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

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

**Seventh session**

**UNESCO Headquarters, Room II**

**4 to 6 June 2018**

**Item 5 of the Provisional Agenda:**

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

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| **Summary**  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’. This document contains a draft report on the Committee’s activities from January 2016 to December 2017, including the reports by States Parties it adopted during the same period, that is at its eleventh and twelfth 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 ‘[t]he report shall be brought to the attention of the General Conference of UNESCO’. Furthermore, by its Resolution 6.GA 5, the General Assembly requested that the Committee ‘report on its activities for the period between January 2016 and December 2017 for examination by the General Assembly at its seventh session, and […] use a biennium calendar year for future reports thereafter’. In this regard, a report by the Committee is presented below in the annex to this document. This report also contains a set of national reports submitted by States Parties, in the sense of Article 29 of the Convention, which were adopted by the Committee during its eleventh and twelfth sessions.
2. This report should be read in conjunction with the report by the Secretariat on its activities (document [ITH/18/7.GA/7](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/ITH-18-7.GA-7-EN.docx)) and the financial statement of the Fund for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (document [ITH/18/7.GA/INF.8](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/ITH-18-7.GA-INF.8-EN.docx)).
3. The General Assembly may wish to adopt the following resolution:

DRAFT RESOLUTION 7.GA 5

The General Assembly,

1. Having examined document ITH/18/7.GA/5,
2. Recalling Article 30 of the Convention,
3. Welcomes the eleven States – Cabo Verde, Cook Islands, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Malta, Saint Kitts and Nevis, South Sudan, Suriname, Thailand, Timor-Leste and Tuvalu – that have ratified the Convention during the reporting period, as well as the two States - Kiribati and Singapore – that ratified the Convention after the reporting period and expresses satisfaction with the continued and steady pace of ratification across the regions;
4. Takes note of the report by the Committee to the General Assembly on its activities between January 2016 and December 2017, as annexed to this document, and thanks the Committee for its effective work;
5. Commends the Committee for the progress made in improving the governance of the Convention and, in particular, for the forward-looking work accomplished to date in developing an overall results framework for measuring the Convention’s impact at various levels as well as the work of the ad-hoc working group established by the Committee at its eleventh session;
6. Further commends the Committee for its continued priority attention to capacity building for the implementation of the Convention at the national level and welcomes the new special attention granted to the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage in formal and non-formal education;
7. Appreciates the attention that the Committee has given to the need to raise the visibility of the Convention by designing outreach and communication tools for the Convention;
8. Acknowledges with satisfaction the continuing interest shown by States Parties in the Convention’s mechanisms for international cooperation, notably the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding, the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices and International Assistance;
9. Requests that the Director-General bring this report to the attention of the General Conference of UNESCO, in conformity with Article 30, paragraph 2 of the Convention.

