



PRESS RELEASE

In a diplomatic triumph for India, the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage has **inscribed Yoga in UNESCO's Representative List as the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.**

This Declaration of Yoga as a "Human Treasure" enjoyed the **unanimous support of the 24 member Intergovernmental Committee** which overturned the decision of an Evaluation Body of technical experts, seeking to defer the case to the next session of the Committee in 2017.

The 23 members of the Intergovernmental Committee who have supported India's nomination are: Austria, Cyprus, Turkey, Armenia, Bulgaria, Hungary, Colombia, Cuba, Guatemala, Saint Lucia, Afghanistan, Mongolia, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Mauritius, Senegal, Zambia, Algeria, Lebanon and Palestine. **Mauritius** had initiated the amended Decision seeking to inscribe Yoga in UNESCO's Representative List (India is the 24th member of the Committee).

The inscription and classification as a 'human treasure' brings immense recognition to Yoga, clearing as it has rigorous criteria set out by UNESCO, the only UN body mandated to capture the intangible aspects of culture. It emphasizes Yoga's role as a social practice, an oral tradition and a system of ancient and scientific knowledge facilitating an enhanced harmony and peace across caste, creed, gender, age and nationality. Additionally, the inscription enables a bottoms-up empowerment, as it directs the spotlight towards the numerous institutions and communities in India disseminating this ancient tradition. As well, it can potentially foment a dialogue on the ideas of peace and tolerance, how these can be extended to meet the goals of sustainable development and where India can play a leading role in this global dialogue on intercultural relations.

The Indian Delegation to Addis Ababa was led by Ruchira Kamboj, India's Permanent Representative to UNESCO. This 12th element of India's to be inscribed on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity since its inception in 2008 comes with the prestigious branding and logo of UNESCO for use at various participatory yoga activities led by the country.

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