



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

Executive Board

Hundred and ninety-fifth session

195 EX/DG.INF
PARIS, 10 October 2014
English & French only

Items 30, 31 and 32 of the provisional agenda

COMMENTS BY THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL ON ITEMS PRESENTED BY MEMBER STATES WHICH MAY HAVE ADMINISTRATIVE AND FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

1. Following 170 EX/Decision 5.1, which states that “the Executive Board shall not take a decision involving expenditure unless it has before it a report from the Director-General on the administrative and financial implications of the proposal”, the Director-General is presenting her comments on three items presented by Member States at the present session of the Executive Board.

Item 30: The Indentured Labour Route Project – 195 EX/30, Item proposed by Mauritius

2. The Secretariat notes that the subject of indentured labour is very important and while welcoming the potential of the proposal by Mauritius to complement UNESCO’s programmes, it wishes to draw attention to a number of aspects concerning the scope and budgetary implications of the latter.

3. The World Heritage Committee’s Decision 30 COM 8B.33 (Vilnius, Lithuania, 2006) referred to in the Explanatory Note recommended “that the State Party and other interested parties: (a) Undertake research on indentured labour to consider the extent, scope and impact of the indentured labour Diaspora around the world;” and “(b) Consider the possibility of inscribing the Aapravasi Ghat archives for the UNESCO’s Memory of the World Register”.

4. It should be noted that Decision 30 COM 8B.33 adopted by the World Heritage Committee recommended to the State Party Mauritius to conduct research on indentured labour, and the impact of its diaspora around the world. Therefore, the decision did not refer as such to the establishment of a “Route” and to the development of a Global Database Initiative thereon related.

5. Regarding the proposals in paragraphs 5 and 6 to establish a secretariat for the project at the Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund and an International Scientific Committee to advise UNESCO on the implementation of the project, it would be important to clarify the national or international scope of the project (current and intended) in order to determine the implications for UNESCO. Both national and international scope would entail budgetary implications for UNESCO.

6. Moreover, in this regard, the Secretariat observes that Decision 30 COM 8B.33 did not recommend establishing an International Scientific Committee on the subject.

7. With regard to the proposal to hold a conference from 3 to 5 November 2014, the Secretariat welcomes the proposal should Mauritius provide the necessary funding support to that purpose, and to

provide its patronage in line with the requirements for the use of its logo according to the established Directives.

8. Regarding the financial implications of the proposal, the Secretariat notes that the budgetary information presented in the annex to the Explanatory Note, indicates a projected shortfall of US \$146,700 relating to the years 2015-2016, for which the Government of Mauritius would seek support, *inter alia*, from the Participation Programme. In this respect, the Secretariat notes that in line of established procedures under the Participation Programme, such support cannot be anticipated at the present stage, and cannot exceed US \$46,000.

9. The Secretariat further notes that international assistance was provided from the World Heritage Fund in the amount of \$29,500 for the Preparation of a Local Economic Development Plan for the Buffer Zones of the Aapravasi Ghat World Heritage Property, an emblematic site of Indentured Labour history. In 2009 international assistance was provided to Mauritius from the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund in the amount of \$33,007 for the project entitled “An inventory of elements of intangible heritage pertaining to the indenture experience in the Republic of Mauritius”. Through this project, the Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund (AGTF) was entrusted with the task of setting up an inventory of elements of intangible heritage related to the history of indentureship in line with its mission and objectives contained in the Management Plan of the Aapravasi Ghat World Heritage Property. Over 60 elements of intangible cultural heritage were identified under four main themes relating to the legacy of indentureship: superstitions and blind beliefs, rites of passage, food and health, and skills and labour. This was achieved through four research groups and fieldwork undertaken in specific regions related to indentured labourers or to the sugarcane industry in Mauritius. The local community served as active participants and informants in the process. AGTF will continue documenting intangible cultural heritage elements and work towards an integrated research methodology to be shared with other institutions in order to enhance the appreciation of Mauritius’ intangible cultural heritage. With regard to the reference to the Slave Route project in the proposal by Mauritius, a project in which Mauritius is very active, it does also address dimensions of the indentured labour, and provides useful research material and insights.

10. With regard to the proposal by Mauritius to submit the Indentured Immigration Records for inscription on the Memory of the World Register in March 2014, the file submitted by the Ministry of Arts and Culture and the National Archives of Mauritius will be reviewed by the Memory of the World International Advisory Committee which will take a decision on its possible inscription in the World Register in July 2015.

Item 31: Protection of Iraqi Heritage – 195 EX/31, Item proposed by France and Iraq

11. The Secretariat welcomes the draft decision proposed by the Governments of France and Iraq, notably the inclusion within its scope of the concern for the loss of intangible heritage and cultural diversity, and to the need to mobilize humanitarian actors on the ground to integrate cultural heritage in their operations.