**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 2016, the General Assembly renewed half of the twenty-four members of the Committee, by electing twelve States Parties to serve a term of four years. The twenty-four members of the Committee, during the period June 2016 to June 2018, were: Afghanistan, Algeria, Armenia, Austria, Bulgaria, Colombia, Congo, Côte d’Ivoire, Cuba, Cyprus, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Hungary, India, Lebanon, Mauritius, Mongolia, Palestine, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Saint Lucia, Senegal, Turkey and Zambia.
3. During the reporting period, the Committee has met twice: in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, from 28 November to 4 December 2016 for its eleventh session (11.COM), and in Jeju Island, Republic of Korea, from 4 to 9 December 2017 for its twelfth session (12.COM).
4. The Bureau of the eleventh session of the Committee was elected by the tenth session in December 2015 in Windhoek, Namibia, and was 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.
5. The Bureau of the twelfth session of the Committee was elected by the eleventh session in December 2016 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, and was composed of: H.E. Mr Byong-hyun Lee (Republic of Korea) as Chairperson; Turkey, Bulgaria, Colombia, Côte d’Ivoire and Palestine as Vice-Chairpersons; and Mr Gábor Soós (Hungary) as Rapporteur.
6. The Bureau of the thirteenth session of the Committee was elected at the end of the twelfth session in December 2017 in Jeju Island, Republic of Korea, and is composed of: Cyprus, Armenia, Guatemala, Philippines, Lebanon as Vice-Chairpersons; and Ms Gabriele Detschmann (Austria) as Rapporteur. Following the request of Mauritius, the Committee decided to suspend part of Rule 13.1 and elect the Chairperson of the Committee through electronic consultation by 31 January 2018 at the latest. Through this electronic consultation, the Committee elected H.E. Mr Prithvirajsing Roopun (Republic of Mauritius) as the Chairperson of its thirteenth session.
7. The Bureau met daily during the sessions of the Committee. During the reporting period, it also met four times at UNESCO Headquarters, on: 2 June 2016 (11.COM 2.BUR), 20 October 2016 (11.COM 3.BUR), 24 May 2017 (12.COM 2.BUR) and 3 October 2017 (12.COM 4.BUR). In addition, electronic consultations were held in April 2016 (11.COM 1.BUR), June 2016 (11.COM 2.BUR), February to March 2017 (12.COM 1.BUR), May to June 2017 (12.COM 2.BUR) and August to September 2017 (12.COM 3.BUR)*.*
8. During the reporting period, the Committee and its Bureau examined a total of 81 items inscribed on their agendas, which were accompanied by 78 working documents or information documents and 11 nominations to the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding, 71 nominations to the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, 23 requests for International Assistance, 11 proposals to the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices, 55 reports submitted by States Parties and 109 requests for the accreditation or renewal of non-governmental organizations.
9. **Promoting the objectives of the Convention, encouraging and monitoring its implementation, and providing guidance on safeguarding measures and good practices** (Article 7[a] and 7[b])
10. **Ratification**
11. Eleven States – Cabo Verde, Cook Islands, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Malta, Saint Kitts and Nevis, South Sudan, Suriname, Thailand, Timor-Leste and Tuvalu – ratified the Convention between January 2016 and December 2017. At the end of 2017, 175 States were party to the Convention.
12. **Sound governance facilitated by enhanced knowledge management services**
13. The Committee remains committed to the sound governance of the Convention and to possible improvements to that end. In line with the overall efforts to improve the governance of UNESCO and its dependant funds, programmes and entities, and in response to the invitation of the General Conference (38 C/Resolution 101), at its eleventh and twelfth sessions, the Intergovernmental Committee examined an item regarding the follow-up to the recommendations of the relevant External Auditor’s report contained in document 38 C/23 of the General Conference. In particular, the Committee examined the actions already taken and those foreseen to improve the governance of the Convention. According to its [Decision 11.COM 7](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/11.COM/7), the Committee transmitted to the Chairperson of the open-ended working group on governance a report on the status of foreseen or ongoing reforms and actions already taken (included in the annexes of documents [ITH/16/11.COM/7](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/ITH-16-11.COM-7-EN.docx) and [ITH/16/11.COM/5](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/ITH-16-11.COM-5-EN.docx)).
14. The Convention’s knowledge management system is an indispensable tool for facilitating the sound and improved governance of the Convention. It provides a unique repository of information accessible to all interested parties as well as a fundamental working tool for both its governing and advisory bodies and its Secretariat. However, in order to adapt to the constantly changing reality of the Convention and to meet the evolving demands of a wide range of stakeholders, the knowledge management system needs to be steadily improved.
