

## Qhapaq Ñan: Indigenous Peoples' Heritage as an Instrument of Inter-American Integration Policy\*

### Qhapaq Ñan: patrimonio de los pueblos indígenas como instrumento de la política de integración interamericana

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#### ABSTRACT

*The article aims to present short review over the relations between the countries of South America regarding the policy of protection and safeguard of one of the most exceptional elements of cultural heritage of the indigenous peoples, represented by the pre-Columbian Andean Road System – Qhapaq Ñan. The first part describes the road network and its meaning for the inhabitants of the Andean region from pre-Columbian to modern times. Further section presents the process of the nomination and declaration of Qhapaq Ñan as a symbol of the World Cultural Heritage by UNESCO (2001–2014). The nomination was possible thanks to the effort of the representatives of six countries linked nowadays by the Trail: Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia, Chile and Argentina, and in official discourse on regional and international level was presented in terms of pan-Andean integration and cooperation (via structures of the Andean Community of Nations, OAS or CONSUR). The last*

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*part of the article offers some reflections about current condition of cultural politics and the process of implementation of the indigenous peoples' rights regarding the right to participation and the management of their cultural heritage.*

**KEYWORDS:** *indigenous peoples, cultural politics, integration policy, heritage, Qhapaq Ñan.*

### RESUMEN

*El objetivo del artículo es presentar las relaciones entre los países de América del Sur en cuanto a la política de la protección y salvaguarda de uno de los elementos más excepcionales del patrimonio cultural de los pueblos indígenas de la región, representado por el Sistema Vial Andino – Qhapaq Ñan. La primera parte describe el sistema de las rutas precolombinas y su significado para los habitantes de la región andina desde tiempos prehispánicos hasta los tiempos modernos. Las partes siguientes presentan el proceso de la nominación y la declaración de Qhapaq Ñan como el símbolo del Patrimonio Cultural Mundial por la UNESCO (2001–2014). La nominación fue posible gracias al esfuerzo de los representantes de los seis países vinculados actualmente por el Sistema Vial: Colombia, Ecuador, Perú, Bolivia, Chile y Argentina, y se presentó en términos de la integración y la cooperación interregional (a través de las estructuras de la Comunidad Andina de Naciones, OEA o CONSUR). La última parte del artículo presenta algunas reflexiones sobre el estado actual de la política cultural y el proceso de implementación de los derechos de los pueblos indígenas en relación con el derecho a la participación y la gestión de su patrimonio cultural.*

**PALABRAS CLAVE:** *pueblos indígenas, política cultural, integración, patrimonio, Qhapaq Ñan.*

## Introduction

At the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, for the first time in the history of the World Heritage Convention (1972), six countries agreed to present a joint proposal for the nomination of a shared cultural property on the UNESCO World Heritage List. Thanks to the initiative taken by Peru in 2001, to which in the following years joined Colombia, Ecuador, Bolivia, Chile and Argentina, a system of roads connecting Andean region in the pre-Hispanic times – *Qhapaq Ñan* was inscribed on the List in 2014<sup>1</sup>. The *Qhapaq Ñan* nomination has become an instrument serving to safeguard and protect cultural achievements inherited af-

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<sup>1</sup> In the history of the UNESCO Convention, 37 properties represent the cross-border areas: 16 refer to natural heritage; 2 are of mixed character, and 19 are properties of cultural heritage. Of the latter, apart from *Qhapaq Ñan*, the List also includes a chain of Jesuit missions founded in the colonial period on the territory of the Guarani and Guaycuru tribes (borderland of the present-day Argentine – Brazil – Paraguay).

ter several hundred years of dynamic interactions between many communities living in the vicinity of the Route. Recognition of the so-called “Inca Trail” as a symbol of Cultural Heritage was based not only on the criteria of its authenticity and uniqueness. In the process leading to the UNESCO nomination, attention was also paid to the associated value of symbolic re-integration as a basis for international cooperation and concerted action to protect the cultural heritage of indigenous peoples of the region. The aim of the article is to present these activities and indicate the main concepts of integration and cooperation between state-parties, based on international standards of cultural policy and protection of cultural rights of indigenous peoples. The use of cultural heritage in political discourse has been a theme of research in the field of interdisciplinary heritage studies for several decades (e.g., issues of patrimonialization, politicization of heritage, social use of culture heritage, human rights and heritage). In studies related to integration and international relations, however, this issue is still relatively new. Integration processes in Latin America are based primarily on economic relations, free trade agreements, infrastructure integration, harmonization of economic and financial legislation, or security problems (Dobrzycki 2000, Gawrycki 2007). The nomination process that led to the inclusion of *Qhapaq Ñan* as part of the World Cultural Heritage can be thus regarded in a broader context of *heritage diplomacy* (Winter 2015, see also: Castellanos 2010). It is an interesting example of official political discourse in which as a platform of communication and basis for cooperation and integration initiatives (beyond political divisions or economic rivalry) was used the notion of the common indigenous cultural heritage of the Andean region.

## ***Qhapaq Ñan* as a symbol of the Andean Heritage**

*Qhapaq Ñan*, also known as *Camino Principal Andino*, in Quechua means “Royal Route”<sup>2</sup>. It is an extensive communication, commercial and defensive network of roads and related infrastructure, which was the result of a political project of integration of the entire Andean area implemented by the Inca in the second half of the 15<sup>th</sup> century. It aimed to connect urban centers, production and trade structures and places of worship within a pan-regional economic, social and cultural system.

The initial stages of the roads included in the *Qhapaq Ñan* system are, however, far ahead of the expansion of the Incas and the construction of their

