



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

Organisation
des Nations Unies
pour l'éducation,
la science et la culture

Organización
de las Naciones Unidas
para la Educación,
la Ciencia y la Cultura

Организация
Объединенных Наций по
вопросам образования,
науки и культуры

منظمة الأمم المتحدة
للتربية والعلم والثقافة

联合国教育、
科学及文化组织

11 HCP

CLT-15/11.HCP/CONF.201/Report
Paris, 16 mars 2016
Original: English

**1954 HAGUE CONVENTION
FOR THE PROTECTION OF CULTURAL PROPERTY
IN THE EVENT OF ARMED CONFLICT**

ELEVENTH MEETING OF THE HIGH CONTRACTING PARTIES

UNESCO Headquarters, Paris
8 December 2015 (a.m.)

FINAL REPORT

I. Opening of the Meeting

1. The Eleventh Meeting of the High Contracting Parties to the 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict was held at UNESCO Headquarters on the morning of 8 December 2015.
2. 76 of 128 High Contracting Parties to the 1954 Hague Convention attended the Meeting. The participants were as follows: Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Belarus, Belgium, Benin, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Canada, Chile, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cuba, Czech Republic, Cyprus, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Estonia, Finland, France, Gabon, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Holy See, Honduras, Hungary, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Israel, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kuwait, Latvia, Lebanon, Libya, Lithuania, Mexico, Monaco, Montenegro, Morocco, the Netherlands, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Palestine, Paraguay, Poland, Qatar, Romania, Senegal, Serbia, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Turkey, Ukraine and Uruguay. In addition, 4 other Member States of UNESCO (Afghanistan, Djibouti, Ireland and Togo), 3 intergovernmental organizations (Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO), the International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM), and Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC)) and 3 non-governmental organizations (the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the International Council of Museums (ICOM) and the Tradition for Tomorrow) attended as observers. The documents of the meeting were made available on the website of the Convention at the following address: <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/culture/themes/armed-conflict-and-heritage/meetings-and-conferences/>
3. The Director-General of UNESCO, Ms Irina Bokova, opened the Meeting. Her speech addressed the recent detrimental impact of armed conflict on cultural heritage, and specified instances of intentional targeting and systematic destruction of cultural heritage in Iraq, Syria and Yemen. Ms Bokova also elaborated on the strategy for the Reinforcement of UNESCO's Action for the Protection of Culture and the Promotion of Cultural Pluralism in the Event of Armed Conflict, a direct response to the rampant destruction of cultural heritage which was adopted by the 38th session of the General Conference. The strategy involves activities such as defining rapid mobilization mechanisms of experts under UNESCO's coordination in collaboration with the United Nations and other concerned international organizations.¹ Ms Bokova also informed the High Contracting Parties of the #Unite4Heritage Campaign, a global movement calling on everyone, particularly young people, to stand up against extremism and radicalization by celebrating the places, objects and cultural traditions of the world.

II. Election of the Bureau

4. Ms Bokova then gave the floor to her representative, the Director of the Division for Heritage to conduct the election of the Bureau of the Meeting. She recalled the Secretariat's e-mail sent on 30 October 2015 requesting the chairs of the regional electoral groups to consult within their respective electoral groups to come to a consensus about their nominations for the Bureau of this Meeting in order to facilitate the election process. She also recalled an e-mail received by the Secretariat on 24 November 2015 from the Arab Group nominating H. Exc. Mr Mounir Anastas, Deputy Permanent Delegate of Palestine to UNESCO as Chair of this Meeting. As there was no other proposal, Mr Anastas was declared unanimously elected and was invited to take his seat at the podium.
5. After expressing his gratitude for his election, the Chairperson proceeded to the election of the remaining members of the Bureau: the four Vice-Chairpersons and the Rapporteur.

¹ Reinforcement of UNESCO's action for the protection of culture and the promotion of cultural pluralism in the event of armed conflict. Available online: <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0023/002351/235186e.pdf>

6. The Chairperson stated that the Secretariat informed him that Electoral Group II nominated the Czech Republic as a Vice-Chairperson.
7. The representatives from Portugal and Palestine nominated Turkey as Vice-Chairperson. The representative from Brazil nominated Argentina as Vice-Chairperson. The representative from Cambodia nominated Japan as Vice-Chairperson. Following this, the representatives from Gabon and Ghana nominated H. Exc. Mr Kehinde Ayotunde Adewale, Senior Counsellor of the Nigerian Delegation to UNESCO, as the Rapporteur. As there was a consensus in the room on these nominations, the Chairperson proposed their election by acclamation, and the Rapporteur was invited to take his seat at the podium.