12. The draft decision calls, among other things, for the urgent implementation of the Emergency Response Action Plan for the Safeguarding of Iraq’s Cultural Heritage; the organization of a mission to Iraq, as soon as possible, to assess damage and identify needs; as well as for support by UNESCO to humanitarian organizations operating in Iraq to help them strengthening, in their policies and actions, consideration for the safeguard of cultural diversity and cultural heritage. In this regard, the Secretariat notes that undertaking the above actions will require substantial financial resources, which at the moment are not available. Such actions would therefore require extrabudgetary funding. The Secretariat stands ready to implement these actions, which would complement UNESCO’s Emergency Response Action Plan for the Safeguarding of Iraq’s Cultural Heritage.

13. Concerning in particular the organization of an assessment mission and the request that a report on its findings be presented to the Member States to the Executive Board at its 196th session in April 2015, the Secretariat wishes to note that such a mission can only be undertaken when the security conditions in the areas affected will permit.

14. Notwithstanding, the Secretariat is actively engaged in supporting the Iraqi authorities in the safeguarding of the country's cultural heritage, through a number of initiatives. In this respect, the Secretariat wishes to complement the information provided in document 195 EX/5 Part II and Add. related to the situation of cultural and educational institutions in Iraq, by providing the following update.

15. The Director-General has repeatedly raised her concern on the status of cultural heritage in Iraq by publishing statements and editorials, including a call to the Iraqi people to stand united and protect their cultural heritage (17 June 2014), an appeal for a halt to intentional destruction of religious and cultural heritage in Iraq (28 July 2014) and a statement urging for immediate protection of the cultural diversity of Iraq (8 August 2014).

16. On 17 July 2014, the Director-General organized an Emergency Expert Meeting for the Safeguarding of Iraq's Cultural Heritage, whose participants agreed on an Emergency Response Action Plan.

17. The following actions have been implemented by the Secretariat within the framework of the Emergency Response Action Plan:

- (a) Addressing the danger of illicit trafficking of cultural property, by alerting all Member States, major museums and auction houses to the risk of pillage affecting Iraqi cultural heritage and calling upon the international community to support an international concerted effort for the protection of this heritage;
- (b) Devising a mechanism that will ensure that information concerning threats to sites, museums and other repositories of cultural heritage property is communicated in an efficient and timely manner and is continuously updated. A dedicated webpage has been created to monitor illicit trafficking of Iraq's cultural objects, and is currently being expanded to include built and intangible heritage.
- (c) Calling on humanitarian actors operating in Iraq for assistance in a systematic recording of damages to the country's cultural heritage through the use of a Rapid Assessment and Monitoring Form, especially in areas, where cultural heritage is at high risk.

18. In the context of the expanding humanitarian crisis in Northern Iraq, in particular the unprecedented wave of internal displacement of populations, the Secretariat advocates for the inclusion of culture-related elements in the strategic response plan of the humanitarian actors, highlighting the crucial role that culture can play in ensuring social cohesion and laying the grounds for sustainable livelihoods and peacebuilding.

Item 32: Establishment of an International Coordination Committee (ICC) for Preah Vihear Temple, included in the World Heritage List – 195 EX/32, Item proposed by Cambodia

19. The World Heritage Committee in Decision 32 COM 8B.102, referred to in the explanatory note, "requested the State Party of Cambodia, in collaboration with UNESCO, to convene an international coordination committee (ICC) for the safeguarding and development of the property, not later than February 2009, inviting the participation of the Government of Thailand and not more than seven other

appropriate international partners, to examine general policy matters relating to the safeguarding of the Outstanding Universal Value of property, in conformity with international conservation standards.”

20. Since the adoption of Decision 35 COM 7B.62 in 2008, several decisions were adopted by the Committee. The last decision adopted in 2011 at the 35th session of the World Heritage Committee “*encourages the States Parties of Cambodia and Thailand to use the 1972 Convention as a tool to support conservation, sustainable development and dialogue*”.

21. The Secretariat also wishes to recall the establishment of an ICC for the World Heritage site of Angkor in Cambodia in the wake of the Tokyo Conference (October 1993), and as confirmed by the Paris Conference (November 2003). The direct and indirect costs for the establishment and functioning of the ICC for the site of Angkor are entirely borne by the Cambodian authorities. Therefore, should the Executive Board decide to establish an ICC for the World Heritage Site of Preah Vihear, the same principles would apply as regards its funding and functioning.

22. The Secretariat further recalls that similar international coordination committees were created for Afghanistan, Iraq and Haiti in response to the need to coordinate international efforts for the rehabilitation of cultural heritage following major conflicts or natural disasters.

23. The Executive Board may also wish to consider as an alternative to the establishment of an ICC, the establishment of a working group in the form of an expert committee focusing on the specific challenges of the property of Preah Vihear, on which experts would participate in their personal capacity (category VI meeting). The World Heritage Centre recalls that a similar model has been devised for the World Heritage property of the Cultural Landscape and Archaeological Remains of the Bamiyan Valley (Afghanistan), funded from extrabudgetary resources.

24. Should the Executive Board decide to establish an ICC for the World Heritage property of Preah Vihear, it would have to approve the statutes and budget of the latter.