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<sup>2</sup> The name comes from the words in Quechua: *Qhapaq*, which means “principal”, “master” or “mighty, rich, holy” and *Ñan*, which means “road, path, trail” (Hornberger, Hornberger 2013: 66, 88). This term can be found in the works of travellers and scholars who traversed the Andean trails and described the system of roads, including Alexander Von Humboldt, Ephraim George Squier, Antonio Raimondi, Clements Markham in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and Julio C. Tello, Tom Zuidema, Victor Von Hagen, Alberto Regal, Anne Marie Hocquenghem, John Hyslop and John Murra in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

powerful pan-regional state. As archaeological researches indicate, some parts of the Inca *Qhapaq Ñan* were built over more ancient roads dated even for several centuries before Christ. The Incas managed to enlarge the system in less than a century: the “Inca Trail”, built and extended over the centuries, reached its maximum range at the time of the expansion and dominance of the Inca state Tawantinsuyu (1440–1532). Undoubtedly, the extensive communication network was one of those achievements that enabled the Inca to enlarge territorial and efficient state organization. Previous routes and structures were used to expand the infrastructure related to the state economic system, transport of goods and control of human resources. The subsequent fragments of the routes were adapted to the topography and climate, from the high mountains of the Andes to the plains of the coastal region, giving a picture of the excellent skills of pre-Hispanic engineers and the usage of complex geography of the entire region. The roads crossed deserts, swamps, agricultural lands, ran through the length of steep slopes and mountain valleys, led through the snow-capped Andes mountain ranges and tropical rain forests. The main eastern route took a high part through the *puna* and the mountain valleys from Quito to Mendoza. The second main artery ran along the coastal plain. The main routes were connected by a network of intersecting trails of a lower rank, leading to places important from the economic, commercial or strategic reasons. The roads were also used during pilgrimages to the main ceremonial centers and *huacas* (holy places and structures) located both in the central Andes and in the coastal valleys. The most important routes coincided at one point: at *Haukaypata* Square (now *Plaza de Armas*) in Cusco, the political, economic and cultural center of the Inca empire.

Inca roads varied greatly in their scale, construction techniques, and appearance. For the most part, their widths varied between about one and four meters. Drains and culverts channeled water alongside or under the roads. If it was necessary, the buttressing walls or causeways over wetlands were also constructed. The roads were flattened and delineated by walls, stone markers, wooden or cane posts or piles of rocks. Stone bridges and suspension bridges made of straw *ichu* were built over the river canyons to save the continuity of trails along the rugged geography of the Andes. Beside the roads, the transportation system was composed of other important architectural elements such as *tambos* (lodging places with storage facilities), *kanchas* (several rectangular houses, gathered around a small courtyard, surrounded by walls), *kallankas* (large rectangular buildings, probably used as resting or meeting space), *chaskiwasi* (small structures for relay messengers, called *chaskis*), warehouses, sacred structures, as *apachetas* (small mounds of stones) or control places for people and products (Hyslop [1984] 2015: 417–503, Rostworowski 2002: 97–106, D’Altroy 2007: 242–246).

The entire communication network was expanded and consolidated in accordance with political assumptions, economic logic and strategic needs of the Tawantinsuyu rulers. Functionality, high standard, well-thought-out infrastructure

deployment was one aspect, but attention should also be paid to the permanent system of conservation, maintenance and management of the trail, directed by the state officials. Road traffic was not allowed to everyone and not at all times. The routes were under strict control of the central administration and served to achieve goals set by the interest of the rapidly growing state.

The purpose of developing the *Qhapaq Ñan* system was, therefore, rapid communication, efficient transport and integration of the vast areas of Tawantinsuyu in order to effectively manage human resources and material assets. Thanks to the whole infrastructure, the Incas were able to unite in a relatively short time an extremely diverse cultural and natural area.

In the first years of the conquest, the Spaniards used the Inca routes during their campaigns. Chroniclers such as Miguel de Estete, Juan de Betanzos, Pedro Cieza de Leon, Bernabé Cobo, Cristóbal de Molina, Vaca de Castro, Guamán Poma de Ayala and Inca Garcilaso de la Vega have left a lot of information about the road system, showing their admiration for the perfect layout and condition of the whole trail and engineering skills of conquered and colonized tribes. The trail was used throughout the period of colonization as a part of the new political and economic structures of the Viceroyalties (first of Peru, then New Granada and La Plata), constituting a network of connections between urban centers (mainly those that flourished along the coasts) and inland valleys<sup>3</sup>. Military conflicts, the mainly export-oriented economic production, new administrative structure and other dynamics of social development in colonial and republic times imposed, however, a different logic of using roads, so some of them have been forgotten and destroyed (Hyslop [1984] 2015; Bar Esquivel 2013: 33–38; Chirinos Portocarrero, Harumi Borba 2015: 32–33). Nonetheless, several parts of *Qhapaq Ñan* infrastructure are difficult to access and their remoteness has over centuries preserved them in a very good condition. To this day, many roads serve as an important element of the transport and communication system (for example, as a main access road to some settlements), especially in remote areas and high altitudes where modern asphalt roads do not exist or are rare. Some routes are still used daily by local people to move to neighboring houses and villages or their farms and communal pastures. Local communities, based on the traditional institution *faena*, have maintained their continuous use for centuries. Archeologists point out that it is this maintained functionality of some sections of the route that contributes to their better conservation and protection against degradation. Intangible values and management practices, especially in the most remote sections of the road network, contribute therefore to the safeguarding of their authentic management mechanisms.

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<sup>3</sup> Every major city from the time of colonization (Quito, Cajamarca, Trujillo, Lima, Cusco, Arequipa, Ica, Puno, La Paz, Cochabamba, Oruro, Sucre, Salta, Santiago and many others) had its beginning in the pre-Hispanic era. From this perspective, roads are a link that connect the Andean region through the centuries, from the Pre-Columbian times to the present.

In his classic publication from 1984, John Hyslop estimated that the *Qhapaq Ñan* trail could have measured around 40,000 km (Hyslop [1984] 2015: 358). Today we know that only in Peru, where most of the identified roads are located, the *Qhapaq Ñan* system has between 60,000 and 70,000 km<sup>4</sup>. To this day, many sections of the route are still used by the local population and have an essential role in the inter-regional communication. In some areas of the sierra, especially at high altitudes and steep passes, the remains of *Qhapaq Ñan* are the only possibility of transporting goods and transfer of peoples and animals. Despite several centuries that have passed since its expansion, destruction resulting from the processes of industrialization, construction of modern communication infrastructure<sup>5</sup> or mining activity, it still impresses with its range, perfect design and engineering achievements.

*Qhapaq Ñan* Trail constitutes something more than only roads, bridges or *tambos*. The entire system is also associated with many traditions that have survived to this day, representing the richness and diversity of the Andean region's cultural heritage and values shared by communities living in an area spanning thousands of miles along the Pacific coast and the Andes chain. Functional, physical and ideological continuation of the trail is still visible among local communities in traditional exchange trading, common cult ritual practices dedicated to land, water and mountain peaks, or the use of pre-Hispanic production technologies in agricultural and irrigation works are various examples of indigenous peoples living cultural heritage.

