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Intangible Cultural Heritage

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**UNITED NATIONS
EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION**

**INTERGOVERNMENTAL COMMITTEE
FOR THE SAFEGUARDING OF THE INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE**

**Second session
Tokyo, Japan, 3 to 7 September 2007**

Item 8 of the provisional agenda: Participation of communities or their representatives, practitioners, experts, centres of expertise and research institutes

Summary

At its first extraordinary session, the Committee requested the Secretariat to submit to it at its second ordinary session a document on the participation of communities or their representatives, practitioners, experts, centres of expertise and research institutes in the implementation of the Convention. This document presents some points concerning such participation.

Decision required: paragraph 6

1. At its first extraordinary session held in Chengdu (China), the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage [*“the Committee”*] confirmed in its Decision [1.COM.6](#) the importance of involving communities or their representatives, practitioners and experts, as well as centres of expertise and research institutes, in the implementation of the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage [*“the Convention”*]. The Committee asked the Secretariat to submit to it at its second ordinary session a document on the participation of such actors (Decision [1.EXT.COM.10 bis](#)).
2. At its meeting in Chengdu, the Committee has distinguished between the above actors, and the NGOs which will have accreditation to the Committee in accordance with [Article 9](#) of the Convention and with which the Committee will maintain ongoing relations for consultative purposes. This document provides some points to help the Committee discuss how to ensure an effective participation in the implementation of the Convention by communities or their representatives, practitioners and experts, as well as centres of expertise and research institutes, who do not have NGO status.
3. The text of the Convention provides in various articles for communities, groups and – where appropriate – individuals to participate in safeguarding measures at the national level, by giving them a key role to play. Thus States Parties, in accordance with [Article 11\(b\)](#), must involve communities in the identification and definition of their intangible cultural heritage. [Article 13\(d\)\(ii\)](#) encourages States Parties to ensure access to this heritage whilst respecting customary practices. [Article 15](#), on the other hand, requires of each State Party that it make every effort to ensure the widest possible participation of communities, groups and – where appropriate – individuals, in implementing safeguarding activities and to actively involve them in managing their heritage. The Committee may wish to reaffirm the crucial role that communities, groups and, if applicable, individuals should play in the implementation of the Convention at the national level.
4. [Article 8.4](#) of the Convention provides that the Committee “may invite to its meetings any public or private bodies, as well as private persons, with recognized competence in the various fields of the intangible cultural heritage, in order to consult them on specific matters”. This provision of the Convention allows the Committee to call on a very wide range of actors, including community representatives, practitioners and experts – whether coming from inside or outside the communities – and representatives of centres of expertise and research institutes. Such consultation should be carried out on an ad hoc basis, with the Committee taking decisions case by case, as needed.
5. Moreover, in accordance with Article 8.3 of the Convention, “[t]he Committee may establish, on a temporary basis, whatever *ad hoc* consultative bodies it deems necessary to carry out its task”. In exercising this prerogative, the Committee will be able to include community representatives, practitioners, experts, centres of expertise and research institutes in these *ad hoc* bodies.
6. The Committee might wish to adopt the following decision:

DECISION 1.EXT.COM.8

The Committee,

1. Having examined document ITH/07/2.COM/CONF.208/8;
2. Recalling its decision 1.EXT.COM10 bis;
3. Further recalling paragraphs 3 and 4 of Article 8 of the Convention;

4. Reaffirms the crucial role that communities, groups and, where applicable, individuals play in safeguarding the intangible cultural heritage at the national level;
5. Emphasizes the importance of their participation, as well as that of experts, centres of expertise and research institutes in the implementation of the Convention.