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**SECOND SESSION OF THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL MEETING OF EXPERTS  
ON THE PRELIMINARY DRAFT CONVENTION FOR THE SAFEGUARDING  
OF THE INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE**

*Paris, UNESCO Headquarters, 24 February-1 March 2003*

**SECRETARIAT REPORT**

**A. Introduction**

1. In 164 EX/Decision 3.5.2, the Executive Board invited the Director-General “to convene one or more category II intergovernmental meetings of experts, the first of which could take place in September 2002, to define the scope and to take forward the work on the preliminary draft of an international convention”. The first session of the first meeting took place from Monday, 23 to Friday, 27 September 2002 at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris. As the first session did not finish its work, the assembled experts recommended that the Director-General “convene the second session of this intergovernmental meeting starting in early 2003 to examine the consolidated text of the preliminary draft convention”. That second session was held from 24 February to 1 March 2003 at UNESCO Headquarters.

2. Approximately 270 experts from 114 Member States, ten experts from three Permanent Observer Missions to UNESCO and representatives of five intergovernmental organizations and six non-governmental organizations (see Annex II) took part in the second session. Since that session represented the continuation of the proceedings of the group of experts that had met at the first session (September 2002), the Chairperson (Mr Bedjaoui – Algeria), the four Vice-Chairpersons (Mr Scovazzi – Italy, Mr Berke – Hungary, Mr Kim – Republic of Korea and Mr Yai – Benin) and the Rapporteur (Mr Barrios – Bolivia) were reappointed in their functions. The Rules of Procedure and the agenda also remained applicable as adopted at the first session. The deliberations of the second session focused on items 7 and 8 of the agenda, “Determination of the scope of the preliminary draft convention” and “Results of the work of the governmental experts concerning the elaboration of the preliminary draft convention”.

3. In the course of the discussions during the first session, 11 States<sup>1</sup> had submitted amendments for examination by all the participants, and in reply to circular letter CL/3629 of 29 July 2002 sent by the Director-General to the Member States, Associate Members and Observer States, a

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<sup>1</sup> Benin, Bolivia, Finland, France, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Spain, Tunisia, Uganda, United Arab Emirates.

further 59 replies<sup>2</sup> were received by the Secretariat. All those contributions were the subject of two compilations, made available to the experts as basic working documents. The first document contained comments of a general character and the second the proposed amendments to the text of the first preliminary draft of the convention. The discussions also resulted in the submission by the experts of 80 draft amendments, a number of which were examined within the six days of the session.

## **B. Opening of the meeting**

4. In his opening address, the Director-General, Mr Koïchiro Matsuura, praised Member States' commitment to making the safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage a priority. He said that he was convinced that the importance of the intangible cultural heritage was on the way to being unequivocally recognized for all the peoples of the world. The proposals contained in the replies to his circular letter had focused primarily on the adoption of a definition of the intangible cultural heritage, the drawing up of a world list of this heritage, the membership of committees and the mechanism for international cooperation. He reiterated that the work of the experts would culminate in a text to supplement the corpus of standard-setting instruments that already existed in the area of the tangible cultural heritage. The Director-General thanked the Chairperson, the Vice-Chairpersons and the Rapporteur for the part they had played at the last session and encouraged the experts in their work.

5. Mr Bedjaoui reported briefly on negotiations to date and what had been achieved in September 2002, then explained the working methods to be used for future meetings. The working methodology would consist of a plenary discussion, with the key articles divided into four groups, as follows:

- First group: I “Purposes and Principles” and II “General Provisions” (Articles 1 to 7)
- Second group: III “Committees [and lists]” (Articles 8 to 14 bis)
- Third group: IV “Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund” (Articles 15 to 18)
- Fourth group: V “Conditions and arrangements for international assistance”, VI “Educational and awareness-raising programmes”, VII “Reports” and VIII “Final clauses” (Articles 19 to 38).