## Nomination for the World Culture Heritage List (2001–2014)

In May 2001, during the 25th sessions of the World Heritage Committee in Helsinki, Peru presented an initiative to include the *Qhapaq Ñan* Road System on the UNESCO World Heritage List in the sub-category of a cultural itinerary of transnational character. In the same time, interim president Valentín Paniagua Corzaao decreed its status as a National Patrimony and qualified the research and conservation of the Inca roads as a national interest, which gave rise to the institutionalization of the *Qhapaq Ñan* Program (Decreto Supremo N° 031-2001-ED 2001). For the implementation of the research, conservation and road registration work, on the 7<sup>th</sup> of June 2001, the National Commission of *Qhapaq Ñan* was creat-

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<sup>4</sup> Probably the most famous and recognizable section of the route system is the 43 km long „Inca Trail” in Peru leading from the Sacred Valley of the Incas to Machu Picchu. The road starts at the Río Urubamba and reaches an altitude of about 2700 meters ASL, to the place called *Intipunku* (Gate of the Sun), from where there is a beautiful view on the restored constructions of the Inca city.

<sup>5</sup> For example, in Peru: Ley 4113 (*Ley de Conscripción Vial o del Servicio Obligatorio de Caminos*) during the presidency of Augusto B. Leguía (1920) or construction of Carretera Panamericana alongside the Pacific Ocean since 1929 (see more: Bar Esquivel 2013: 38–44).

ed, integrated by ministries of education, transport, agriculture, and tourism (Decreto Supremo No 039-2001-ED 2001). The 2001 Decree No 031-2001-ED took effect under the Law No. 28260, adopted in 2004. In accordance with its Article 1, it was declared: "(...) preferential national interest of the research, identification, registration, protection, conservation and enhancement of the network of existing roads of the Inca Empire within the national territory". Likewise, its Article 2 ordered: "(...) preferred attention to the Great Inca Trail, known as Qhapaq Ñan ("Great Road" or "Main Path"), that starting from Cusco towards the north communicated it with the present territory of the Republic of Ecuador and towards the south-east until the present city of La Paz, Bolivia, and current territories of Chile and Argentina" (Ley 28260; see: Instituto Nacional de Cultura (2007); Martorell Carreño 2010: 519–523; Gómez Salazar 2011: 104–105).

The political atmosphere prevailing at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century in Peru favored decisions related to the cultural heritage of indigenous people, primarily the Inca heritage, unambiguously indicated by the then government circles as the central reference point for the reconstruction of the Peruvian nation after the trauma of the 20-year civil war (Contreras, Cueto 2010: 367–401; Kania 2013a: 69–70). During the election campaign in 2000 Alejandro Toledo Manrique, the candidate of the Peruvian opposition party *Peru Posible*, did not hesitate to use Inca symbolism for the political goals and referred to the particular idea of Peruvian indigenist movement, called *incaísmo*. After the winning elections, on July 29, 2001, a special ceremony was held in the Inca city of Machu Picchu, the day after the official swearing-in for the president at the Government Palace in Lima. It was a spectacle that took place in the presence of shamans and priests of the neo-Inca cult, as well as diplomats, many presidents of Latin American countries and special guests, including the prince of Asturias, Philip Bourbon, and laureate of the Nobel Peace Prize, Israeli politician Shimon Peres (Kania 2013: 107–117). On the next day, on July 30<sup>th</sup>, Alejandro Toledo delivered a message to all the inhabitants of the Andean region, "heirs of the thousand-year tradition and the creators of a thousand-year civilization, which they should be proud of". "The moment to acknowledge the rights of the Andean community and respect its traditions and customs has come" – said the newly elected president, and promised that during his term of office he would develop a program of revindication of cultural values of the indigenous peoples of the region (El Sol 2001: 2). The concept of cooperation for democracy and development (primarily within the structures of Andean Community), as well as principles of recognition and respect for the rights of indigenous communities were reflected in a special document *Declaración de Machu Picchu*. The provisions of the *Declaration* concerned education in ethnic languages, the fight against discrimination and poverty, and the inclusion of indigenous people in the mainstream political, economic and social life of countries belonging to the *Comunidad Andina*. Andean countries were also officially recognized as multi-ethnic and pluricultural nations, committing themselves to respect and promote their cultural diversity:

*We do believe that the cultural and ethnic diversity that characterizes our nations is a source of great wealth and unity among our societies. The democratic exercise demands the respect and the promotion of its diversity. We express, in that sense, our decision to continue developing strategies and policies aimed at revaluing the ethnic plurality and multiculturalism of our nations, in order to promote the full participation of indigenous peoples and ethnic minorities.* (Declaración de Machu Picchu 2001)

The document was signed by all presidents of the countries belonging at that time to the Andean Community; besides Peru, also Gustavo Novoa Bejarano, president of Ecuador, Jorge Quiroga Ramírez, interim president of Bolivia, Hugo Chávez, president of Venezuela and Andrés Pastrana, president of Colombia.

The *Qhapaq Ñan* Program announced at that time corresponded therefore to the assumptions of the cultural policy of the Peruvian government and can be interpreted as a political instrument created with the purpose to integrate the Andean countries in common goal, based on the revaluation of the Andean region's cultural heritage. Evocation to the *lo inca* in the pre-Columbian history shared by the Andean countries can be seen also as a process of politicization of the cultural heritage and shaping of the vision of the pan-Andean integration based on the shared past. The investigations on the social, political and economic aspects of the indigenous peoples achievements in the past and their modern socio-cultural status and condition were seen not only as an opportunity to establish new standards and shared methods of documentation and conservation, but also promoted as an impulse to create and develop the regional and pan-regional identity.

Peruvian initiative gained the support of the countries through which nowadays passes the network of pre-Hispanic routes: Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, and Ecuador, thus the project has officially assumed an international character. During the 1st World Heritage Reports Meeting at the World Heritage Center in Montevideo (March, 2002) the document "Prehispanic Andean roads and routes of Tawantinsuyu" was signed, which emphasized the importance of "joint research actions, valuation methodologies and community incorporation as well as development policies and sustainable tourism of a regional nature around the *Qhapaq Ñan*" (Banco Interamericano de Desarrollo 2006a, Banco Interamericano de Desarrollo 2006c: 17–19). *Acta de Compromiso*, signed also by the representative of Colombia, was recognized as an official commitment of the signatory states to promote joint activities for the inscription of the Trail on the UNESCO World Heritage List. On 29 January 2003, at the UNESCO headquarters in Paris, permanent Delegates from Andean countries made a joint application to take over the coordination of the *Qhapaq Ñan* Program and gain the support to the nomination process by the World Heritage Centre, thereby officially receiving institutional and expert patronage in the area of inventory and protection of the preserved infrastructure of the Inca Trail. Further political



