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**International Symposium-Workshop on Natural dyes
(Hyderabad, India - 5 to 12 November 2006)**

FINAL REPORT

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. Convened at the initiative of UNESCO, in partnership with Crafts Council of India, the International Symposium-Workshop on Natural Dyes took place in the Shilpakala Vedika Conference Centre of Hyderabad (India), from 5 to 10 November 2006. The Symposium was attended by some 700 researchers, artisans, craft promoters and representatives of non-governmental organizations from 57 countries. The list of participants is annexed to this report (UNESCO/CCI/SYMP/2006/INF/3).

2. Numerous registered participants sent apologies for not being able to attend the Symposium for lack of public or private sponsors and looked forward to receiving the conclusions and recommendations.

II. OPENING CEREMONY

3. The official opening of the Symposium was held on Sunday 5 November in the presence of the Hon. Minister of State for Textiles, Government of India, New Delhi, Shri E.V.K. Elangovan, and the Hon. Minister for Tourism of Andhra Pradesh, Dr Mrs Geetha Reddy. The ceremony started with a film projection: "Natural dyes: in search of lost colours" (Maiwa Handprints Ltd.), followed by a video message to the participants from Mrs Françoise Rivière, Assistant Director-General for Culture in UNESCO, inviting them to put their deliberations and proposals for future action in the broad framework of existing international instruments, especially the 2005 Convention on the Protection and the Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions.

4. After the welcome address by Shri Ashok Chatterjee, Honorary President of Crafts Council of India, Mr Indrasen Vencatachellum, UNESCO Chief of Section for Arts, Crafts and Design, presented the main objectives and expected results of the Symposium. In their addresses, the Minister for Tourism of Andhra Pradesh and the Minister of State for Textiles highlighted the significance of this international event for the promotion of sustainable development in general and in particular for the cultural and economic role of natural dyes.

III. STRUCTURE OF THE SYMPOSIUM-WORKSHOP

5. The Symposium-Workshop was structured around the following four components:

- Specialized panels
- Poster presentations
- Demonstration workshops
- Memory of Indigo performance

IV. SPECIALIZED PANELS

6. The oral presentations were grouped in several sessions under two formats:
- each session included one or several longer « lectures » of synthetic prospect, presenting the theme of the session in its present, global context ;
 - these lectures were complemented and illustrated within each session by shorter « papers », presenting as wide a variety of viewpoints and aspects of the theme as possible.

Session 1: Natural dyes today: declines and revivals

7. Dr Dominique Cardon provided an overview of the strategy and contents of the Symposium against a backdrop of the movements between natural and synthetic dyes since the industrial revolution. The growing importance of natural dyes in the context of contemporary concerns (including biodiversity and renewable resources) demanded joint efforts from an international network that could inspire research programmes towards the sustainable production of natural dyes and common global marketing efforts and communication campaigns. Prof. Ji-Hee Kim pointed to the national, regional and global networks that could be harnessed, a theme developed by Dr Casselman's presentation on the Colour Congress 2002 in Iowa which stressed value addition, outreach to artisan communities and the potential of natural dyes as a tourism destination. This rich possibility was demonstrated in Padmini Balaram's exploration of the craft as practiced in the Baatar districts of Central Asia. Mr Eduardo Portillo recalled Venezuela's experience in moving natural dyes from a market niche to much wider access and acceptability. For this exchange, opportunities into research institutions in Europe and North America are essential. Ms Delphine Talbot underlined the need for alternative development models that could permit to use natural colours in an industrial way and to reconsider specific craftworks as the rediscovery of diversity. The consumer movements as well as the fashion industry are mobilized towards their social, cultural and political paradigms.

Session 2: Natural dyes today: a global heritage

8. This session was a global survey of the situation of natural dyes in a wide range of countries and presented different approaches, ranging from historical considerations to a demonstration of the role of an NGO in Bangladesh in reviving indigo and a moving testimony by a painstaking artist in resist printing and indigo dyeing in Norway. This led the ensuing discussion to examine ways to record or encourage traditional dyers.

One of the messages that emerged most clearly from the session was "education" in its broadest sense. The project in Uzbekistan highlighted the way many young people can be reached through textile college education. Could crafts and particularly the art of dyeing with natural colorants be taught in schools? How do we educate the textile industry about the special qualities of natural dyes, and also the general public?

Another general concern was environment, and particularly to ensure that natural dyes are sourced from genuine renewable resources.

Lastly, the discussion extended to the ways to communicate clearly the message on the development of natural dyes and avoid muddled thinking.