15. In its Resolution 6.GA 9, the General Assembly approved a Plan for the use of the resources of the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund [hereafter the Fund] for the period 1 January 2016 to 31 December 2017, which devoted 20 per cent of the budget (US$1,590,746) to the ‘other functions of the Committee’. By its [Decision 10.COM 8](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/10.COM/8), the Committee delegated to its Bureau the authority to decide upon the utilization of the funds allocated under this line of the Plan, based on specific proposals to be prepared by the Secretariat. Recognizing the importance of the knowledge management system, the Bureau approved an amount of US$386,900 for the period January 2016 to December 2017[[1]](#footnote-1) for activities aimed at improving the system’s accessibility, usability and functionalities. Detailed information on the results of these activities is included in the report of the Secretariat to the Committee (document [ITH/18/7.GA/7](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/ITH-18-7.GA-7-EN.docx)).
16. **Strengthening the capacity-building programme and guidance on safeguarding measures and good practices**
17. The Committee continues to consider capacity building as a priority, convinced that the effective implementation of the Convention depends on a thorough knowledge and understanding of the Convention and its concepts, measures and mechanisms. Therefore, the Bureau of the Committee allocated a total of US$817,346, – or 51 per cent of the line ‘other functions of the Committee’ – to the period January 2016 to December 2017. Activities proposed under this line were aimed at supporting a number of cross-cutting needs, in particular: (i) strengthening the network of expert facilitators; (ii) developing adequate content, formats and materials, such as for policies, sustainable development and gender; (iii) monitoring, evaluating and adapting the strategy; (iv) developing alternate, lighter ways of sharing safeguarding experiences than just the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices; and (v) developing guidelines on inventories.
18. The funds dedicated to ‘other functions of the Committee’ are instrumental for developing and maintaining global functions for the effective delivery of the programme, while actual implementation at the country level is made possible through earmarked contributions to the Fund and Funds-in-Trust arrangements. Detailed information on the results of the activities approved by the Bureau concerning these issues is included in the report of the Secretariat to the Committee (document [ITH/18/7.GA/7](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/ITH-18-7.GA-7-EN.docx)), which also looks at the situation regarding the implementation of capacity-building programmes at the country level.
19. **Overall results framework**
20. Reaffirming its commitment to improving the implementation and monitoring of the Convention, the Committee continued the process of developing an overall results framework. The intention was to follow up on the recommendations of UNESCO’s Internal Oversight Service on UNESCO’s standard-setting work in the Culture Sector, which was undertaken in 2013. At its eleventh session, the Committee welcomed the results of a preliminary expert meeting on this subject, which was held in Beijing, China, in 2016 (see document [ITH/16/11.COM/14](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/ITH-16-11.COM-14-EN.docx)). Building on the outcomes of this expert meeting, an open-ended intergovernmental working group met in Chengdu, China, in 2017. The Committee examined a draft proposal for a results framework at its twelfth session (document [ITH/17/12.COM/9](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/ITH-17-12.COM-9-EN.docx)) and forwarded it to the General Assembly for its consideration/with a recommendation for its adoption at its seventh session.
21. The generous support from the Government of the People’s Republic of China (Decisions [10.COM 9](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/10.COM/9) and [11.COM 6](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/11.COM/6)), for a total of US$150,000, allowed the organization of both the preliminary expert meeting and the open-ended intergovernmental working group.
22. **Raising awareness and outreach**
23. Raising awareness of the importance of intangible cultural heritage and ensuring mutual appreciation thereof is one of the purposes of the Convention. To this end, the Bureau allocated US$336,500 for the period January 2016 to December 2017. The activities approved include, in particular: (i) the design of a communication and outreach plan with a view to promoting the objectives of the Convention; (ii) support for the integration of intangible cultural heritage into university courses in fields such as heritage studies, cultural policy, development studies and others; and (iii) consultation on how to integrate intangible cultural heritage into training programmes for teachers and educators. Furthermore, by its [Decision 11.COM 5](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/11.COM/5), the Committee invited the Secretariat to expand the outreach and visibility of its activities. Detailed information on the results of these activities is included in the report by the Secretariat to the Committee (document [ITH/18/7.GA/7](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/ITH-18-7.GA-7-EN.docx)).