support for the program in the international arena was manifested in many official decisions of the presidents of South American countries presented during meetings at the highest diplomatic level. On May 23, 2003, during the 17th Summit of the then Río Group<sup>6</sup> in Cusco, the heads of states of Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia, Chile and Argentina signed a document „Joint Declaration of the Presidents of the Río Group” (Banco Interamericano de Desarrollo 2006b, Banco Interamericano de Desarrollo 2006c: 23). The leaders pledged to promote the idea of the *Qhapaq Ñan* project and expressed their full support for the regional cooperation idea presented by the Peruvian government to the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) in the document “Regional Action Plan for the Development of the Qhapaq Ñan – Main Andean Road” (Banco Interamericano de Desarrollo 2006c). Thanks to the funding of the Spanish government, financial support for research and future publications was also secured, as well as funds enabling the organization of a special meeting of technical experts involved in the process of preparing the nomination (October 2003, Cusco). In the same year, in November, participants of the 13th Ibero-American Summit of Heads of States and Governments of the Organization of Ibero-American States gathered in Santa Cruz de la Sierra in Bolivia, supported the initiative of the Andean countries, noting its potential for integration and development of the entire region. In addition to the issues related to the inventory and protection of the extensive infrastructure of the route, the issue of the necessary research regarding the natural heritage and biodiversity present in the territories covered by the *Qhapaq Ñan* system also appeared. During the 17th Ordinary Meeting of the Andean Committee of Environmental Authorities (CAAM, November 2004) it was pointed out that the issue of biodiversity conservation and the elaboration of a common methodology for its research and protection is a priority for pan-regional cooperation implemented within Andean Community structures. The *Qhapaq Ñan* Program also gained support during the 18th Ibero-American Summit of Heads of State and Governments (September 2008, San Salvador), and then again, in December, during the next, 20<sup>th</sup> Ibero-American Summit in Mar del Plata (Argentina), where the presidents of Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia, Chile and Argentina signed another official political commitment, expressing their support for a common inscription of *Qhapaq Ñan* on UNESCO’s World Heritage List. In the official substantiation the value of the shared cultural heritage with such a unique character was stressed. It was agreed that the joint submission of the *Qhapaq Ñan* candidacy for the inscription on the World Heritage List would be an unprecedented event, allowing not only to promote and raise awareness of the region’s common history and culture, but also would serve to strengthen cooperation and good relations between signatory countries in

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<sup>6</sup> Grupo de Río, an international organization gathering the South American and Caribbean countries established in 1986, was replaced by a new organization Comunidad de Estados Latinoamericanos y Caribeños (CELAC) during the 21<sup>st</sup> Latin America and the Caribbean Unity Summit (22–23 of February 2010, Playa del Carmen).

the field of revaluation and protection of their cultural heritage. The signing of the commitment was clearly a political act of the highest rank and indicated the beginning of the last stage of a very ambitious and challenging project that had been going on for over seven years.

Initiatives and declarations at the international level were accompanied by the meetings and decisions taken simultaneously on the territory of the countries that were signatories of the *Qhapaq Ñan* Program. In order to identify and register selected sections of the routes (classified as binational, cross-border and national sections) several research components were created, that enabled to obtain broad, interdisciplinary documentation on pre-Hispanic infrastructure. The research was carried out through the archeological, historical, ethnographic and geographical-environmental projects, as such a broad perspective was considered necessary to respond to the criteria of authenticity and integrity of the Trail, required in the process of nomination by UNESCO. Program required then the cooperation of many technical experts and the development of both a common research methodology and a coherent concept for the interpretation of the results<sup>7</sup>. One of the points of dispute between the representatives of individual research teams was the name of the network, used in official documents prepared for the World Heritage Centre. At the beginning on the transnational level there was used the term “Inca Trail”, but this denomination did not consider that much of the road network of the Inca state was built using the pre-Inca roads that already existed before the expansion of the empire. The name “Qhapaq Ñan” was considered as the appropriate terminology for the nomination process at the Second Technical Meeting Qhapaq Ñan-Andean Main Road, held in October 2003 in Cusco. In February 2010, representatives of the technical secretariats of the signatory countries met in Paris, where it was decided to name the nominated property officially as “*Qhapaq Ñan – Andean Road System*”. The main reason indicated by the representatives of Ecuador, Bolivia, Chile and Argentina was the need to identify and include the roads that existed before the Inca state, thus recognize and underline the contribution of many different communities and cultures, not only Incas, to the creation and development of complex communication system pass throughout the Andean region (UNESCO 2003, Sanz 2004, Banco Interamericano de Desarrollo 2006c, Instituto de Cultura 2009, UNESCO 2014).

The Nomination Act of the “*Qhapaq Ñan – Andean Road System*” (*Expediente de Candidatura del Qhapaq Ñan – Sistema Vial Andino*) was officially presented on the 1<sup>st</sup> of February 2013 in Cusco, and then again on the 9<sup>th</sup> of May 2013, during the special, symbolic ceremony organized in the former heart of the Inca state. The whole process ended with the final decision made on

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<sup>7</sup> In the period 2003–2008, several expert meetings on research and conservation were organized: Lima 2003, Cusco 2003, Santiago de Chile 2004, La Paz 2004, Quito 2005, Buenos Aires 2005, Pasto 2006, Paris 2006 and 2007, Cuenca 2007, Lima 2008, Santiago de Chile 2008 (see more: Instituto de Cultura 2009a, Gómez Salazar 2011: 207–213).

the 21<sup>st</sup> of June 2014, during the 38th Session of the World Heritage Committee in Doha (Qatar), in the presence of delegations of each of the six signatory states<sup>8</sup>. Initially, the inscription on the List was recommended according to the criteria ii, iii and iv, related to the aspect of the vital interchange of human values, unique and exceptional cultural tradition and authenticity. However, thanks to the negotiations of the representatives of technical committees with delegates of the Regional Committees of ICOMOS and UNESCO, *Qhapaq Ñan* was registered under criteria ii, iii, iv and the criterion vi, which emphasizes not only the aspect of exceptional technological achievements, but also the value of “direct or tangible association with events or living traditions, with ideas or with beliefs, with artistic and literary works of outstanding universal significance”, so with the value of intangible culture heritage of indigenous peoples<sup>9</sup>. It is also worth mentioning that according to the initial assumptions of the Peruvian representatives, *Qhapaq Ñan* has been included in the UNESCO List in the sub-category of the “cultural route” (or “cultural itinerary”). This new sub-category of cultural heritage was created in 1993 when the nomination of the Camino de Santiago de Compostela was being prepared and its features did not fit into any *Operational Guidelines* of the World Cultural Heritage Convention of 1972. In 2005, “cultural routes” were defined as:

*Any route of communication, be it land, water, or some other type, which is physically delimited and is also characterized by having its own specific dynamic and historic functionality, which must fulfil the following conditions: It must arise from and reflect interactive movements of people as well as multi-dimensional, continuous, and reciprocal exchanges of goods, ideas, knowledge and values between peoples, countries, regions or continents over significant periods of time. It must have thereby promoted a cross-fertilization of the affected cultures in space and time, as reflected both in their tangible and intangible heritage<sup>10</sup>.*

The “cultural route” sub-category has therefore broadened the perspective of defining the *Qhapaq Ñan* Trail as a result of the dynamic processes of cultural changes and interactions that the people of the Andean region expe-

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<sup>8</sup> The Qhapaq Ñan nomination process, as the first example of an initiative undertaken, coordinated and implemented on such a broad international scale, has become an inspiration for further projects of this type, for example, for transnational nomination of the Silk Roads – routes network linking the ancient societies of China, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan (the Near East, Western and Central Asia), inscribed on the UNESCO List in the same 2014.

<sup>9</sup> See criterion (vi): <http://whc.unesco.org/en/criteria/>. Thanks to the work of technical committees, it was possible to identify and register 25 089 km of the Andean roads and 82 related archaeological sites (UNESCO 2014).

<sup>10</sup> Definition proposed by the International Scientific Committee CIIC ICOMOS on Cultural Routes in its draft of international charter on cultural routes (ICOMOS International Committee on Cultural Routes, <http://www.icomos-ciic.org>).

rienced throughout the centuries (*Plan Operativo Institucional* 2015: 12; Martorell Carreño 2010: 489–517). Thus, it was possible to emphasize the value of material heritage elements (preserved parts of the Trail and accompanying structures), but also to draw attention to the manifestations of living culture – cosmovision – and preserved aspects of the traditional model of life of the Andean societies. In this way, the important role of the *Qhapaq Ñan* in promoting and shaping the integral cultural identity of the inhabitants of the entire Andean region was also emphasized.

### **“El camino que nos une”<sup>11</sup>. *Qhapaq Ñan* as a symbol of integration policy**

International cooperation in the protection and safeguarding of the cultural heritage of indigenous peoples is promoted as one of the pillars of contemporary cultural policy based on the principles of culture pluralism and respect of diversity. In the field of the promotion of cultural rights, special laws were introduced and adopted in the Convention no 169 of the International Labor Organization (*Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention* 1989). Drawing attention to the distinctive contribution of indigenous peoples to the cultural diversity of humankind (Preamble), the Convention requires Governments to promote and safeguard the cultures of indigenous peoples through special measures (arts. 2 and 4), and to recognize and protect their cultural values and practices (art. 5). Governments are required to respect and safeguard the cultural and traditional values of indigenous peoples and their use and management of the land, and natural resources (arts. 13, 14 and 15), and ensure that the traditional activities of indigenous peoples are strengthened and promoted (art. 23). The recommendations on the protection, safeguarding and access to the cultural heritage are also present in the articles of the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, adopted in 2007 (arts. 11–13, 33).

In the American system, the result of the efforts made in the field of inter-regional cultural policy has taken form of provisions included in the Charter of the Organization of American States (OAS). The Charter of the OAS contains specific recommendations and regulations on the economic, social and cultural rights of the Member States. Chapter VII, Article 30 states:

*The Member States, inspired by the principles of inter-American solidarity and cooperation, pledge themselves to a united effort to ensure international social justice in their relations and integral development for their peoples, as conditions essential to peace and security. Integral development encompasses the economic, social, educational, cultural, scientific, and technological fields*

<sup>11</sup> “The road that unites us” – one of the slogans promoted by *Proyecto Qhapaq Ñan* in Peru.

*through which the goals that each country sets for accomplishing it should be achieved.*

The issue of mutual efforts in the name of promotion and protection of cultural heritage is underlined in Article 48 of Chapter VII:

*The Member States will cooperate with one another to meet their educational needs, to promote scientific research, and to encourage technological progress for their integral development. They will consider themselves individually and jointly bound to preserve and enrich the cultural heritage of the American peoples. (Organization of American States 1948)*

Concerning the protection of the archaeological, historical and artistic heritage of the American nations OAS has approved the *Convention on the Protection of the Archaeological, and Artistic Heritage of the American Nations* (so-called *Convention of San Salvador 1976*). The Convention declared mutual interest in the defense and conservation of cultural heritage and indicated that this could only be achieved through mutual appreciation and respect for such properties, within the framework of the most solid inter-American cooperation:

*The purpose of this Convention is to identify, register, protect, and safeguard the property making up the cultural heritage of the American nations in order: (a) to prevent illegal exportation or importation of cultural property; and (b) to promote cooperation among the American states for mutual awareness and appreciation of their cultural property. (Article 1)*

*The States Parties bind themselves to cooperate in the mutual knowledge and appreciation of their cultural values by taking the following measures: b) promoting the exchange of information on cultural property and on archaeological excavations and discoveries. (Article 15)*

Those standards also appeared in *American Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, adopted on the 15<sup>th</sup> of June 2016 during the 46th regular session of General Assembly of the OAS in Santo Domingo. In Article XXVIII we also find specific recommendations for the protection of indigenous tangible and intangible cultural heritage and respect of the right to participation and consultation in any national and international initiative related to indigenous peoples' cultural heritage (OAS 2016). Regarding the Andean Community's policy of the inter-regional promotion and protection of the indigenous peoples' rights (to identity, cultural heritage, traditions and knowledge) as the important document we can point out the above-mentioned *Declaration of Machu Picchu*, issued by the Andean Presidential Council in July 2001. The purpose of signing this document was, in general, to strengthen and consolidate democracy as a system of government and restore the validity of human rights after years of violence and conflicts in the region.