Session 3: A global heritage with a social impact: gender and rural development issues

9. This session raised several important questions related to the development of natural dyes and also provided some solutions:

- Environment preservation. From Mali, Kandioura Coulibaly called for respect for earth, while Cheryl Kolander suggested that for an exploited tree, ten others be planted.
- Settling populations in their area, even if it is isolated. Rashmi Barhi and Amy Frey presented the project of their respective NGO (in the North of India and in Central Tibet), both working for promotion, development and diffusion of endangered textile traditions in view of providing a local source of income to the rural population and, particularly, to women.
- Contempt of nationals for their own traditions. Kandioura Coulibaly quoted the case of bogolan, the mud dyeing, in his country Mali, and Carmen Bolaños that of indigo in El Salvador. Their struggle for their valorization of traditions is similar.
- Scarcity of development programmes to preserve traditional techniques, especially those related to the use of natural dyes. Edric Ong proposed the inscription of certain exceptional textile traditions, which transmit know-how and essential cultural values, on the list of Intangible Heritage of Humanity.
- Ethical problems concerning the real estate of craftspeople vis-a-vis financial consortia. Cheryl Kolander moved the assistance by telling the expulsion from their land of the Caribbean families gathered by Nicolas Perez Brito around the Logwood project in the Dominican Republic.
- Importance of teaching and particularly youth training. Riika Raisanen brilliantly showed the multiple benefits of a pedagogical project which chose natural dyes as the common theme for teaching the different scientific and technical disciplines in a school of Helsinki's suburbs (Finland).
- Need for know-how to benefit from the impulse of persons who act as go-between to allow the combination of efforts and experience exchanges. Adriana Buitrago Pardo presented the Ytachoque Foundation which fights for the promotion of natural dyes in Colombia.
- Urgency to establish an international charter for the protection and promotion of natural dyes. Liz Williamson, Australian artist and art teacher, described some articles she suggests to include in this Charter.
- Links existing between the dynamism of natural dyeing traditions and contemporary creation. Liz Williamson made the demonstration for Australia.

Session 4: Sustainability and eco-friendliness of natural dyes

10. The fourth session, like the previous one, was unforgettable, and often very moving. They both highlighted the challenge of combining what could be called the “spiritual” quality of our work with the analytical, the irrational with the rational. The message was: whatever we do, must be dominated by our reverence for life, in all its forms.

Grace Guirola de Seassal from El Salvador gave an excellent account of the environment and philosophical challenges facing someone starting a small indigo production unit. Shalini Sahoo gave a sensitive account of her work among the tribes of North East India. One small extract from her talk summarises her feelings towards these wonderful peoples. *“I became friendly with Ja, a 79-year old grandmother dyer. In her little garden, she kept moving from one plant to another, making sure she never took too much from one. She repeatedly told me not to pull the plants too hard while cutting. Her special relationship with plants keeps coming back to me”*. Shalini’s “Ethical Manifesto” is a valuable contribution to the debate about standards. Elina Herinivonirina spoke of the traumas faced by dyers in Madagascar about the unchecked exploitation of the environment influenced by the “developed” countries.

On what might be called the “rational” side of the debate, Assistant Professor Pajaera Patanthabutr from Thailand introduced us to some excellent research into the improvement of dyeing practices connected with natural dyes, particularly concerning the reduced use of mordants to eliminate the problems of heavy metals, while India Flint gave a clear summary of her work in Australia with a range of alternative mordants, with particular reference to eucalyptus dyes.

Session 5: Scientific and technical advances

11. “Spindigo”, a research project on the production of natural indigo in Europe, conducted in five different countries and sponsored by the European Union, has developed methods to purify the product and to minimize the losses during the production process. These methods could be used in other indigo producing countries by modifying the procedures.

Using of enzymes and ultrasonic dyeing is a new method that was presented which makes the dyeing process more effective without high costs.

New sources of natural dyestuffs produced from different bacteria and fungi are now made available and can enlarge the range and spectrum of natural dyes for different fibres. In addition, a process has been presented whereby plant colorants that are not water soluble are solubilized in other solvents and made available for dyeing textiles.

Another scientific and technical advance is in the discovery of new natural dyestuffs and their application to less common textile fibres.

Session 6: From the past to the future of natural dyes: the contribution of archaeological and anthropological research

12. This session was dedicated to the contribution of the social sciences to our knowledge of natural dyes materials and techniques and the additions that scientific research has made in this area. Speakers came from around the world, from South America to China.

The key message coming from this session was the interconnection that exists between all aspects of research and development concerning natural dyes.

Mabel Ladaga and Verónica Marchant stressed the collaborative nature of their research in Argentina and Chile which highlighted the interrelationships that had existed between the two different regions they studied and the high occurrence of common skills, allowing for exchange of ideas and knowledge.

Ana Roquero Caparros stressed the important role of the artisans themselves in protecting and passing on their knowledge, promoting their national and international recognition as “living treasures”!

