**CONVENTION FOR THE SAFEGUARDING OF THE   
INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE**

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATES PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION**

**Sixth session**

**UNESCO Headquarters, Room II**

**30 May to 1 June 2016**

**Item 5 of the Provisional Agenda:**

**Report of the Committee to the General Assembly**

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| **Summary**  Article 30.1 of the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage states that ‘on the basis of its activities and the reports by States Parties [...], the Committee shall submit a report to the General Assembly at each of its sessions.’ This document contains the report of the Committee based on its activities between June 2014 and June 2016 and the reports by States Parties it adopted during its ninth and tenth sessions.  **Decision required:** paragraph 3 |

1. Article 30.1 of the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage states that ‘on the basis of its activities and the reports by States Parties [...] the Committee shall submit a report to the General Assembly at each of its sessions.’ Article 30.2 continues that ‘The report shall be brought to the attention of the General Conference of UNESCO.’ This document contains the report of the Committee, based on its activities between June 2014 and June 2016 and the reports by States Parties it adopted during its ninth and tenth sessions, in the annex to the draft resolution.
2. This report should be read in conjunction with the report of the Secretariat on its activities and its annexes concerning follow up on audits and evaluations (document ITH/16/6.GA/6) and the financial statement of the Fund for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (document ITH/16/6.GA/INF.9.1).
3. The General Assembly may wish to adopt the following resolution:

DRAFT RESOLUTION 6.GA 5

The General Assembly,

1. Having examined document ITH/16/6.GA/5,
2. Recalling Article 30 of the Convention,
3. Welcomes the five States – Cabo Verde, Ghana, Ireland, Kuwait and Marshall Islands – that have ratified the Convention since the fifth session of the General Assembly and expresses satisfaction with the continued steady pace of ratification;
4. Takes note of the report of the Committee to the General Assembly on its activities between June 2014 and June 2016 and thanks the Committee for its effective work;
5. Commends the Committee for progress made on various statutory aspects of the implementation of Convention as well as for its priority attention given to capacity building for the implementation of the Convention at the national level;
6. Acknowledges with satisfaction the continued interest shown by States Parties in the Convention’s mechanisms for international cooperation, and encourages the Committee to continue raising awareness on the importance of intangible cultural heritage and to disseminate best safeguarding practices;
7. Requests the Director-General to bring this report to the attention of the General Conference of UNESCO, in conformity with Article 30.2 of the Convention;
8. Further requests the Committee to report on its activities for the period between January 2016 and December 2018 for examination by the General Assembly at its seventh session, and to use a biennium calendar year for future reports thereafter.