Those values are also presented in the official cultural policy line indicated by the Regulatory Framework for the Protection and Safeguarding of Cultural Heritage of the Andean Community (*Marco Normativo para la Protección y Salvaguardia del Patrimonio Cultural*), adopted during the XLVII Plenary Session of the Andean Parliament (November 2015, Bogotá). *Marco Normativo* established the norms and principles that should be considered by the Member States in the construction and elaboration of internal policies and legislation regarding the protection, safeguarding and recovery of their tangible and intangible heritage (Title I, Article 2). The document also refers to the intercultural dialogue as a means of fostering the understanding among Andean peoples, protection of indigenous peoples and minorities rights, and promotion of cultural diversity. The Andean cultural heritage (*patrimonio andino*) and the common Andean identity (*identidad cultural Andina*) are recognized therefore as essential for regional integration and cooperation. The cultural issues in the Andean integration policy are promoted through the Decisions dedicated to the protection and recovery of the cultural heritage properties in the territory of the Member States (Decisions 460 and 588). Furthermore, recognizing the importance of culture aspects in the political and economic integration process, the coordination institutions among the Member States were established, such as: the Andean Council of Ministers of Culture (Decision 760), and the Andean Committee of Cultural Affairs (Decision 823)<sup>12</sup>.

As mentioned above, in the time of the Incas dominance *Qhapaq Ñan* played the role not only of the main communication trail, space for the distribution of trade goods, military coordination, labor control or efficient provisioning, but also represented an essential factor for the integration of the entire state, facilitating the transfer of shared cultural values, cosmovision and political concept promoted by the central administration settled in Cusco. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century the *Qhapaq Ñan* road system as a symbol of the unique cultural achievement has become an inspiration to develop and promote an idea of international cooperation based mainly on those particular integration qualities of the Andean heritage (the process that we can identify as *politicization of heritage*). The integration value of *Qhapaq Ñan*, perceived as a foundation for the future cooperation and strengthening of links between the states-parties of the program, was repeatedly emphasized in the official documents, both those published at the national level and those issued by regional organizations.

The government of Peru was the main stakeholder in reconstructing and promoting *Qhapaq Ñan* as a symbol of pan-Andean re-integration. As in its territory more than 70% of archaeological physical evidence of the total road system was identified, the state was regarded as being at the privileged posi-

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<sup>12</sup> For cooperation, legal framework and joint initiatives regarding heritage issues see: *Comunidad Andina – Identidad Andina y Cultura*, <http://www.comunidadandina.org/Seccion-identidad-andina-y-cultura>

tion of transnational domination, playing the role of patron in the frames of *Qhapaq Ñan* Program. Already in October 2003, during the 32nd General Conference of UNESCO in Paris, president Alejandro Toledo drew the participants' attention to the exceptional mutual initiative:

*I should also like to tell you of another project in which the Government of Peru is engaged. It concerns the development of the Qhapaq Ñan, the Andean Highway, joining in a shared effort Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru, which should become a flagship cultural integration project based on the ancient Inca road system, one of the region's most important pre-Columbian vestiges. This regional undertaking is absolutely unique because, for the first time, six countries have decided to work together to have shared property placed on the UNESCO World Heritage List (...). (UNESCO 2003a)*

In February 2003, after a special seminar organized by the Organization of Ibero-American States and the Secretariat of Culture of the Argentine Nation about the "Management and Strategies Policy for the Andean Roads" (Jujuy), in its conclusion, the exceptional opportunity for the integration of shared cultural values was underlined, beyond the historical-anthropological meaning and material existence the road system in the Andean geography (Martorell Carreño 2010: 489). The importance of the nomination initiative as an inspiration for an integration policy also became apparent at the MERCOSUR XXVII meeting in Ouro Preto (December 2004), when the presidents of the state parties (Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay and Paraguay) and associated states (Bolivia, Ecuador, Chile, Colombia, Peru) signed a particular document *Declaración de Ouro Preto*, containing the article:

*[the presidents] support the Andean Cultural Itinerary/Qhapaq Ñan, which involves four countries of the block, since it constitutes an integration project that has a high impact on the regional development, with culture as the articulating axis. (Declaración de Ouro Preto 2004, Article 27)*

In November 2005, during the 17th Ordinary Session of the Andean Parliament (Bogotá), the official support for the Program was justified by recognizing the *Qhapaq Ñan* Road System as "a symbol of the integration of the Andean region countries" (*Decision* 1131). Similar assumptions also can be found in the draft of Regional Action Plan (Banco Interamericano de Desarrollo 2006c). Its purpose was to identify and promote the integration of the Andean region countries, based on the recognition of their shared cultural heritage (represented by *Qhapaq Ñan*) and on the international cooperation. On the 30th of November 2012, during the 6th Summit of the Union of South American Nations (*Unión de Naciones Suramericanas*, UNASUR), which took place in Lima, participants signed "Joint Declaration on the *Qhapaq Ñan* –

Andean Road System” (UNASUR 2012), in which they expressed not only their support for the nomination process, but also the unique significance of *Qhapaq Ñan* for the physical, cultural, social and economic integration of American states. The activities of the *Qhapaq Ñan* Program were recognized as a symbol of peaceful dialogue, an example of international cooperation in the field of cultural policy and a foundation for seeking a balance between, on the one hand, the protection and conservation of the culture heritage of indigenous peoples and, on the other, the socio-economic development of those communities in the Andean region (UNASUR 2012). The same values were underlined during the meeting of the Permanent Council of the Organization of American States organized in July 2014, when the inclusion of the *Qhapaq Ñan* – Andean Road System on the UNESCO List of World Heritage was celebrated with high honors and enthusiasm. The General Secretary of the OAS, José Miguel Insulza, welcomed the decision of UNESCO Committee as a symbol of cooperation and unity of American states, that was not “just a political slogan, but a historical reality”. The Permanent Representative of Peru to the OAS, Juan Federico Jiménez Mayor, emphasized:

*Thanks to the Qhapaq Ñan, the Incas were able to join the tremendous historical, natural and cultural diversity of the territory that today is part of the countries of Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru. The inclusion of this route in the World Heritage List is a recognition of the historical richness of these six OAS member countries, joined historically by this system of roads, that was crossed a complex geography along the ridge of the Andes, with monumental pathways and thanks to the management of the outstanding construction techniques of the Inca civilization. (OAS Members Countries celebrate..., 2014)*

Another of the documents emitted with the aim to confirm the crucial role of the *Qhapaq Ñan* Program for the integration of the Andean region countries and the promotion of the joint projects in the field of cultural and social policy in the future is the *Declaration of “Qhapaq Ñan” or “Andean Main Road” as the cultural patrimony of the Andean Community*, approved by Andean Community (San Salvador 2017). In the Declaration, the extraordinary material and immaterial cultural value of the Andean Road network was highlighted, based mainly on its regional integration function. It was recognized as imperative that the Andean Parliament would elaborate an official statement with the purpose to recovering and preserving the network of the *Qhapaq Ñan*, and promoting its enormous historical, cultural, social, and economic importance. Recognizing that *Qhapaq Ñan* has the potential to implement development projects that could benefit the communities and improve the quality of life of the people living adjacent to the Trail, it was approved to officially recognize the Andean Road System as an opportunity to regional integration, development and promotion of the common cultural identity (Article 2). It



was also proposed to develop an international and inter-institutional cooperation project, called “Strengthening integration in the Andean region through the creation of Qhapaq Ñan Multimodal Centers” (Article 3) with the aim to make *Qhapaq Ñan* known as a World Heritage and central axis of Andean integration (*Resolución no 19 2017*).