24. **Preparation of a draft plan for the use of the resources of the Fund and increasing the Fund’s resources** (Articles 7[c] and 7[d])
25. The Committee submits to the current session of the General Assembly a plan for the use of the resources of the Fund for the period 1 January 2018 to 31 December 2019 and for the first six months of 2020. This plan proposes a new approach compared to the plan proposed and adopted for the period 2016‑17 and the plans adopted before that. In particular, the new plan proposes measures to increase the utilization of the Fund. The biggest percentage continues to be dedicated to International Assistance. The plan can be found in document [ITH/18/7.GA/8](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/ITH-18-7.GA-8-EN.docx).
26. During the reporting period, the Fund received supplementary voluntary contributions of US$597,483 from the People’s Republic of China, the Republic of Korea and the Government of Netherlands in support of three different earmarked projects. The Sub-Fund of the Fund, devoted exclusively to enhancing the human capacities of the Secretariat, also received contributions of US$120,286 during the reporting period.
27. Document [ITH/18/7.GA/INF.8](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/ITH-18-7.GA-INF.8-EN.docx) includes, in Annex I, a list of such contributions for the reporting period as well as a statement of income and expenditures in Annex II. To inform donors of the funding gap for reaching the targets of the Convention, including those of the global capacity-building programme at the country level, the Secretariat identified two main funding priorities for the 2003 Convention for the period 2018 to 2021. These priorities were approved by the Committee at its twelfth session in December 2017 ([Decision 12.COM 6](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/12.COM/6)) as the framework within which it can accept voluntary supplementary contributions without express approval.
28. **Preparation of the Operational Directives for the implementation of the Convention** (Article 7[e])
29. During the reporting period, the Committee recommended that the General Assembly approve amendments to the Operational Directives for the implementation of the Convention as regards periodic reporting. In particular, the Committee recommends moving towards a regional cycle of national reporting.
30. **Examination of periodic reports** (Article 7[f])
31. The [Convention](https://ich.unesco.org/en/convention) 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 submit a report to the General Assembly.’ During the reporting period, the Committee examined seventeen reports by States Parties on the implementation of the Convention at the national level, ([six](https://ich.unesco.org/en/9a-periodic-reporting-00857) in 2016 and [eleven](https://ich.unesco.org/en/8b-periodic-reporting-00921) in 2017) and eighteen reports on the status of elements inscribed on the Urgent Safeguarding List ([six](https://ich.unesco.org/en/9b-periodic-reporting-usl-00858) in 2016 and [twelve](https://ich.unesco.org/en/8c-periodic-reporting-usl-00922) in 2017).
32. A detailed overview and summary of the periodic reports, as adopted by the Committee in its Decisions [11.COM 9.a](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/11.COM/9.a) and [11.COM 9.b](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/11.COM/9.b) (for the 2016 reports) as well as in Decisions [12.COM 8.b](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/12.COM/8.b) and [12.COM 8.c](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/12.COM/8.c) (for the 2017 reports), are included in the related documents of the Committee 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 (2016 cycle) | **ITH/16/11.COM/9.a:** [English](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/ITH-16-11.COM-9.a-EN.docx)/[French](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/ITH-16-11.COM-9.a-FR.docx) *See the* [*6 reports*](https://ich.unesco.org/en/9a-periodic-reporting-00857)*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 (2016 cycle) | **ITH/16/11.COM/9.b:** [English](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/ITH-16-11.COM-9.b-EN.docx)/[French](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/ITH-16-11.COM-9.b-FR.docx) *See the* [*6 reports*](https://ich.unesco.org/en/9b-periodic-reporting-usl-00858) *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 (2017 cycle) | **ITH/17/12.COM/8.b (Rev. English only)** [English](hhttps://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/ITH-17-12.COM-8.b_Rev.-EN.docx)/[French](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/ITH-17-12.COM-8.b-FR.docx) *See the* [*11 reports*](https://ich.unesco.org/en/8b-periodic-reporting-00921) *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 (2017 cycle) | **ITH/17/12.COM/8.c:** [English](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/ITH-17-12.COM-8.c-EN.docx)/[French](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/ITH-17-12.COM-8.c-FR.docx) *See the* [*12 reports*](https://ich.unesco.org/en/8c-periodic-reporting-usl-00922) *submitted* |

