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Italian National Commission for UNESCO

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Proposals for the involvement of NGOs coming from Developing countries in the activities of the Intergovernmental Committee of the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage

In response to the consultation launched in the States Parties to the UNESCO 2003 Convention (Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage) on the involvement of NGOs from Developing countries in the work of the Intergovernmental Committee of the Convention, we make the following proposal, based on the optimization of already existing UNESCO networks operating in the cultural field, such as the Cultural Cities Network.

The cities involved in the network meet requirements that make them ideal centers for launching support and exchange initiatives with NGOs in developing countries, due to the presence of paths of education in national and foreign literature, festivals and initiatives dedicated to translating and disseminating the cultures of other countries. The continuity of relationships among many of these cities and Developing Countries cities makes them as excellent point-to-point centers. The attention devoted to multimedia tools and the presence of multi-cultural exchange programs are additional elements that can be highlighted.

The previous participation in other regional information network (APIN, INFOLAC, MEDLIB, RINAF), the presence of virtual laboratories and other forms of global cooperation (traditional and innovative media) will facilitate the identification of the City able to carry out tutoring actions towards NGOs in the countries targeted by the support action.

In the States Parties to the UNESCO Convention of 2003 we can see:

- the lack of a common frame of reference for determining unique international legal status of NGOs in different States Parties and
- a structural economic deficit affecting NGOs identified in the developing countries, limiting their effective participation in the work of the Intergovernmental Committee and affecting their ability to advise the Committee

we propose to carry out mapping, linking, dissemination and multimedia communication actions, as follows:

1. Mapping

Launching an international consultation in the States Parties to the 2003 Convention, designed to provide the mapping of national legislation concerning the legal status of their NGO and to identify, if possible, the common requirements. The results of this survey will be published and organized so as coherent as possible with those already prepared in the framework of Creative Cities Network, and related to the fields of application of the 2003 Convention.

2. Networking

By consulting the Cities of the Creative Network, the NGOs meeting the above requirements and operating in at least two States Parties to the 2003 Convention will be put in a reciprocal contact, through a tutoring program focused on previous multicultural exchange experiences and good practices.

2.1 Each State Party will identify, among the Developing countries with which it maintains continuous and easy cooperative relations (on a political, economic, but

also geographical or linguistic basis), a developing country with which already have developed support and cooperation programs. Between these two poles, a tutoring action will be implemented for at least 2 years, both desk (through ICT tools) and on the ground (exchange activities, support for participation).

- 2.2 The requirements will be enhanced with the involvement of NGOs and organizations that represent them during the meetings of the Intergovernmental Committee.
- 2.3 The NGOs will be involved on the basis of the indications of an international experts working group in the themes of participation, fundraising and other relevant topics. This activity could be launched in the Committee to be held in 2010 in Kenya, as well as the mapping activities ad referred above in point.
- 2.4 Before starting the consultation work, the experts will propose a first hypothesis of the conditions on which it is possible to involve the Creative Cities Network.
- 2.5 In the working group may also be involved the International Federation of Arts Councils and Culture Agencies (IFACCA), as a body that normally takes part in the meetings of the UNESCO Committees and links cultural institutions (able to implement concrete communication and dissemination actions at local level), but also in its capacity as an institution that brings together scientific expertise able to actively contribute to the formation of the mentioned criteria and standards.

3. Dissemination and communication

Among the tools that can be activated for the involvement of NGOs, it is worth pointing out the opportunity to propose to the Governments of Developing Countries in the implementation of multi-media centers available to NGOs and individuals to access to Intergovernmental Committee's documents.

The results of the Committee meetings could be made available to the public through podcasting and the website www.unesco.org.

The launching of a special solidarity fund can strengthen support activities to the participation of developing countries (enhanced with centralized actions of fundraising), whose NGOs will be selected on the basis of territorial, geographic and thematic representation.