III. Adoption of the agenda

8. The Chairperson proceeded to the adoption of the Agenda, and invited delegations to give proposals for modifications.
9. The representative from Denmark requested to put on the provisional agenda for the Twelfth Meeting of the High Contracting Parties (2017) an additional item on the follow-up to 38C/Res.101 adopted by the UNESCO's General Conference at its 38th session concerning the "Governance, procedures and working methods of the governing bodies of UNESCO", and requested that all High Contracting Parties submit their written considerations on this issue to the Secretariat prior to the Meeting. Cuba and the Dominican Republic supported this proposal. The Chairperson proposed to include this item in the Recommendations of the High Contracting Parties.
10. As no other proposals for modifications were made, the agenda was adopted as proposed.

IV. Report of the Secretariat on its activities

11. After the adoption of the agenda, the Chairperson proceeded to introduce the item number 4 of the agenda, inviting the Secretariat to present an update on its activities in addition to the information stated in the report.
12. The floor was then given to the Secretary to present the report of the Secretariat. He gave an update on activities that had occurred since 30 September 2015, as well as additional information that was not made available in the Report.
13. The Secretary began his Report by announcing that Ethiopia became a State Party to both the 1954 Hague Convention and its First Protocol on 31 August 2015, which entered into force on 30 November 2015. The main points of his presentation can be summarized as follows:
 - The Secretariat organized an expert meeting on the concept of the "Responsibility to Protect as applied to the protection of cultural heritage" on 26-27 November 2015 at the Headquarters. 22 legal experts and representatives of governmental and non-governmental organizations participated in this meeting. During the first day of the meeting, the experts discussed in general the notion of the Responsibility to Protect and its possible extension to the protection of cultural heritage. On the second day, the experts focused on the concepts of "safe havens" and "protected cultural zones". As a result of the meeting, the experts adopted a set of recommendations for the Director-General and UNESCO Member States, including a recommendation to give due consideration to the idea of establishing "safe havens" and "protected cultural zones".
 - The General Conference, at its 38th session adopted the strategy on the Reinforcement of UNESCO's Action for the Protection of Culture and the Promotion of Cultural Pluralism in the Event of Armed Conflict (document 38 C/49). This strategy was developed as a response to the increasing deliberate attacks on cultural heritage, and includes specific suggestions for priority activities to be undertaken by UNESCO and its Member States. The two-fold objectives of the strategy are: (a) to strengthen the ability of Member States to prevent, mitigate and recover the loss of cultural heritage and diversity as a result of conflict by developing institutional and professional capacities for reinforced protection; and (b) to incorporate the protection of culture into humanitarian action, security strategies

and peace-building processes by engaging with relevant stakeholders outside the culture domain.