6. A drafting committee, made up of 18 governmental experts (three experts per electoral group) and open to observers, was set up in order to propose, in the light of the plenary debate, a new version of the text of the articles under discussion. The drafting committee, chaired by the Ambassador of India, was composed of the following members:

- for Group 1: France, Greece and Norway;
- for Group 2: Hungary, Czech Republic and Russian Federation;
- for Group 3: China, India and Japan;
- for Group 4: Argentina, Mexico and Saint Lucia;

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<sup>2</sup> Algeria, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Barbados, Belgium, Benin, Bolivia, Brazil, Bulgaria, Cambodia, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Egypt, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Italy, Japan, Korea (Republic of), Kuwait, Lebanon, Lithuania, Malawi, Mali, Mexico, Morocco, Netherlands, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Philippines, Portugal, Qatar, Saint Lucia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, Vanuatu, African Group, United States. In addition, the Secretariat received contributions from three NGOs: Traditions for Tomorrow, International Music Council and International Council for Traditional Music.

- for Group 5A: Algeria, Egypt and Oman;
- for Group 5B: South Africa, Nigeria and Senegal.

### **C. General discussion**

7. During the six days of discussions in plenary and in the Drafting Committee, agreement was reached in plenary on a new wording for Articles 1, 2, 3 and 11A and on the title of 11B (see Annex I).

#### **(a) Article 1**

8. In general, Article 1 specifies that the aims of the convention are the “safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage”. More specifically, in regard to Article 1(a), a discussion arose on the use of the word “creation”, on the need to define it more appropriately in the glossary and on the need to include in the text more examples of modalities of protection or safeguarding, such as presentation or documentation. There was a consensus in favour of retaining the word “safeguarding” alone as this term was broadly defined in Article 2, paragraph 3.

9. Article 1(b) gave rise to a wide-ranging discussion on the terms “communities”, “groups” and “individuals”:

- Would the term “community” require a qualifier such as “cultural” and/or “local”?
- Should the term “group” be qualified by the word “social”?
- Would the insertion of a reference to the term “individuals” automatically entail significant differences in regard to intellectual property rights?

It was finally decided to retain these three terms “communities”, “groups” and “individuals”.

10. Article 1(c) on awareness-raising regarding the importance of intangible cultural heritage and its mutual appreciation was adopted by consensus in the form proposed by the Drafting Committee, with the addition by the plenary of the qualifier “local” before “national” and “international”.

11. Lastly, Article 1(d), on international cooperation and assistance, was agreed on in the form proposed by the Drafting Committee.

#### **(b) Article 2 – Definitions**

12. The experts then turned their attention to Article 2, “Definitions”, a key article on which the scope of the future convention would depend. Calling for a flexible and open-minded approach, certain delegations emphasized the need for broad definitions while others feared that a definition that was too general or imprecise would pave the way to over-extended and imprecise interpretations, thus undermining the objective of a rigorous implementation of the convention.

13. The States considered the wording of paragraphs 1, 2 and 3 in general to be fairly satisfactory. More specifically, the reference in paragraph 1 to the question of human rights was clarified by a reference to universally recognized legal instruments. The choice of the terms “communities” and “social groups” was again discussed, as the two concepts had different meanings for different cultures. In the end, the experts decided to retain those two terms in a broad sense, that is to say by omitting the qualifier “social”. As for the concept of “cultural space”, which had been considered to be wider and more acceptable than “site”, it was added to the paragraph. Similarly, in view of the fact that the intangible cultural heritage was a living entity, the words “transmission from

generation to generation” were included. The concept developed through the Living Human Treasures programme was recognized as essential in this connection.

