A- Name of Country: - Sultanate of Oman.
B- Date of ratification: - 16th March 2007.
D- Total contribute to the fund: - $ 10000.
E- Bodies or Organizations responsible for preparation of the report: - Ministry of Heritage and Culture.
F- Official contact point: - Ministry of Heritage and Culture
G- Date of report: 30-4-2012
H- Name of the official signatory of the report, Saeed bin Sultan Al Busaidi, Director of Folklore Department - Telephone: 096824641610, E-mail: omanfolk@mhc.gov.om
I- Consultation process on writing the report: - the Sultanate set up a working group to prepare the report. The information has been collected as per the report's conditions through the relevant cultural institutions. A number of websites and printed sources have been also used for getting data that are more detailed. The report was made available to the governmental and civil bodies and institutions, researchers, intellectuals and concerned parties.
**Report's summary:**

On an is looking through this report to highlight the role it plays in activating the International Convention for the protection and promotion of cultural expressions in order to enhance the cultural diversity in the country. The report shows a number of measures, which have been taken by the Omani government for the protection of cultural diversity. Some events were held by the government at the local level designed to raise awareness of the importance of the protecting of cultural diversity. The report also includes the efforts of Oman at the international level through its call for a world tolerant and respectful of concerted cultural and civilization diversity. The Sultanate has many efforts to give effect to this aspect at the global level.

The report also indicates the awareness-raising efforts of the government for the protection and promotion of cultural expressions at the individual and society level. Some observations are mentioned, which will form the stages and steps of action in the next phase.

And away from the narrative construction, the report came in the form of specific points plus the list of the governmental and civil institutions that are related to this kind of work through the moves made by these institutions, in addition to the list of references and resources that were consulted through the report.

**Introduction:**

The Sultanate of Oman represents one of the countries which were the cradle of many civilizations of the world. This is reflected on the cultural and biological diversity of the Omani civilization and the literature production of that had an impact and adds value to human civilization in general. The Omanis played a prominent role in the dissemination of Arab and Islamic civilization in different parts of the world through their ships that traveled the east and west of the world. The tolerance and open-minded thoughts helped in strengthening the bonds of love between them and the nations and civilizations in which they set the sails of their ship. The Omanis also contributed to the Arab and Islamic intellectual and literary knowledge. Omani books can be found in the sciences of jurisprudence, literature, nature and history.
The nature, geographical environment and the coastal stretch of the Sultanate created a kind of cultural diversity resulted in overlapping of the desert, rural and mountainous environments. This merger created homogeneity between these environments, which had a good impact in the cultural diversity of the Sultanate of Oman.

The modern Omani Renaissance becomes known in 1970, was able to accommodate and provide a fertile environment for the different thoughts, values and tradition of the Omani society. The Sultanate managed to deal positively with the various foreign communities present in its territory and gave freedom to practice religions and cultural customs in line with the culture of the country.

**Measures:**

The Sultanate at all the time respects the different customs and traditions of the Omani society with its various sects and trends. The government's objectives and plans are focused in giving total opportunity for all community members to freely express their views and attitudes and guaranteed them the right to maintain their cultural identity and expression.

The Sultanate seeks to be a point of contact for different countries of the world through by taking a number of measures and holding conferences and activities. This is clearly demonstrated through the following points:

- **The local level**

  - The Sultanate has worked to involve various segments of society in its annual plans. The five-year development programs and projects aim at Omani people in their places of residence in the plain and the mountain. This helped the people to maintain their culture emanating from the environment where the customs were born.

  - The Sultanate adopted the principle of "opportunity for all" in various events and activities. The Annual Muscat Festival holds a competition dedicated to each State to allow it to present its different performs, arts, customs and traditions of different.
- In the State Basic Law, which was issued in 1996, it gives the right for all people to express their views, ideas and provides a respect for different races and lineages, and all citizens are equal before the law.

- Different environments are represented equally in all occasions; we find the Bedouins, marine and rural environments with all their details producing a harmony of cultures that maintains the Omani identity.

- Cultural diversity in Oman can be witnessed in the dialects, races and origins of the society; in return, the government was able to absorb it all in one place. There are many cultural practices preformed with local dialects in an efficient manner and freedom.