- The Secretary highlighted the projects on the dissemination of the Hague Convention and its two (1954 and 1999) Protocols within the military. The Secretariat had been working with the University of Newcastle to prepare military training materials for the protection of cultural property in the event of armed conflict. It also initiated the preparation of a military manual on the same issue in close co-operation with Sanremo International Institute of Humanitarian Law. Finally, the Secretariat participated in the November 2015 Tyre (Lebanon) meeting on property in the event of armed conflict for UNIFIL (United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon), as well as in a side event at the ICRC International Conference in Geneva on the protection of cultural property, which focused on the importance of culture and heritage from a humanitarian perspective.
 - The Secretariat thanked several States Parties for their generous contributions to the Fund for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict: the Netherlands (25,000 EUR), Switzerland (20,000 CHF), Slovakia (15,000 EUR) and the Czech Republic (7,235.08 EUR). It also announced that the total assets of the Fund, as of 4 December 2015, are US\$ 387,718.91, and further thanked Switzerland for its generous contribution of 100,000 CHF in total, 20,000 CHF to the Fund and 80,000 CHF to enhance activities of the Secretariat for three specific projects: 1) the promotion of wider ratification of the Hague Convention and its protocols; 2) ensuring training for peacekeeping forces on the protection of cultural heritage in the event of armed conflict; and 3) collaboration with national committees for international humanitarian law in order to ensure adoption of relevant legislation by Parties. Finally, it was mentioned the new addition of a Junior Professional Officer from China, Ms Shen Yue, to enhance the resources of the Heritage Division in the field of knowledge management.
 - The Secretariat noted the informal request by Libya on 19 October 2015 to obtain financial assistance from the Fund to the amount of US\$ 50,000 for activities related to emergency measures with regard to awareness-raising and protection of World Heritage sites.
14. In response to an inquiry by Denmark regarding why the item on the follow-up of the IOS audit was included in the provisional agenda of the Tenth Meeting of the Committee and not in the provisional agenda of the Eleventh Meeting of the High Contracting Parties and the Sixth Meeting of the Parties, the Secretary stated that the reason for inclusion of this item in the Committee meeting was to follow up Decision 9.COM 11 adopted by the Committee at its Ninth Meeting in December 2014.
 15. Following the delivery of the Report of the Secretariat, the Chairperson opened the discussion to the delegations.
 16. Taking the floor Nigeria thanked the Secretariat for regularly meeting with Delegations and offering assistance. The representative raised a question regarding why the international discussion platform (consisting of representatives of UNESCO, the ICRC and the Blue Shield) on all matters related to the protection of cultural property in the event of armed conflict was not convened during 2015. The Secretariat responded that the convening of the platform would be a matter for discussion with the Chairperson of the Committee.
 17. Argentina expressed concern over the fact that Mali submitted an official request to the Secretariat for the granting of enhanced protection for the World Heritage site “Tomb of Askia” one day after the statutory deadline of 1 March 2015, resulting in its inability to be considered by the Committee in 2015, and requested greater flexibility by the Secretariat in considering requests submitted past the deadline.

V. Exchange of national experiences and debate

18. The Chairperson then moved to item 5 and invited States to share their national experiences.
19. The representative of France informed that the President of the Louvre, Jean-Luc Martinez, at the request of President François Hollande, recently developed a 50-point strategy for the

protection of cultural heritage, which is available on-line. He also provided information on the newly published Handbook on the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict. Furthermore, Lieutenant General Xavier de Marnhac (retired), former KFOR Commander (2007-2008), shared his experience in Kosovo on preserving cultural heritage with the participants of the meeting.

20. The Delegation of Cambodia also provided information concerning the activities carried out by Cambodian authorities on implementation of the 1954 Hague Convention and its two Protocol since December 2013, including the Asian regional seminar organized on September 2015.

VI. Adoption of recommendations

21. As there were no further comments regarding national implementation, the Chairperson proceeded to the adoption of recommendations.
22. Notably, the recommendations were amended to include reference to the Resolution recently adopted by the General Conference at its 38th session concerning the strategy on the “Reinforcement of UNESCO’s Action for the Protection of Cultural Heritage and the promotion of Cultural Pluralism in the Event of Armed Conflict”. Furthermore, the recommendations were amended to acknowledge the issue of cultural property under threat in Iraq, Libya, Mali, Syria and Yemen.
23. Additionally, the recommendations were amended to include a provision inviting the High Contracting Parties to communicate to the Secretariat by 30 June 2016 proposals for the modification of its Rules of Procedure, and requested the Secretariat to prepare a working document reflecting the proposals received to present at its Twelfth Meeting.
24. The recommendations were adopted as amended.

VII. Miscellaneous

25. The Chairperson then moved to miscellaneous issues to be discussed. Japan posed a question to the Secretariat about the link between the concept of “protected cultural zones” and 1954 Hague Convention and its two (1954 and 1999) Protocols. The Secretary thanked Japan for raising this important question and stated that Article 19 of the Hague Convention which enables UNESCO to offer its services to the parties to the conflict can be a legal ground for application of the concept of “protected cultural zones”. No other questions were raised.

VIII. Closure of the Meeting

26. The Chairperson declared the Meeting closed and thanked all participants and observers, as well as the Secretariat, for their contribution to the success of the Meeting.