The idea of integration and cooperation between the Andean countries based on the mutual values of shared heritage was also promoted through UNESCO’s patronage over the *Qhapaq Ñan* Program. As it is well known, the World Heritage Convention created in 1972 is one of the most important global patrimonial instruments. The implementation of the Convention is facilitated through the *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention*. These guidelines relate not only to the technical aspects of the preservation and the protection of the cultural or natural heritage properties, but also include recommendations and commitments on international cooperation and pan-regional activities aimed to protect heritage sites of exceptional value. Properties with trans-border continuity, or with shared identity, has been clearly supported in the *Operational Guidelines* as the reflection of the vision of shared responsibility to the patronage of the actions of conservation, enhancement and sustainable social use of heritage properties:

*In cases where a cultural and/or natural property which fulfills the criteria adopted by the Committee extends beyond national borders the States Parties concerned are encouraged to submit a joint nomination; In keeping with the spirit of the Convention, States Parties should as far as possible endeavour to include in their submissions properties which derive their outstanding universal value from a particularly significant combination of cultural and natural features.* (World Heritage Center 1999/2: 4–5)

During the meeting of representatives of the Ibero-American countries with the representatives of the World Heritage Centre in Mar del Plata (2010), the then Director General of UNESCO Irina Bokova drew attention to the unique role of the *Qhapaq Ñan* Program in the re-integration and cooperation process of the Andean region countries:

*(...) The region already has numerous sites inscribed on the World Heritage List. However, now a plan for the integral management of all of them will be established for the first time to safeguard, at the same time, a natural heritage – whose biodiversity is one of the richest on the planet – and a cultural heritage that will include indigenous and local traditions. The aim is to protect the system in an integrated manner and thereby promote cooperation that encompasses a cultural itinerary with a continental dimension.*

*(...) Since I was elected to head UNESCO, I advocate a new vision of culture as a vector of development and a political instrument of cooperation, mutual understanding and reconciliation. The will that encourages Argen-*

*tina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru to preserve together a common heritage raises that cooperation to a degree rarely achieved. This is the “second miracle” of the Qhapaq Ñan, after its construction, with such a huge human effort. (Bokova 2010)*

In November 2012, during a special session involving six countries – signatories of the program, Irina Bokova again appealed to the unique role of *Qhapaq Ñan* heritage in shaping the foundations for international cooperation:

*It is an exceptional heritage, shared among six countries in Latin America. (...) These countries have decided to protect it together through an innovative regional cooperation process. (...) Due to its enormous cultural, technical and symbolic ramifications, this Project represents a message for all the nations of the world. It is a model of cultural cooperation. (...) This [dossier of candidacy for the inscription on UNESCO List] is the best gift that can be made on the 40th anniversary [of the UNESCO Convention 1972]: a youthful bath, a message of peace, an impulse of political cooperation. (Bokova 2012)*

The distinct integration value of the *Qhapaq Ñan* system has also been clearly underlined in justification of its inclusion in the World Cultural Heritage List:

*The Qhapaq Ñan is an exceptional and unique testimony to the Inca civilization based on the values and principles of reciprocity, redistribution and duality constructed in a singular system of organization called Tawantinsuyu. The road network was the life-giving support to the Inca Empire integrated into the Andean landscape. As a testimony to the Inca Empire, it illustrates thousands of years of cultural evolution and was an omnipresent symbol of the Empire’s strength and extension throughout the Andes<sup>13</sup>.*

*The Andean Road System continues to serve its original functions of integration, communication, exchange and flow of goods and knowledge, and – despite the current modern trade and social changes – keeps its pertinence and importance throughout the centuries and its role as a cultural reference which contributes to reinforcing the identity within the Andean world<sup>14</sup>.*

It has to be emphasized, that the whole concept of integration of Andean nations over administrative and political divisions and the slogans of interna-

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<sup>13</sup> UNESCO 2014, criterion (iii).

<sup>14</sup> UNESCO 2014, criterion (vi). The *Qhapaq Ñan* Program was also one of the projects presented in the framework of *Action Plan for World Heritage in South America, 2015–2020* of World Heritage Centre (Paris).

tional cooperation in the name of protection and promotion of shared values of cultural (indigenous) heritage sounded exceptionally despite the political situation and the temperature of diplomatic relations prevailing among the countries of the region. In addition to the continuous political and economic rivalry within various pan-regional organizations (including Andean Community, UNASUR, MERCOSUR, Pacific Trade Alliance), there are still conflicts routed in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, referring to the subject of borders and territorial divisions between state-parties of the Program. Parallel to the signed documents and declarations of cooperation in the field of cultural politics (2001–2014), arose disputes between Peru and Chile for the extent of territorial waters in the Pacific (conflict over borders and the economic benefits in 2008). Tense diplomatic relations, associated with Bolivia's continuing claims for access to the Ocean lost as a result of the Pacific War (1879–1883), have characterized political relations between this country and Chile for years. The border conflict also took place between Peru and Ecuador (the 1940s) and ended at the end of the 20th century, during the presidency of Alberto Fujimori and Jamil Mahuad. The Peace Pact was signed in 1998, only a few years before the beginning of the *Qhapaq Ñan* Program. The relations between the countries that form the Andean Community have also been weakened by continuing disagreements and arm conflicts between the Republics of Ecuador and Colombia, caused by the fight against the Colombian *guerrilla* and unauthorized incursions into Ecuadorian territory (Klarén 2000; Spyra 2006; Contreras, Cueto 2010; Pastrana, Jost 2012). From international relations' policy perspective, *Qhapaq Ñan* can, therefore, serve as an example of the implementation of the idea of pan-Andean social and cultural union, based on the vision of common past and beyond political and economic conflicts and rivalry in modern times. As it was presented above, in both – American diplomatic circles and broader international forum – the *Qhapaq Ñan* Program and the process of nomination for the World Heritage List were described as an important goal strengthening cooperation between state-parties, essential for the unity and integration of the region and for the promotion of Andean culture in the world. Thus, the multinational, transboundary *Qhapaq Ñan* Program was evaluated as an exceptional example of “the strength of culture as a factor of peace” (Bokova 2012).

