**Subject: Questionnaire by the Special Rapporteusse for Cultural Rights Ms. Karima Bennoune**

Of vital importance for the Cultural Services of the Ministry of Education and Culture, is the protection of the cultural heritage of the island, since Cyprus had the misfortune of experiencing the destruction of its cultural heritage on account of hostile operations.

Apart from ancient monuments, antiquities and religious monuments, there are libraries, archives, historical manuscripts and maps, as well as works of contemporary visual arts which also belong in the domain of the cultural heritage of the recent past, the fate of which remains unknown. The Kyrenia Museum of Folk Art, the Municipal Library and the Municipal Art Gallery of Famagusta, as well as the well known Marangos Library of Famagusta and also the Armenian Monastery situated on the range of Pentadaktylos on the north coast of Cyprus-a pilgrimage of the Armenian community of the island-are only a few examples.

Unfortunately, one cannot estimate the extent of the losses with accuracy, as no records exist. The cultural heritage of a country does not of course consist only of antiquities or of material culture in general. It also includes the entire spiritual creation, the legends, virtues, ideas and ideologies of its people, which spring from the national roots of its entire population and are in harmony with their identities and traditions. All these tell personal stories and carry social memories and cannot be stolen or auctioned. In support of the latter, the Cultural Services of the Ministry of Education and Culture have proceeded in the publication of the following two editions: “Short Stories by Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots: A Bilingual Anthology” (2013) and “The Turkish-Cypriot Dress” (2012).

The Cyprus National Commission for UNESCO promotes the implementation of the cultural conventions of UNESCO ratified by Cyprus, especially those that concern the protection of World Cultural Natural Heritage (1972), Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003) and the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (2005) in cooperation with the Department of Antiquities, the Cultural Services of the Ministry of Education and Culture and other entities, the objects of which are in accord with the principles of the Conventions.

In recent years, the Commission has been actively participating in the protection of Intangible Cultural Heritage, both by attending regional and international meetings of UNESCO and implementing targeted actions on a national level, particularly for the promotion of the three elements that Cyprus has inscribed on the Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage: the Lefkara embroidery (2009), tsiattista poetic dueling (2011) and the Mediterranean Diet (2013).