1. The Committee continues to be confronted with a high number of States Parties whose reports are overdue; for example, for the 2017 cycles, forty-four out of sixty-seven expected reports were not submitted.
2. **Inscriptions on the Lists of the Convention, selection of good safeguarding practices and granting of International Assistance** (Article 7[g])
3. During the reporting period, the Committee examined ninety-six files and inscribed a total of seventy-seven elements on the Lists of the Convention: ten elements on the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding and sixty-seven elements on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. During the reporting period, the Committee also selected seven good safeguarding practices. For the first time, at its eleventh session the Committee approved one International Assistance request that was examined together with a nomination to the Urgent Safeguarding List in order to support the implementation of the proposed safeguarding for an amount of US$238,970. At its twelfth session, the Committee approved two International Assistance requests for a total amount of US$566,940. Furthermore,during its twelfth session, the Committee reflected on and evaluated, for the first time, the removal of one element from the Urgent Safeguarding List and its transfer to the Representative List.
4. Since 2014, when the General Assembly approved 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 continued to establish the Evaluation Body during its eleventh and twelfth sessions by renewing three seats every cycle.
5. Following the recommendation of the Committee by its [Decision 10.COM 15.c](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/10.COM/15.c), in June 2016 the General Assembly approved the amendments to the Operational Directives to increase requests for International Assistance that can be approved by the Bureau of the Committee from US$25,000 to US$100,000. Accordingly, the Committee (for requests greater than US$100,000) or the Bureau (for requests up to US$100,000 and emergency requests) approved a total of eighteen out of twenty-three requests for International Assistance for a total amount of US$1,783,506 during the reporting period (see also document [ITH/17/12.COM/8.a](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/ITH-17-12.COM-8.a-EN.docx) for the report on the use of International Assistance by States Parties). A total of thirteen countries received financial assistance from the Fund during the period.
6. At the eleventh session of the Committee, a number of States members and not members of the Committee expressed their concerns about decision making in relation to the inscription/selection process and in particular about the overwhelming number of reversals (71 per cent - 17 out of 24) of the Evaluation Body‘s recommendations. In response to those concerns, the Committee established an informal ad hoc working group to ‘examine issues related to the consultation and dialogue between the Evaluation Body and the submitting States, the decision-making process of the Committee concerning nominations, proposals and requests’. Furthermore, the Secretariat was requested to ‘propose a procedure, to the next session of the Committee, which would include an intermediary step in the evaluation of files, thus allowing submitting States to respond to preliminary recommendations that the Evaluation Body would have addressed beforehand to the Secretariat’ ([Decision 11.COM 10](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/11.COM/10)). The Group met five times during the reporting period: in three meetings with the States Members of the Committee and two open-ended meetings. At one of the meetings, the Committee members of the ad hoc working group consulted the Evaluation Body members. A detailed overview of the results of the meeting and the proposal of the Secretariat can be found in related documents [ITH/17/12.COM/13](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/ITH-17-12.COM-13-EN.docx) and [ITH/17/12.COM/12](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/ITH-17-12.COM-12-EN.docx), respectively.
7. In response to the same concerns of States Parties, for the 2018 cycle the Evaluation Body proposed dual options of recommendation for nine files considered to be lacking minor technical information. This new approach allowed the Committee, at its twelfth session, to receive such missing information from the submitting States, allowing for the inscription of all nine such elements. In total, the Committee decided, at its twelfth session, to inscribe forty-four out of forty-nine nominations evaluated by the Evaluation Body and overturned the Evaluation Body’s recommendation on three nominations only.
8. Noting the views expressed by the Evaluation Body, the twelfth session of the Committee decided to extend the mandate of the informal ad hoc working group. The group is asked to study a number of issues concerning the governance of the Convention.
9. The External Auditor in his [report on the Culture Sector](http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0025/002590/259007e.pdf) presented to the Executive Board at its 202 session also expressed his concerns regarding the overturning of the recommendations of the Evaluation Body for nominations, proposals and requests. The report recommended that information on inscriptions resulting from such situation be reported to the Executive Board of UNESCO (Recommendation No. 13). In accordance to this recommendation, this document includes the information in question for the first time. While this document will not be transmitted to the Executive Board, it will be transmitted to the General Conference of UNESCO.

1. . For further details on outputs and indicators, refer to document [ITH/16/11.COM 2.BUR/1](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/ITH-16-11.COM_2.BUR-1_EN.docx). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)