## **Final considerations**

As a transnational property, the *Qhapaq Ñan* Road System covers the jurisdiction of six countries. Between 2001 and 2014, several of international joint declarations and Statements of Commitment have been signed. They have highlighted the will to protect and promote exceptional values and integrity of Andean Road System. During the process of nomination and after the inclusion to the List of World Heritage, *Qhapaq Ñan*, a symbol of politi-

cal, economic and cultural unification in pre-Hispanic times, has turned into a symbol of modern regional re-integration and even an icon of the unity of contemporary Andean nations, even though this “unity” seems to be a utopian vision, based more on ideological discourse of *incaísmo* than on rational evaluation of economic, social and political differences between state-parties. Nonetheless, through the joint efforts for its protection and preservation carried out by the representatives of six South American countries, all interested parties consider it as an element of cultural heritage, which would potentially generate an opportunity of cooperation on many levels (e.g. conservation and protection of the archeological heritage, preservation of biodiversity, local communities development, promotion of sustainable tourism).

We cannot avoid the question about the contemporary nature of the relations that link indigenous peoples of the Andean region to such an exceptional element of the cultural heritage as the *Qhapaq Ñan* road system. The idea of re-integration is aimed not only to protect the cultural and natural heritage associated with the “Inca Trail”, but also to search for the alternatives of economic development and to improve the standards of life of communities living in the Andean region. In this perspective *Qhapaq Ñan* is not only a symbol of the revaluation of culture, knowledge and traditions of the Andean region inhabitants but also an important instrument of the inclusion of indigenous peoples to the social and economic policies of the six state-parties of the *Qhapaq Ñan* Program. The protection and proper safeguarding of the cultural heritage of indigenous peoples, in accordance with the principles of their active participation, is one of the essential elements of neo-indigenismo (*indianismo*) movements that have been developed intensively in Latin America since the 1990s. In addition to the demands of democratic reforms and more significant presence in political life, there are postulates to limit the actions directed against indigenous material cultural heritage, to revalorize elements of intangible heritage (living culture) and to create favorable conditions for development in accordance with the preservation of their ethnic and cultural identity. Such postulates can be found in international documents relating to the rights and political status of indigenous peoples (ILO 169, UN 2007) and *Operational Guidelines* of World Heritage Committee. In the American system, these issues are presented in the *American Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (OAS 2016). Recalling the priority of the OAS to advance in the promotion and adequate protection of the rights of the indigenous peoples, its significant presence in American societies and immense contribution to development, plurality and cultural diversity were recognized. It was agreed that the rights of indigenous peoples are a fundamental aspect for the present and the future of the Americas and recognized that respect of the rights of indigenous peoples fosters harmonious and cooperative relations among States and indigenous peoples, based on the principles of justice and democracy (Preamble).

The requirements to respect directives of international institutions referring to the principle of indigenous peoples’ participation, consultation and co-

operation in the name of sustainable development were indicated almost from the beginning in the activities of the *Qhapaq Ñan* Program. Representatives of Peru, Bolivia, Ecuador and Argentina emphasized the need to introduce international criteria throughout the whole nomination process. Already during the meeting in Cusco, in May 2003, indigenous peoples were recognized as essential actors, both in the preparatory works and further activities related to joint management of the Andean road system (Banco Interamericano de Desarrollo 2006c: 20, Korstanje 2016). By this decision the communities living along the “Inca Trail” were recognized as representatives (“guards”, “continuers”, “depositors”) of the intangible aspect of the *Qhapaq Ñan* heritage: preserved languages, knowledge and production technologies, the ritual sphere manifested in costumes, dances, songs and rituals, as well as gastronomy, social structures and symbolic organization of the space. In this context, the principles of the *Regional Action Plan* were not only regional integration, but also sustainable management of natural and cultural heritage and strengthening of local capacities, participation issue and social equity (Banco Interamericano de Desarrollo 2006c: 37). Officially presented policy was based on the articulation of *Qhapaq Ñan* management to the communities, municipalities and sectoral management in line with the decentralization policies of the states-parties. Unfortunately, for several years those principles did not result in a concrete action and on the side of official (states) agendas remained only at the declarative, formal stage<sup>15</sup>.

Nonetheless, recent years have brought some positive initiatives, both on national and international level, that we can consider as indicators of growing consciousness of social and political responsibility and commitments of states in the field of new model of indigenous peoples' culture heritage policy. Concerning the *Qhapaq Ñan* Program, one of those is the national and binational “walks” (*caminatas*) organized through the Inca Trail sections declared as World Heritage. The idea of *caminatas* was created in order to recognize and promote the *Qhapaq Ñan*, to strengthen the cultural identity and participatory action of indigenous communities and to develop a notion of culture as a factor of social and economic development in the territories where the Inca road system passes. The first “Binational Walk” was held on September 2011: Peruvian and Ecuadorian walkers toured the *Qhapaq Ñan* sections that link Peruvian and Ecuadorian territory. In an official commentary, participants underline the goal of integration and respect of mutual culture traditions. The second edition was held in September 2013, from Cariamanga (Ecuador) to Aypate and Ayabaca (Peru). This activity was carried out by an initiative of the communities of Ayabaca and Cariamanga, with support of the Ministry of Culture of Peru, through the *Qhapaq Ñan* Project – National Centre

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<sup>15</sup> About criticism of the procedures realized during the nomination process, in which indigenous peoples were absent or only figurative, see for example: Korstanje and Azcárate 2007, Gómez Salazar 2012, Korstanje 2016, Gnecco 2017.

(Lima), the Provincial Municipality of Ayabaca, Municipality of Calvas and Ministry of Tourism of Ecuador (*Caminata Binacional Wayakuntu...*, 2013). A few years later, in June 2017 and August 2018, similar initiatives took place in the southern part of the road system: *caminatas* were organized in cooperation between Peruvian and Bolivian state entities and the Aymara community members, inhabitants of District of Puno (section Cruz Pata – Chucasuyo Ccajje – Challapampa – Juli – Pomata). According to the representatives of *Qhapaq Ñan* Project (Lima), it was a good opportunity not only to exchange work experiences within the framework of the Bilateral Agreement that joined the institutions of *Qhapaq Ñan* Project – Peru and the *Qhapaq Ñan* – Bolivia, but also to promote the safeguarding of the cultural heritage of the Aymara peoples of Peru and Bolivia (*III Caminata Regional, I Caminata Binacional...* 2017; *Puneños y bolivianos participan...* 2018).

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