where research has taken place. A further limitation to indigenous control over research results lies in the fact that funding bodies often require copies of the materials.

Mr **Jimmy Robertson Jampijinpa** (artist, Manager of the Warnayaka Art Centre, Lajamanu, Australia) talked about his first encounter with the “White Man” in the Central Australian desert as a young boy. He went on to say that he might not be able to read or write, but could speak 10 languages. He stressed his people’s attachment to the land and the continuing strength of his culture and laws, notwithstanding the fact that they are threatened by Western influences. After pointing out that if a dead person’s relatives failed to attend their funeral, they themselves faced the risk of being put to death as punishment, he sang (in Warlpiri) parts of a song cycle about breaking the Law and the fate of the deceased’s spirit, which needs relatives to respect the Law for it to find its sacred resting place. Hence the necessity of respecting the rules of mourning. As he sang, the CD-ROM “*Dream Trackers: Yapa art and knowledge of the Australian desert*” (UNESCO Publishing) was displayed on-screen by Dr **Barbara Glowczewski** (CNRS), who had developed this CD-ROM with Mr Robertson and 50 other Warlpiri artists as an interactive means of returning to the Lajamanu community the photos, song cycles and films she had recorded over some 20 years. Dr Glowczewski explained that a multimedia device had been developed in order to resolve the problem of representing a dead person whose image or name cannot be shown or mentioned for a period of at least two years: the deceased’s image is covered by a picture of the Aboriginal flag and can be updated, i.e. images can be covered, uncovered or recovered whenever there is a need or desire to do so.

Mr **Peter White** (Indigenous Liaison Officer, Australian Museum, Sydney) discussed his Museum’s community outreach programme and the success it has had in assisting local indigenous groups to research and develop their own community museums and keeping places. He noted that the programme Unit offers training in the conservation and storage of objects as well as in the organization of exhibitions. Since communities in the whole New South Wales region should be able to benefit from this, the Unit—despite its limited resources, staff and time—has been working on a CD-ROM that is due for release this year. It represents the case studies of four Aboriginal cultural centres and supplies background information on their objectives, background and structure (with interviews, photos, etc). Mr White suggested that this CD-ROM should help other communities to collect and compare ideas, and find solutions to suit their own needs. Given that it would be impossible for the Unit to visit every single community on a regular basis, he sees the CD-ROM as an acceptable alternative that would facilitate Aboriginal access to information, especially for people living in more remote areas.

Dr **Jari Kupainen** (anthropologist, University of Joensuu, Finland and Manager of the Centre for Media Culture) presented an Internet project being planned by the CMC aimed at interlinking international museum collection and research databases with a view to providing comprehensive data on a large number of different societies and cultures. This could, for instance, include an “Oceania Net” segment in which museums holding collections from Oceania would be expected to collaborate. A further aim is to cooperate with Pacific organizations and communities who should also figure among the beneficiaries of the project. Dr Kupainen suggested that open

access to the website will provide indigenous peoples with an opportunity to learn more about their own history and culture, and that the site could even become an important tool for building or reaffirming local identities, and “repatriating” cultural heritage.

Finally, Dr **Emmanuel Désveaux** (anthropologist, EHESS, Scientific Director of the Musée du Quai Branly, Paris) delivered a paper on the history of museums and their role in educating the public. He gave an overview of the history of ethnography and museography in the West, where non-Western artefacts have been treated as “alien” objects or “trophies” and representations of “exotic” peoples. He noted that modern museums have sought to escape this dilemma by taking refuge in art: “ethnographic” exhibitions have been replaced by “art” exhibitions in which the aesthetic qualities of objects are given priority and where new methodological approaches are required. As regards the issue of repatriating collections, i.e. returning objects held by museums to the indigenous people, Dr Désveaux noted that French law does not allow for such repatriation and, hence, French museums must seek other solutions such as returning collections to indigenous peoples for a limited period of time (for exhibitions and so on), as the future Musée du Quai Branly plans to do in cooperation with communities in Alaska. The Musée du Quai Branly is also studying the idea of providing space for indigenous peoples to visit and perform rituals in which objects held at the Museum can be used according to the participants' needs and wishes.

Discussions

Comments from the floor described the concept of the museum as totally Western. Participants asked what the indigenous contribution might be in the cases presented. Indigenous people need to tell their own stories. Although the display techniques within the museum context may be Western, the contents should be created in direct collaboration with the indigenous people themselves.