In his paper on “The Myth of Indigo, a vanished ethno plant industry”, Dr Jui-Tseng Lee emphasized the importance of communication to the general public and within the indigo dyeing community, which were his aims for forming the Association of Indigo Dyers in Taiwan.

The conclusion is that we need continuing on-going multi-disciplinary research into natural dyes with transparent, open communication between all key players, plus support groups.

Session 7: Economic development and marketing of natural dyes – case studies

13. In a world saturated with synthetic colour, it is imperative that natural dyes remain economically viable. If we are realistic in our assessment of natural dyes, we understand that they cannot replace synthetic dyes, but they must remain as a vibrant alternative. There is a connection between natural colour and its source that simply does not exist with a synthetic colour. There is an intimate connection to the plants, animals and earth that give us colour. This inheritance is the wealth of all of our art, craft and traditional design.

How can trading practices engage the public and create the economic climate necessary for natural dyes and textiles to flourish? How can the colours of the earth remain in the minds and understanding of the public? For example, Eber Lopes Ferreira talked about the very interesting Coexis Project in Brazil while Kazuki Yamazaki spoke about *kusaki-zome* (the art of plant dyes) and the long tradition and deep appreciation of natural dyes in Japan. Stefano Panconesi spoke about current and emerging trends in natural dyes and textiles in Italy and Europe. Noorjehan Bilgrami shared her experience in Pakistan in continuously finding markets for natural dyes through exquisitely designing products to showcase the colour.

Session 8: Synergies for the development of natural dyes: the role of governments, NGOs, producers, consumers

14. In this session were highlighted the importance of:
- the role of governments in making action plans for the promotion of natural dyes (example of Madagascar), issuing regulations for the protection of dye plants, both for their collection and exportation;
 - the value chain and fair-trade;
 - the improvement of the cultivation of major dye plants which appears in some countries as a way to diversify crops (by mechanization, varietal selection, improvement of extraction processes);
 - developing educational tools for schools and for communication with the public to further knowledge on natural dyes including information on the health issues.

Some technical and methodological problems faced both by NGOs and marketers were pointed to:

- diminution of the use of metallic mordants,
- research of adapted policies to ensure the sustainability of natural dyestuffs,
- the need to conciliate the concerns about cultural preservation and technological advances in order – as one of the speakers put it “to transform weavers into technologists”,
- and to favour improvement of technologies

The most important needs expressed were: the protection of plant accession and of systematic cropping, the establishment of a network for all NGOs and bodies involved in certification and standardisation so far to work towards possibly a common seal in a spirit of cooperation and not of competition. The conclusion was to develop a “contemporary eye” for natural dyes and join as one voice to promote them.

V. POSTER PRESENTATIONS

15. 34 posters were presented. The late cancellations were more than compensated by late propositions which could be accepted since stands had been prepared in anticipation of such cases.

The oral presentations of the posters by their authors were divided into four groups following the order in the list, one quarter of the authors presenting their poster each of the afternoons.

The limited number of visitors for each session, due to the simultaneous presentations of the dye-workshops in Shilparamam Park, allowed long, fruitful exchanges in a quiet place between the authors themselves and with the visitors.

Very important topics were debated, connected with the topics of the posters as well as with the questions raised during the morning sessions of the symposium, as an extension of the resulting discussions. The presentations of the posters were of a very high standard generally, including outstanding examples of artistic creation.

VI. DEMONSTRATION WORKSHOPS

16. The dyeing demonstrations were grouped in four themes:
- Theme I – Indigo dyes: indigo around the world – Shellfish purple
 - Theme II – Red insect dyes
 - Theme III – Blacks and browns
 - Theme IV – Natural dyes in textile decoration techniques: tradition and innovation
 - Theme V – Natural dyes on unusual or precious fibres

The programme had been prepared by Mrs Dominique Cardon in collaboration with the Association Dastkar Andhra which, in concertation with the Crafts Council of India, selected Indian craft dyers to illustrate the different themes.

The installations prove perfectly adapted and convenient. Each dyer had the efficient and friendly help of volunteers from Dastkar Andhra and students, who reciprocally, benefited greatly from the dyeing demonstrations presented by foreign crafts dyers they could not easily have met, and learnt from, in other circumstances. The number of visitors each afternoon during three hours was considerable and the interest often rose to enthusiasm: demonstrations of bogolan from Mali, for example, had to be repeated for one extra session on a morning. Another addition was provided by a Naga dyer from North East India who demonstrated three dyes from his region.