- The Omani government works through the Ministry of Heritage and Culture to organize a theater competition, which witnesses a large and wide participation from the theater groups and various sectors of the society. This festival provides an opportunity for the players to present their creativity and to highlight the cultural elements of each group or actor.

- The Ministry of Awqaf and Religious Affairs publishes a magazine titled “Understanding” in order to deepen the tolerance among the people of the society and promote the dialogue between different religions and jurisprudence doctrines of the world. The Ministry also holds a seminar on the development of the sciences of Jurisprudence where a number of scholars and thinkers deliver worksheets to stand on the various aspects of the intellectuals and believes of the Islamic religion.

- The Omani government gives the opportunity to the art works production institutes, through the art permits, to produce art works, whether documentary or dramatic. The number of institutions of the artistic production in the Sultanate has reached 115.

- The Sultan Qaboos University is one of the main supporters of Oman's cultural diversity as many programs and events held in the field of poetry, stories in addition to the university theater.

- The Omani craft innovation is specially supported by the Public Authority for Craft Industries. It offers many kinds of support for the creative craftsmanship providing an opportunity for craftsmen to market
their products at the local and international levels as well as protecting the creative crafts through implementing laws and regulations that guarantee the craftsmen their literary and intellectual rights.

- The Omani government attaches a great importance to the scientific research as the core of the progress of civilizations and nations. The Omani researches gain a special support from the Scientific Research Council as it adopts the forwarded researches presented and provides the financial and technical aids for researchers.

- The civil associations are partner with the government in the implementation of its plans and programs. The law in Oman allows formation of civil associations that have clear objectives and programs. The Sultanate looks at these associations as the primary engine of government action and a good partner through the programs and events offered by the associations. The associations enjoy financial and administrative independence.

- The Sultanate’s government has paid great importance to education at all levels and stages. Schools in various regions and villages of the country were established and the public and private universities that include all academic disciplines were opened.

- The Sultanate issued several laws and regulations that serve the intellectual creativity and contribute to the promotion of cultural creation as the publications and printings law and intellectual property law. The Sultanate also encourages the young Omani writers to produce their works through the Omani writers support programs.

- Respecting for the diversity of arts and musical creativity, a number of music bands and folk lore groups can be found in different regions of the Sultanate. The bands are civil entities formed by the local community in order to maintain their art and musical inheritance that is presented to the world. The number of folk groups reached 202, while the number of bands is 54 at the time when the report is produced.
- **The international level:**
  - Respecting the culture and intellectual diversity is one of the most important pillars of Omani culture. It is the essence of the Sultanate’s policy in its relations with the outside community. The Sultanate calls in various international events to respect cultural diversity and human creativity. Thus, it was one of the leading countries to host the international activities. The initiatives of the Sultanate can be summarized in the following points:

  - The Royal Oprah House has been opened in Muscat, and through this entity the Sultanate works to host a number of international musical bands in order to reflect the message of the House, which is to spread the musical culture through hosting those bands. Many international teams participated in performing their music, including teams from China, the United States of America and Italy as well as to Arab countries like Egypt, Lebanon and Syria.

  - The Royal orchestra symphony is strongly driven and taken care by HM the Sultan Qaboos bin Said. It preformed its concerts with a number of international music artists. It also appeared in many countries of the world such as the UAE.

  - Assuring and crowing the message of love and peace, the Sultanate participates in different world commercial, tourist and cultural exhibitions. It seeks to spread out and exchange the Sultanate’s culture with the other countries’ cultures confirming the respect of the Sultanate to the cultural diversity and mutual dialogue.

  - The Sultanate, through the Omani government, organizes the annual Muscat International Book Fair. International publishing houses participate to present in a freedom and transparency a mosphere their intellectual and literary issues. On the sidelines of the exhibition, a
number of lectures and seminars are held that discuss the cultural and intellectual aspects.

- In 2011, the International Conference on Education for Sustainable Development was held in the Sultanate to support the cultural and biological diversity. The conference witnessed a large participation from different countries of the world, as well as the international organizations. The most important objectives of conference: how to overcome the issues arising between cultures in order to improve the cultural and biological diversity and raise awareness among the various sectors of the community with the strategies and methodologies designed to respect the cultural and biological diversity. A number of global experts attended the conference and it concluded with important recommendations that left a sound effect in raising the international and local awareness for the cultural and biological diversity.