14. In paragraph 2, to be read in close correlation with the Annex, the various fields covered by the definition are set forth. In subparagraph (a), relating to the question of languages, while certain experts expressed a preference for oral “expressions”, “process of communication” or the explicit mention of languages as such, the following wording was adopted as a compromise solution: “oral traditions and expressions, including language as a vehicle of the intangible cultural heritage” (see Annex I). With regard to the French text of subparagraph (b), it was decided to add to the words “arts d’interprétation”, the words “et du spectacle”, since this form of words was more meaningful for certain States. With regard to paragraph (c), it was agreed by consensus to retain the text proposed, “social practices, rituals, festive events” without introducing any reference to religion. Under subparagraph (d), the experts accepted reference to the “universe” in respect of “knowledge and practices”. Lastly, the experts agreed that the term “craftsmanship” should be translated into French as “traditions artisanales” for the time being (pending a meeting of the language committee), and be placed in a new subparagraph (e).

15. Paragraph 3 of Article 2 defines the safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage as “measures ensuring the viability of the intangible cultural heritage, including the identification, documentation, research, preservation, protection, promotion, transmission ... and revitalization” of its various aspects. It was suggested and then decided, to mention in addition the importance of education for its transmission.

16. On the other hand, the question of whether or not to include an annex (containing examples of intangible cultural heritage) and a terminological glossary with the convention was broached without any conclusion being reached. It would need to be re-examined later. Certain delegates would have liked to select from the glossary only the most useful definitions, while others were in favour of a more exhaustive list and still others simply proposed its deletion. Certain experts also expressed uncertainty on several occasions as to whether it was necessary to maintain the Annex as it stood, as an annex, or with additions, or whether to incorporate its elements into the body of the definition in Article 2, or simply to drop it.

### **(c) Article 3 – [Prerogatives of States Parties]**

17. The discussions focused on the role of States and the function of communities in the identification and definition of the intangible cultural heritage. A large majority of experts supported variant (a) which establishes the principle of the pre-eminent role of the States Parties. A large number also proposed supplementing this variant by incorporating elements from (b) that dealt with modalities of action. A consensus emerged from the discussions that made it possible to dovetail the two options by attributing to States a role of identification and definition of the intangible cultural heritage while stipulating modalities of consultation and partnership with the cultural communities concerned, NGOs, practitioners, etc. As no definite agreement was reached concerning the inclusion of representatives of civil society, that option was kept in square brackets. In the title, the experts preferred the term “role”, thus including both the obligations and the rights underlying such a role.

### **(d) Article 11 – Lists of [items of the] intangible cultural heritage**

18. The discussion demonstrated the fundamental importance of the provision in Article 11A concerning the plan to establish national inventories of the intangible cultural heritage. The desirability of such inventories and of a Committee was recognized, with each State Party establishing them according to its means and circumstances. The experts were careful to point out

that the main objective of the convention was international cooperation between States, so that those experiencing difficulties in establishing the inventories, for example, could be given assistance by the other States. During the debates, a majority came out in favour of the following three steps:

- the establishment of a national inventory was considered to be the main obligation of the State Party;
- with respect to the title of Article 11 B, the principle of the creation of a register or a List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding was accepted;
- lastly, following the logic of the Proclamation of Masterpieces of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, the elaboration of an international register, which would draw from the heritage already inventoried at the national level, would ensure the visibility of the intangible heritage and promote cultural diversity.

19. In regard to the creation of Committees, a number of States expressed the wish that the question be examined there and then, drawing, if necessary, on information on the impact of the Proclamation of Masterpieces, whose effects were still being analysed. An initial document (“Impact of and best practice in safeguarding action – First Proclamation of Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity, CLT-2003/CONF.205/INF.7), concerning action taken to safeguard the intangible cultural heritage as a result of the first Proclamation, has already been drafted by the Secretariat.