Museums and cultural centres are different kinds of institutions. In the latter case, the museum concept has been changed and adapted to indigenous needs.

Summary

All in all, the sessions that took place during this second part of the Symposium—on the use of new technologies—engendered lively debate, with a key contribution to the debate provided by the indigenous speakers. Points covered may be summed up under five main headings:

1. Participation and dialogue. A number of participants questioned the extent to which indigenous peoples were actively involved in the development of multimedia technologies, and their limited ability to influence production if not involved from the outset. In some cases, it was reported, indigenous community members approached individuals and museums experienced in or holding collections from their own communities. In others, indigenous people felt frustrated that they did not always know where to go or who to contact about such matters, especially when many years had elapsed since the initial contact.

2. Funding and infrastructure. Other indigenous participants raised the point that multimedia and computers are wonderful tools, but only if communities have access to electricity supply for their computers and telephone lines for connection to the Web. Even software programmes can be prohibitively expensive, costing more than six months salary for some communities in South America, for example.
3. Accessibility and language. Anthropologists and museum professionals frequently spent large sums of money, time and effort on developing productions in order to restore cultural material to communities with whom they had worked, or from whom their collections had been derived. It was recognized that no matter how laudable such efforts may be, they will be useless if the material being developed is unusable by the target audience (programmes running in the wrong language or utilizing symbols/patterns that have no local meaning). Cultural specificity, then, is a must. It was noted that some productions work in two local languages.
4. Representation and confidentiality. How do anthropologists and museum workers structure their relationships with funding bodies and superiors? The issues of ethical practices, confidentiality and the potential misuse of personal or confidential information were also raised. The proliferation of untrustworthy Websites has led to an urgent need for reliable gateways.
5. Research protocols. This issue pointed to a key theme: the need for the development and implementation of ethical protocols across different disciplines—and cultural groupings—in order to enhance the indigenous voices and to safeguard cultural material.

6. Conclusions

Mr **John Stanton**, Chair of the Closing Session, congratulated speakers for the quality of their papers and thanked all the participants their contribution to the debates. He then handed over to Mr Mike Barns, who read out the recommendations of the Indigenous Caucus (to be published shortly as an annex to this report), which had met on the fringes of the Symposium sessions.

Ms **Katerina Stenou**, Director of UNESCO's Division of Cultural Policies, highlighted the strong points of four consecutive days of speeches enriched by poetry readings, singing and experience-sharing. She recalled the outstanding, emotion-filled, moments that had created magic of a kind that is all too rare at international symposia (and difficult, if not impossible, to relate). The speakers had shown how absolutely crucial it was to bolster action aimed at safeguarding indigenous cultures, accepting the views of others (with all their differences) and acknowledging the equality of different forms of cultural and scientific expression. Ms Stenou went on to underline the importance of humanity's duty to safeguard memory in the face of the frequently severe damage done to the oral heritage of indigenous cultures.

In conclusion, she stressed that the Symposium had served to establish fruitful dialogue between actors and witnesses; and that UNESCO had a number of lessons to draw from it:

- that so-called "advanced" cultures must remain humble in light of the vast wealth of knowledge and wisdom amassed by indigenous cultures;
- that humanity cannot wholly fulfil its duty to safeguard memory when traditional, oral cultures are threatened with extinction;
- that the new technologies of the twenty-first century, with their power to combine pictures and sound (and, hence, memorize both gestures and storytellers' intonations), paradoxically offer oral traditions the chance of instant revenge for thousands of years of exclusion at the hands of the "all-conquering civilization of written expression". Indeed, computer-based media are restoring indigenous cultures to the level of universal communication.

Mr **Daniel Cadet**, CNRS Director of International Affairs, stressed that the Symposium had helped launch a dialogue, which must continue being developed in tune to the Centre's spirit of partnership. He noted that "we are fortunate on this Earth to have a diversity of cultures" that absolutely have to be protected; and that the new information technologies, notwithstanding the concomitant dangers, are an excellent means of awareness-raising. He stressed that the CNRS was keen to continue carrying out research of benefit to all within the framework of true partnership, where each partner is treated with respect. The best means to achieve this would be to "produce a charter or protocol to be signed by the various actors". Recalling that, in light of past mistakes, science must work together with ethics, he confirmed that the CNRS intended to refer the issues raised in the recommendations to its ethics committee (COMITS); and to talk to partners in other countries so that other research organizations take up those issues as well.