Awareness:

In an implementation of the International Convention for the Protection and Promotion of Cultural Expressions, the Omani government represented by different relevant governmental institutes, has taken a number of actions to raise awareness of this aspect and involve the civil society through giving importance to maintain the cultural diversity principals. These actions can be summarized in the following points:

- Giving the civil associations the opportunity to participate in various local events and occasions such as the theater and folklore groups festivals in addition to the Omani Song Festival.
- Preparing a number of workshops and organizing conferences that are specially designed to simplify the concept of cultural diversity and explain its aspects to the concerned parties in different governmental institutions, which are related to cultural affairs in the country. A conference is being organized this year to look at the cultural diversity and the actions should be taken to protect and understand it.
- Taking into account the cultural diversity in the development plans of the Sultanate in order to preserve the local culture of the society.
- Exploiting the educational curricula, whether during the primary stages or higher education, to promote the concept of cultural diversity to young people in the Omani society. The government is keen to include educational materials in the curricula that deal with various local and international cultures besides initiating several and practical study activities at universities and schools.

- A number of media programs are broadcasted of which their subjects are derived from the culture of the Omani society. Opportunities are also given to individuals and groups with large spaces in media to present and express their views and impressions in a freedom and transparency way.

- The Omani artists have a full support provided by the Omani government. It contributes to provide all necessary materials and facilities to prepare the artists’ dramas and media programs. It also supports this field by the producing the works of the Omani singers. On the other side, the painting and story sphere is continuously helped to give the chance for the artists and photographers to appear at the local and international levels.

- The Ministry of Heritage and Culture organizes an annual project aimed at collecting and documenting various cultural oral expressions of different regions of the Sultanate. All this is collected and documented in a scientific methodology. The outcome is made accessible for students and researchers besides issuing series of books on the project.

- The Omani government is seeking through religious speeches and publications to spread the spirit of cultural understanding and tolerance between different groups of the society to ensure the freedom of expressions and speech of individuals and communities in accordance with the Islamic principles that call for respecting the cultural diversity.

- In the context of maintaining the expression of cultural and musical creativity, the Ministry of Heritage and Culture works to produce musical CDs containing a collection of the Omani society’s arts in order to preserve the cultural identity of these arts.

The Difficulties facing the cultural diversity:

- Efforts of the governmental institutes of the Sultanate made in promoting and protecting the cultural diversity can be obviously seen and noticed. It is believed that the Sultanate has passed long way in this field, a part from that all programs and planning processes of the Sultanate take into account the protection of cultural expressions of the Omani society in a way that guarantees the individual and society freedom of speech.
However, as a general assessment, few observations can be summarized that represent goals which should be avoided in the near future:

- The rural communities are slightly unconscious of the importance of preserving cultural diversity.
- The need to increase the scientific publications which will contribute to introduce the society to the aspects relating to the International Convention for the Protection of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions.
- Establishing laws and regulations help to protect the intellectual and cultural environments of the communities.
- Working to rehabilitate cadres and enhance capabilities of workers in the cultural sector to the level that meets the needs of this field.
Authorities and Institutions concerned with the cultural work in the Sultanate

1- Ministry of Heritage and Culture
   P.O Box: 668, P. C: 100

2- Ministry of Information
   P.O Box: 600, P. C: 100

3- Ministry of Social Development
   P.O Box: 560, P.C.: 100

4- The Ministry of Tourism
   P.O Box: 200, P.C: 115

5- Public Authority for Craft Industries
   P.O Box: 818, P.C: 130

6- Scientific Research Council
   P.O Box: 1422, P.C: 130

7- Sultan Qaboos Center of Islamic Culture
   P.O Box: 3066, P. C112

8- Sultan Qaboos University
   P.O Box:500, P.C123

9- Ministry of Education
   P.O Box: , P.C:100

10- Ministry of Awqaf and Religious Affairs
   P.O Box:3232, P.C112

11- Diwan of Royal Court
   P.O Box: 632, P.C:100

12- Cultural Club
   P.O Box: 3954, P.C:112
References:
- Ministry of Awqaf and Religious Affairs, Tafidhoom magazine
- Nil Ritchardson and Marshidolar, the Omani Traditional Crafts, Ministry of Heritage and Culture, Motivate Press, 2011.

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