#### **D. Conclusion**

20. The six days of work enabled progress to be made in the examination of the articles, the great purposefulness of the States reflecting the sense of urgency felt by many of them with respect to the safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage. However, the governmental experts did not think it necessary to address a recommendation to the Director-General under the ninth agenda item. In view of the many articles which it had not been possible to examine at that session of the intergovernmental meeting, the Chairperson proposed the setting up of an intersessional mechanism in the form of a working group of 18 governmental experts (three chosen by the chairperson of each electoral group) who had legal qualifications and would be given responsibility for proposing a consolidated version of the articles which had not yet been examined. This proposal was adopted by the plenary by acclamation and was accepted by the Director-General. The new version would be drafted in the light of the amendments and comments contained in the compilation documents and of those submitted at the second session, and care would also be taken to ensure consistency with the articles already approved by the plenary. The working group would meet at UNESCO Headquarters from 22 to 30 April 2003. The results of its deliberations would form the working document to be submitted for examination at the third session of the Intergovernmental Meeting of Experts, which would be held at UNESCO Headquarters from 2 to 14 June 2003.

## ANNEX I

### ARTICLE 1 – PURPOSES

**Approved in plenary, 28 February 2003**

The purposes of this convention are:

- (a) Safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage.
  - (b) Respect for the intangible cultural heritage of concerned communities, groups and individuals.
  - (c) Awareness-raising at the local, national and international levels of the importance of intangible cultural heritage and promoting its mutual appreciation.
  - (d) International cooperation and assistance.
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### ARTICLE 1 – BUTS

**Approuvé en plénière, 28 février 2003**

Les buts de cette convention sont:

- (a) La sauvegarde du patrimoine culturel immatériel.
- (b) Le respect du patrimoine culturel immatériel des communautés, des groupes et des individus concernés.
- (c) La sensibilisation aux niveaux local, national et international en faveur de l'importance du patrimoine culturel immatériel et son appréciation mutuelle.
- (d) La coopération et l'assistance internationales.

## **ARTICLE 2 – DEFINITIONS**

**Approved in plenary, 28 February 2003**

For the purposes of this convention,

1. The “intangible cultural heritage” means the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills – as well as instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces associated with them – that communities, groups and, where appropriate, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage. This intangible cultural heritage, transmitted from generation to generation, is constantly recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment, their interaction with nature and their historical conditions of existence, and provides them with a sense of identity and continuity, thus promoting the respect of cultural diversity and human creativity.

For the purposes of this convention, only relevant is the intangible cultural heritage that is consistent with universally recognized human rights international instruments, as well as with the principles of justice and equity, sustainability, and mutual respect between communities, groups and individuals.

2. The “intangible cultural heritage”, as defined in paragraph 1 above, covers the following (see the Annex [delete “see the Annex”]):

- (a) oral traditions and expressions, including language as a vehicle of the intangible cultural heritage;
- (b) the performing arts;
- (c) social practices, rituals, festive events;
- (d) knowledge and practices about nature and the universe; and
- (e) traditional craftsmanship.

3. “Safeguarding” means measures ensuring the viability of the intangible cultural heritage, including the identification, documentation, research, preservation, protection, promotion, transmission, particularly through education, and revitalization of the different aspects of such heritage.

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## ARTICLE 2 - DEFINITIONS

**Approuvé en plénière, 28 février 2003**

Aux fins de la présente Convention,

1. On entend par “patrimoine culturel immatériel” les pratiques, représentations, expressions, connaissances et savoir-faire -ainsi que les instruments, objets, artefacts et espaces culturels qui leur sont associés- que les communautés, groupes et, si cela apparaît opportun, les individus reconnaissent comme faisant partie de leur patrimoine culturel. Ce patrimoine culturel immatériel, transmis de génération en génération, est recréé en permanence par les communautés et groupes en fonction de leur milieu, de leur interaction avec la nature et de leur histoire et leur procure un sentiment d’identité et de continuité, contribuant ainsi à promouvoir le respect de la diversité culturelle et la créativité humaine.

Aux fins de la présente convention, seul sera pris en considération le patrimoine culturel immatériel conforme aux principes consacrés dans les instruments internationaux relatifs aux droits de l’homme universellement reconnus ainsi qu’aux principes de justice et d’équité, de durabilité et de respect mutuel entre communautés, groupes et individus.