In his closing address, Mr **Mounir Bouchenaki**, UNESCO's Assistant Director-General for Culture, thanked participants on behalf of the Director-General for their contribution and expressed how pleased he was at the quality of the speeches and debates. He underlined the complementary nature of the work of the Symposium and that of the jury involved in the first Proclamation of Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity (an event that took place concomitantly to the Symposium at the Headquarters of UNESCO in Paris), since the safeguarding of the intangible heritage is directly linked with the preservation of cultural identity. These two events have demonstrated the transversal and intersectoral nature of the issue of the intangible heritage within the realms of conceptualization and standard-setting and at operational level alike. The Symposium, for its part, has shown that cultural policies cannot be dissociated from education policies and must regard cultural identity as an ever-evolving, rather than static, phenomenon. Mr Bouchenaki went on to state that indigenous cultures have set UNESCO a new challenge: to take greater account of the fruitfulness of interaction between the world's indigenous and non-indigenous cultures. Indeed, as far as humanity is concerned, indigenous cultures represent an asset for future generations and a potential source of regeneration. Yet they cannot fulfil such a role unless efforts are made in advance to protect them from any attempt to distort their true nature. Such has been the aim of the Symposium (and the Indigenous Book Fair), which represented an illustration of "partnership in action", a founding principle for implementation of the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People. Mr Bouchenaki added that UNESCO's commitment towards—and action on behalf of—the world's indigenous communities must continue beyond implementation of the Decade. He went on to stress that UNESCO advocates a strengthening of ties between indigenous peoples and the scientific community, and predicted a upsurge of cultural energy on the part of indigenous peoples in this new century, thanks to the creative inspiration of their writers and artists together with the work of the researchers tirelessly striving to highlight the importance of their traditions and world-views.

7. Recommendations

Participants recalled that many indigenous cultures have been marked by domestic and international colonization, discrimination and intolerance. Books have been a source of upheaval and cultural recomposition alike. Indigenous forms of expression now figure as part of a new issue-area that brings to the fore the interaction between—and complementary nature of—oral and written expressions, museology and new technologies.

The participants presented UNESCO with guidelines and recommendations in the following areas:

1. Memory, culture and education:

Promote oral tradition as a crucial means of safeguarding and transmitting cultural identity;

Encourage efforts to rewrite the history of communities marked by stereotyping, using reliable sources based on the oral tradition and living memory of elders and relying on the support of the populations concerned;

Encourage national decision-makers to incorporate facts that are respectful of indigenous memory, traditions and cultural values into school curricula and public education-system teaching tools;

Promote, in cooperation with the communities concerned, the implementation of operational projects geared to recording the memory of elders and enabling the revitalization of traditional culture.

2. Indigenous cultures and publishing:

Encourage the formulation of new national editorial policies and the creation of indigenous publishing houses with a view to correcting and enriching available sources on the history and contemporary situation of the populations concerned;

Encourage programmes designed to safeguard endangered languages, together with projects for gathering, transcribing and publishing the traditional myths and fables that constitute the roots of identity, in an effort to fill the cultural and psychological void affecting a large share of the indigenous youth;

Develop a guide on indigenous writers in order to encourage publishing houses to publish their work;

Encourage the participation of indigenous people in the production, safeguarding and circulation of their cultural goods.

3. Teaching of indigenous languages and cultures

Promote quality bilingual or trilingual education and encourage the preparation, in cooperation with indigenous communities, of suitable indigenous-language teaching methods;

Encourage Member States to adopt measures that will help foster mutual respect among indigenous communities through the development of indigenous languages and cultures and the education of dominant groups.

4. Indigenous representation at national and global levels

Promote better representation of indigenous peoples within the UNESCO National Commissions concerned and encourage more systematic participation of those peoples in the Organization's meetings on themes concerning their cultural development.

5. Participation within the framework of museums and new technologies

Facilitate active indigenous participation, dialogue and partnership with museums in the field, *inter alia*, of multimedia and Internet website production.

6. Financing access to modern means of communication

Encourage the decision-makers of the States concerned together with international organizations and the private sector to finance the necessary infrastructure to provide indigenous communities with access to computers and the Internet.