**ANNEX**

**Report by the Committee to the General Assembly on its activities**

1. The functions of the Committee are set out in the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, in particular in Article 7. This report follows the order of functions set out in Article 7 of the Convention.
2. In 2014, the General Assembly renewed half of the 24 members of the Committee, by electing 12 States Parties to serve a term of four years. The 24 members of the Committee, during the period June 2014 to June 2016, were: Afghanistan, Algeria, Belgium, Brazil, Bulgaria, Congo, Côte d’Ivoire, Egypt, Ethiopia, Greece, Hungary, India, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Mongolia, Namibia, Nigeria, Peru, Republic of Korea, Saint Lucia, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda and Uruguay.
3. Since its election by the General Assembly in June 2014, the Committee has met twice: at UNESCO Headquarters, Paris, from 24 to 28 November 2014 for its ninth session (9.COM) and in Windhoek, Namibia, from 30 November to 4 December 2015 for its tenth session (10.COM).
4. The Bureau of the ninth session was elected by the eighth session in December 2013 in Baku, Azerbaijan and was composed of H.E. Mr José Manuel Rodríguez Cuadros (Peru) as Chairperson; Belgium, Latvia, Kyrgyzstan, Namibia and Egypt as Vice-Chairs; and Ms Anita Vaivade (Latvia) as Rapporteur.
5. The Bureau of the tenth session was elected by the ninth session in November 2014 at UNESCO Headquarters and was composed of H.E. Ms Trudie Amulungu (Namibia) as Chairperson; Belgium, Hungary, Brazil, India and Tunisia as Vice-Chairs; and Mr Ahmed Aly Morsi (Egypt) as Rapporteur.
6. The Bureau of the eleventh session of the Committee was elected at the end of the tenth session in December 2015 in Windhoek, Namibia and is composed of Mr Yonas Desta Tsegaye (Ethiopia) as Chairperson; Turkey, Bulgaria, Saint Lucia, Republic of Korea and Algeria as Vice-Chairpersons; and Mr Murat Soğangöz (Turkey) as Rapporteur.
7. The Bureau met daily during the sessions of the Committee to adjust the timetable of the session according to the progress made. Since the fifth session of the General Assembly, it has also met three times, twice at UNESCO Headquarters: on 13 October 2014 (9.COM 3.BUR) and 6 October 2015 (10.COM 2.BUR) and once in Windhoek, Namibia, on 4 December 2015 (10.COM 3.BUR). In addition, electronic consultations were held in June 2014 (9.COM 2.BUR), November 2014 (9.COM 4.BUR), June 2015 (10.COM 1.BUR) and in April 2016 (11.COM 1.BUR).
8. During the reporting period, the Committee and its Bureau examined a total of 76 items and sub-items inscribed on their agendas, which were accompanied by 75 working documents or information documents and 306 nominations, requests for international assistance, reports submitted by States Parties or requests for accreditation of new non-governmental organizations (NGOs) as well as the review of accredited NGOs. The Committee also examined a report submitted by a State non party to the Convention, namely the Russian Federation, on two elements originally proclaimed Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity and then incorporated in the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2008.
9. **Promoting the objectives of the Convention, encouraging and monitoring its implementation** (Article 7[a])
10. **Ratification**
11. Five States – Cabo Verde, Ghana, Ireland, Kuwait and Marshall Islands – ratified the Convention between June 2014 and June 2016. At the time of the sixth session of the General Assembly, 166 States are party to the Convention.
12. **Strengthening capacities**
13. The Committee continues to consider capacity-building as a priority, convinced that effective implementation depends on a thorough knowledge and understanding of the Convention and its concepts, measures and mechanisms. The General Assembly at its fifth session authorized the use of the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund to continue the overall strategy of capacity-building using the budget line ‘Other functions of the Committee’. In its Decision 8.COM 11, the Committee delegated to its Bureau the authority to decide upon the utilization of the funds allocated under this line of the Plan, on the basis of specific proposals to be prepared by the Secretariat. To inform donors of the funding requirements of the global capacity-building programme, the Secretariat developed a [Concept Note](http://en.unesco.org/system/files/Strengthening%20capacities%20to%20safeguard%20intangible%20cultural%20heritage%20for%20sustainable%20development_0.pdf) for the 2014–2017 Complementary Additional Programme entitled Strengthening capacities to safeguard intangible cultural heritage for sustainable development, available for consultation on UNESCO’s global partnership web page. The Concept Note was approved by the Committee at its ninth session in November 2014 (Decision 9.COM 7) as the framework within which it can accept voluntary supplementary contributions without express approval.
14. Activities approved by the Bureau were for a total of US$785,097 for the period January 2014 to December 2015 and US$196,772 for the period January to June 2016, aimed at supporting a number of cross-cutting needs, in particular: (i) developing training content and materials; (ii) strengthening the network of expert facilitators; and (iii) monitoring, evaluating and adapting the strategy accordingly[[1]](#footnote-1). Detailed information on results of the activities between June 2014 to June 2016 concerning these issues is included in the report of the Secretariat on its activities (document ITH/16/6.GA/6). That report also looks at the situation as regards the implementation of capacity-building programmes at country level, which has been made possible through earmarked contributions to the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund and Funds-in-Trust arrangements.
15. **Knowledge management services**
16. Knowledge management has become increasingly indispensable as the Convention continues to develop and the network of stakeholders expands. It is only steady improvement in management of knowledge and information that allows the Secretariat to deliver services to States Parties and governing bodies of the Convention, as well as to the international community at large in as timely and accurate manner as possible. Activities for improving accessibility, usability and functionalities of the Convention’s knowledge management system were approved by the Bureau for a total of US$304,000 for the period January 2014 – December 2015 and US$80,000 for the period January 2016 – June 2016. Once again, the above-mentioned report of the Secretariat provides details on the improvements achieved and still envisaged in the field of knowledge management services.
17. **Guidance on best practices and recommendations on safeguarding measures**(Article 7[b])
18. The Committee called upon all stakeholders to develop alternate, lighter ways of sharing safeguarding experiences than exclusively relying on the Register of Best Safeguarding Practices (Decision 8.COM 5.c.1). It is in this context that the Bureau allocated a total of US$133,000 for the period January 2014 to December 2015 and US$43,000 for the period January 2016 to June 2016 to help the Secretariat identify and share interesting and innovative examples, in particular concerning codes of ethics and other themes. It also requested to strengthen cooperation with WIPO concerning traditional knowledge and cultural expressions. The above-mentioned report of the Secretariat and its annexes on the follow-up on audits and evaluations provide details on the improvements achieved.
19. The Bureau also allocated a total of US$129,000 for the period January 2014 to December 2015 and US$18,000 for the period January 2016 to June 2016 to publish a number of communication materials: the 2014 version of the Basic Text in six languages, both in print and in digital form; digital brochures of elements inscribed in 2012 and 2013 on the Urgent Safeguarding List, as well as the programmes selected for the Register of Best Safeguarding Practices; a leaflet on gender and intangible cultural heritage and another on intangible cultural heritage for sustainable development in English, French and Spanish to complement the Kit on intangible cultural heritage, which was also reprinted on this occasion in English and French; and the multilingual availability of the website of the Convention in English, French and Spanish.
20. **Preparation of a draft plan for the use of the resources of the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund and increasing the Fund’s resources** (Articles 7[c] and 7[d])
21. The Committee is submitting to the sixth session of the General Assembly a plan for the use of the resources of the Fund for the period 1 January 2016 to 31 December 2017 that is substantially similar to that proposed and adopted for the period 2014‑15, with the majority of the resources allocated, as before, to international assistance.
22. Since the last General Assembly in June 2014, the Fund received supplementary voluntary contributions from Azerbaijan, Netherlands, Norway and Spain in support of seven capacity-building projects. The Sub-Fund of the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund, devoted exclusively to enhancing the human capacities of the Secretariat, has also received contributions of US$417,345 during the reporting period.
23. Document ITH/16/6.GA/INF.9.2 includes a list of such contributions for the period  
    1 June 2014 to April 2016. Document ITH/16/6.GA/INF.9.1 includes the Financial Report for the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund for the period 1 January 2014 to 31 December 2015 established by the Bureau of Financial Management, preceded by a brief explanatory note.
24. **Preparation of the Operational Directives for the implementation of the Convention** (Article 7[e])
25. During the reporting period, the Committee recommended to the General Assembly to approve new directives or amendments to the Operational Directives for the implementation of the Convention on the following questions:

* periodic reporting
* safeguarding intangible cultural heritage and sustainable development
* referral option
* non-governmental organizations evaluation schedule
* examination of international assistance requests

1. **Examination of periodic reports** (Article 7[f])
2. The [Convention](http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/index.php?lg=en&pg=00022) provides in Article 29 that States Parties shall submit to the Committee reports on legislative, regulatory and other measures taken for the implementation of the Convention, and in Article 30 that ‘On the basis of its activities and the reports by States Parties […] the Committee shall report to the General Assembly.’ During the reporting period, the Committee examined 51 reports by States Parties on the implementation of the Convention at the national level ([27](http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/index.php?lg=en&pg=707) in 2014 and [24](http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/index.php?lg=en&pg=768) in 2015) and 11 reports on the status of elements inscribed on the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding ([8](http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/index.php?lg=en&pg=708) in 2014 and [3](http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/index.php?lg=en&pg=769) in 2015).
3. A detailed overview and summary of the periodic reports, as adopted by the Committee in its Decisions [9.COM 5.a](http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/en/Decisions/9.COM/5.a) and [9.COM 5.b](http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/en/Decisions/9.COM/5.b) (for the 2014 reports) as well as in Decisions [10.COM 6.a](http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/en/Decisions/10.COM/6.a), 11.COM 1.BUR 2 and [10.COM 6.b](http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/en/Decisions/10.COM/6.b) (for the 2015 reports), are included in the related working documents of the Committee (and of the Bureau with regard only to the 24 reports on the implementation of the Convention examined in 2015) as follows:

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| Examination of the reports of States Parties on the implementation of the Convention and on the current status of elements inscribed on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity (2014 cycle) | **ITH/14/9.COM/5.a:** [English](http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/doc/src/ITH-14-9.COM-5.a-EN_.doc)/[French](http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/doc/src/ITH-14-9.COM-5.a-FR__.doc) *See the* [*27 reports*](http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/index.php?lg=en&pg=00707)*submitted* |
| Examination of the reports of States Parties on the current status of elements inscribed on the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding (2014 cycle) | **ITH/14/9.COM/5.b:** [English](http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/doc/src/ITH-14-9.COM-5.b-EN.doc)/[French](http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/doc/src/ITH-14-9.COM-5.b-FR.doc) *See the* [*8 reports*](http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/index.php?lg=en&pg=00708) *submitted* |
| Examination of the reports of States Parties on the implementation of the Convention and on the current status of elements inscribed on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity (2015 cycle) | **ITH/16/11.COM 1.BUR/2:** [English](http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/doc/src/ITH-16-11.COM_1.BUR-2-EN.doc)/[French](http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/doc/src/ITH-16-11.COM_1.BUR-2-FR.docx) *See the* [*24 reports*](http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/index.php?lg=en&pg=768) *submitted* |
| Examination of the reports of States Parties on the current status of elements inscribed on the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding (2015 cycle) | **ITH/15/10.COM/6.b:** [English](http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/doc/src/ITH-15-10.COM-6.b_EN.docx)/[French](http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/doc/src/ITH-15-10.COM-6.b_FR.doc) *See the* [*3 reports*](http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/index.php?lg=en&pg=769) *submitted* |

1. In the reporting period two major changes in the treatment of periodic reports on the implementation of the Convention were welcomed and endorsed by the Committee: the inclusion in the overview of an in-depth study and cumulative focus on a specific topic every year (inventorying in 2014 and transmission and education in 2015), as well as the preparation of an abstract for each report submitted that was introduced for the first time in 2015.
2. The Committee continues to be confronted with a high number of States Parties whose reports are overdue: for example concerning the reports on the implementation of the Convention, for the 2015 cycle 24 out of 48 expected reports were not submitted. In order to try to solve this situation, for the first time at its tenth session the Committee has included in its decisions on 2015 periodic reports an encouragement to States Parties to fulfil their reporting requirements before submitting new nominations.
3. **Inscriptions on the Lists of the Convention, selection of best safeguarding practices and granting of international assistance** (Article 7[g])
4. The Committee inscribed during the reporting period a total of 65 elements on the Lists of the Convention: 8 elements on the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding and 57 elements on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. During the reporting period, the Committee also selected one best safeguarding practice.
5. Following the approval by the General Assembly in 2014 of the amendments to the Operational Directives for the creation of a single 'Evaluation Body' (numbering six experts representing States Parties to the Convention non-members of the Committee and six accredited non-governmental organizations), the Committee established the first Evaluation Body during its ninth session and renewed three seats during its tenth session.
6. The Committee (for requests greater than US$25,000) or the Bureau (for requests up to US$25,000 and emergency requests) approved a total of 15 requests for international assistance for a total amount of US$831,561 (see also [document ITH/15/10.COM/6.c](http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/doc/src/ITH-15-10.COM-6.c_EN.docx) for the report on the use of international assistance by States Parties). A total of 14 countries received financial assistance from the ICH Fund during the reporting period.

1. . For further details on outputs and indicators refer to document [ITH/14/9.COM 2.BUR/1](http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/doc/src/ITH-14-9.COM_2.BUR-1_EN.docx). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)