2. Le “patrimoine culturel immatériel”, tel qu’il est défini au paragraphe 1 ci-dessus, couvre les domaines suivants (voir Annexe) [supprimer (voir Annexe)] :

- (a) les traditions et expressions orales, y compris la langue comme vecteur du patrimoine culturel immatériel ;
- (b) les arts d’interprétation et du spectacle ;
- (c) les pratiques sociales, rituels et événements festifs ;
- (d) les connaissances et pratiques concernant la nature et l’univers ; et
- (e) les traditions artisanales<sup>3</sup>.

3. On entend par “sauvegarde” les mesures visant à assurer la viabilité du patrimoine culturel immatériel, y compris l’identification, la documentation, la recherche, la préservation, la protection, la promotion, la transmission, essentiellement par l’éducation, et la revitalisation des différents aspects de ce patrimoine.

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<sup>3</sup> La version anglaise a été approuvée comme telle. La traduction française fera l’objet d’une étude par le comité linguistique.



**ARTICLE 3 – Role of the State Party in the identification and the definition of the intangible cultural heritage**

**Approved in plenary, 28 February 2003**

It is for each State Party to identify and define the various elements of the intangible cultural heritage present in its territory, with the participation of communities, groups and relevant non-governmental organizations [and representatives of civil society].

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**ARTICLE 3 – Rôle de l'Etat partie dans l'identification et la définition du patrimoine culturel**

**Approuvé en plénière, 28 février 2003**

Il appartient à chaque Etat partie d'identifier et de définir les différents éléments du patrimoine culturel immatériel présents sur son territoire, avec la participation des communautés, des groupes et des organisations non gouvernementales pertinentes [et des représentants de la société civile].

## **ARTICLE 11**

**Approved in plenary, 1 March 2003**

### **Article [11A] - National Inventories of the Intangible Cultural Heritage**

1. To ensure identification and safeguarding, each State Party shall draw up [, according to its means and] as appropriate to [the situation of] each country, one or more national inventories of its intangible cultural heritage. These inventories shall be regularly updated.
2. When States Parties periodically submit their report to the Committee, under Article [29] of this convention, they will submit relevant information on the national inventory.

### **Article [11B] – Register [List] of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding<sup>4</sup>**

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## **ARTICLE 11**

**Approuvé en plénière, 1<sup>er</sup> mars 2003**

### **Article [11A] - Inventaires nationaux du patrimoine culturel immatériel**

1. Pour assurer l'identification et la sauvegarde, chaque Etat partie dresse, [selon ses moyens et] de façon adaptée à [la situation de] chaque pays, un ou plusieurs inventaires nationaux de son patrimoine culturel immatériel. Ces inventaires font l'objet d'une mise à jour régulière.
2. Les Etats parties, lorsqu'ils présentent périodiquement leur rapport au Comité, conformément à l'article [29] de la présente Convention, soumettent des informations pertinentes concernant l'inventaire national.

### **Article [11B] - Registre [Liste]<sup>5</sup> du patrimoine culturel immatériel nécessitant une sauvegarde urgente**

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<sup>4</sup> The majority of participants favours “register” the minority favours “list”.

<sup>5</sup> Alors que la majorité des participants est en faveur du terme « registre », une minorité est en faveur du terme « liste ».

**ANNEX II**

**LIST OF PARTICIPANTS / LISTE DES PARTICIPANTS**

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*SECOND SESSION OF THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL MEETING OF EXPERTS  
ON THE PRELIMINARY DRAFT CONVENTION FOR THE SAFEGUARDING  
OF THE INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE*

**Paris, UNESCO Headquarters, 24 February-1 March 2003**

*DEUXIEME SESSION DE LA REUNION INTERGOUVERNEMENTALE D'EXPERTS SUR  
L'AVANT-PROJET DE CONVENTION POUR LA SAUVEGARDE DU PATRIMOINE CULTUREL  
IMMATERIEL*

**Paris, Siège de l'UNESCO, 24 février-1er mars 2003**

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