7. Adapting computer-based tools to indigenous cultures and languages

Promote the development of software, databases and multimedia programmes in a technical and cultural language tailored to the needs and priorities of the indigenous groups concerned.

8. Respecting the customary rules of indigenous peoples in research, museums, the media and on the Internet

Raise public awareness of the urgent need to adhere to a professional code of ethics for the dissemination of data and information on indigenous peoples;

Encourage recognition of general ethical principles such as respect for the confidential nature of sacred elements and the right of indigenous people to have elements of their tangible and intangible heritage returned to them, in accordance with the report of the seminar on the draft principles and guidelines for the protection of the heritage of indigenous people (E/CN.4/Sub.2/2000/26, 19 June 2000, United Nations Commission on Human Rights).

9. Adopting an ethical charter for research, publishing and exhibitions

Establish mechanisms and technical meetings between UNESCO, WIPO, research centres such as the CNRS and experts in international law and intellectual property rights (in partnership with indigenous organizations and in a spirit of co-management), with a view to introducing a standard protocol or charter of ethics for research (covering repatriation of data, intellectual property rights, recording and filming conditions, museums, Internet, multimedia, etc.);

Draw up an inventory of the key ethical codes, charters and protocols developed by research centres and indigenous organizations, along the lines of the list produced by the Canberra-based Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS);

Consider the following factors in efforts to establish a standard charter of ethics:

- the need to resolve the urgent issue of publishing digitized films and archives online while respecting the rights of the indigenous peoples concerned (rules

regarding intellectual property, the protection of confidential and sensitive data, etc.);

- the need to develop culture-specific portals in cooperation with indigenous people, museums and national and international research organizations;
- the need to promote cooperation projects with indigenous communities to introduce interdisciplinary data repatriation programmes and develop new technological tools that will be useful to indigenous people (software for indigenous language-learning, establishing genealogies and virtual museums, etc.), while facilitating dialogue geared to safeguarding cultural diversity.

ANNEX

Resolution of the Indigenous Peoples assembled for the International Symposium on "Indigenous Identities: Oral, Written Expressions and New Technologies" jointly organized by UNESCO and CNRS, 15-18 May 2001, Paris (France).

We, the Indigenous Peoples at the Symposium on "Indigenous Identities: Oral, Written Expressions and New Technologies", organized in cooperation with the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (CNRS), congratulate UNESCO's Division of Cultural Policies on its efforts in staging this Symposium.

We would like to propose the following general recommendations for the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO):

1. that UNESCO, in line with, but not limited to the United Nations International Decade of the World's Indigenous People and the United Nations Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People, recognize and reaffirm the special place of Indigenous Peoples in the world and our basic right to self-determination;
2. that UNESCO, in consultation with Indigenous Peoples, create and formulate a formal process of dialogue between UNESCO and Indigenous Peoples;
3. that UNESCO make issues concerning Indigenous People a priority area in all programmes throughout UNESCO before the end of the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People;
4. that UNESCO, together with Indigenous Peoples, establish an International Programme of Action for Indigenous issues to be co-ordinated with other United Nations agencies;
5. that UNESCO take responsibility for mobilizing the necessary funding and resources for these activities;
6. that UNESCO encourage its National Commissions in each relevant country to create an official seat for Indigenous Peoples, and foster Indigenous participation at local level;
7. that UNESCO establish a specific Indigenous Office to co-ordinate all activities relating to Indigenous issues throughout the Organization and its National Commissions, and that this Office report directly to the Director-General of UNESCO;
8. that UNESCO and other scientific agencies such as the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (CNRS) develop and institute specific codes of ethics and principles regarding research on Indigenous organizations that have already developed research protocols and ethics;
9. that UNESCO, when organizing future meetings for Indigenous Peoples, account for the diversity of Indigenous situations and the differing levels of access to technology, infrastructure and resources available to Indigenous Peoples in different countries, and that it inform, with due notice, as many Indigenous Peoples and organizations as possible;
10. that UNESCO, in order to achieve inclusiveness, be encouraged to involve a broader representation of Indigenous Peoples and communities for future UNESCO forums;

11. that UNESCO disseminate widely the above resolutions from this Symposium among Indigenous Peoples and organizations, Member States and UNESCO's partners as soon as possible, and that it include these resolutions in the official Symposium Report.