Circulation between the sites allowed access to all demonstrations, and proximity in the groups surrounding each site, encouraged questions and discussions with the dyers and between on-lookers. A question-and-answer session had to be organized at the end of the afternoons to allow all questions to be answered. During an improvised session of discussion between Dastkar Andhra's workers, students and Mrs Cardon, it appeared that this series of workshops had awakened great interest and inspired vocations among students and young designers. The exchanges between dyers from different countries were also very fruitful, since there were both overall similarities and significant differences in the practice of the main dyeing techniques presented.

The friendly atmosphere prevailing ensured a generous, complete sharing of knowledge by dyers, which may prove a source of technical progress for participants. For instance, the series of indigo vats proved of great interest and usefulness for the dyers from Madagascar, where techniques of dyeing with natural indigo have not been preserved in some parts of the country. Their contacts with the indigo dyers provided them with recipes and advice for reviving indigo dyeing in simple conditions.

As expected, this was the privileged moment of practical discussions, leading to projects of collaboration.

VII. “MEMORY OF INDIGO” PERFORMANCES

17. The spectacular show created by Mr Nasser Soumi, well-known artist from Palestine, visualized his image of the origin and emergence of indigo. Each evening culminated with a performance inspired by the activities of the day. Directed by the two choreographers Luigia Riva and Anita Ratnam, the dancers enchanted the audience with this very original performance. The group of musicians “Sounds of Isha” whose unique musical notes created openness and receptivity to the spiritual process greatly participated to the fascination of the public. The songs created instinctively were a blend from many countries and idioms.

VIII. RECOMMENDATIONS

18. The participants examined the major recommendations which emerge from the discussions after each session, as well as the exchange of experiences at the workshops. These recommendations constitute a Plan of Action, in the short and medium term as follows:

(a) Short-term measures

- In order to develop a system of continuous flow of information on the state of natural dyes and exchanges between producers and users, it is recommended:
 - i. that a network of existing/future websites at local, national and regional level be established. This network will be managed by a system of access reserved to contributors, on the model of “Wikipedia” for example;
 - ii. information on available materials;
 - iii. that an International Federation of Natural Colorants Organizations be set up.
- Considering the imperative need to ensure that natural dyes remain economically viable it is recommended to expand the market of consumers by the position to other fields of activity, such as cosmetics, food, paints, which can even exceed the demand from the textiles sector.
- To avoid that important international companies copyright for their sole benefit the wild tinctorial plants used for dyeing by a specific community, which has unfortunately been done for medicinal plants, it is recommended that the necessary protection mechanism be established at the national level.

(b) Medium-term measures

- In the framework of agricultural diversification and protection of bio-diversity, it is recommended that studies be undertaken:
 - i. on the selection of plants that can shift from collecting to cultivating (for example, on the model of “Couleurs de plantes” in France);
 - ii. on the management of available natural resources at national level.

- In order to satisfy the needs of the craft sector – considering the close links between ecological education and natural dye use and fibre selection, it is recommended that courses on environment awareness based on dyeing with natural materials be introduced in the school programmes.
- In order to ensure the proper promotion of natural dyed products on the national and international markets, it is recommended that a system of eco-labels or certification be established, such as the Seal of Excellence promoted by UNESCO.

IX. CLOSING CEREMONY

19. The participants met for the very last session of the Symposium on Friday 10 November, in the afternoon, for the adoption of the Draft Report and Recommendations of the meeting. After a short presentation by Mr Indrasen Vencatachellum (UNESCO), Dr Dominique Cardon read the report which has been followed by a lively discussion between the participants and a series of questions/answers. The Recommendations were also adopted.

20. The moving moment of this session was brought by the vote of thanks on behalf of the participants. Mr Fausto Contreras Lazo and Ms Claudine Randriambololona took the floor to read a very cordial message of thanks to the organizers of the event.

21. In pledge of thank and recognition for their valuable contribution to the implementation of this event, Mr Vencatachellum remitted UNESCO Medals to Mr Ashoke Chatterjee, Mrs Dominique Cardon and Mr Nasser Soumi.

22. The official closing ceremony was held in the presence of Mrs Renuka Choudhary, Hon. Union Minister for Women and Child Welfare. In his welcome address, Mr Ashoke Chaterjee, as President of the Symposium, presented the results of the meeting. He was followed by Mr Indrasen Vencatachellum, who, on behalf of UNESCO, expressed his satisfaction for the excellent running of this event and his gratitude to the partners who cooperated in the achievement of this meeting and to all the participants who came from all around the world to make the success of this event. In her valedictory address, Mrs Renuka Choudhary stressed on the importance of children and women's role in building the future. Her vivid message aroused the interest and enthusiasm of the assistance. Mrs Vijaya Rajan and Mrs Vijaya Lakshumi Prabhakar took the floor on behalf of Crafts Council of India for the closing address and a vote of thanks to all the partners and sponsors who collaborated in the implementation of the Symposium-Workshop.