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

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

**Eighth session**

**UNESCO Headquarters, Room I**

**8 to 10 September 2020**

**Item 15 of the Provisional Agenda:**

**Follow-up to the recommendations of the Open-Ended Working Group  
on Governance, Procedures and Working Methods of UNESCO**

|  |
| --- |
| **Summary**  The seventh session of the General Assembly of the States Parties to the 2003 Convention requested that an item be inscribed on the agenda of the present session of the General Assembly to deal with two interlinked issues concerning the governance, procedures and working methods of the 2003 Convention. This document provides information on the progress made in this regard with a proposed way forward.  **Decision required:** paragraph 12 |

1. The seventh session of the General Assembly of the States Parties to the 2003 Convention requested that an item be inscribed on the agenda of the present session of the General Assembly to deal with two interlinked issues concerning the governance, procedures and working methods of the 2003 Convention:
   1. Follow-up to the implementation of relevant recommendations of the Open-Ended Working Group on the Governance, Procedures and Working Methods of the Governing Bodies of UNESCO including by proposing draft amendments to the Rules of Procedure of the General Assembly ([Resolution 7.GA 12](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/7.GA/12)).
   2. Harmonization of the Rules of Procedure of the six culture conventions ([Resolution 7.GA 13](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Resolutions/7.GA/13)).
2. At its thirty-eighth session in 2015 ([38 C/Resolution 101](http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/GBS/38GC/pdf/101_Resolution.pdf); document 38 C/23), the General Conference of UNESCO invited all intergovernmental programmes, committees and organs of the conventions to discuss the follow-up to the recommendations of the External Auditor’s report to improve their governance through concrete measures. At the same time, the same session of the General Conference also established an Open–Ended Working Group on Governance, Procedures and Working Methods of the Governing Bodies of UNESCO with the objective to pursue greater synergy, harmonization, efficiency and impact.
3. Noting the disparity of the rules of procedure of the different governing bodies of UNESCO’s culture conventions and in line with the recommendations of the External Auditor, the General Assembly at its sixth session in 2016 invited States Parties to submit ‘proposals for the modification of its Rules of Procedure’ ([Resolution 6.GA 11](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/6.GA/11)) to improve coherence among UNESCO’s six culture conventions.
4. At its thirty-ninth session in 2017, the General Conference examined the report of the Open-Ended Working Group ([document 39 C/20](http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0025/002590/259081e.pdf)) and by its 39 C/Resolution 87 it endorsed the group’s recommendations as amended by the APX Commission[[1]](#footnote-1) in [document 39 C/70](http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0026/002600/260089e.pdf). Furthermore, by the same Resolution, the General Conference invited the Executive Board, the Director-General and the governing bodies of the different organs examined by the Open-Ended Working Group on Governance to implement, as appropriate, the recommendations endorsed. The examination by the twelfth session of the Committee was limited to those recommendations of the Open-Ended Working Group that specifically mention the 2003 Convention ([document ITH/17/12.COM/16](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/ITH-17-12.COM-16-EN.docx); [Decision 12.COM 16](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/12.COM/16)).
5. The seventh session of the General Assembly in 2018 subsequently examined at the same time two separate items concerning the follow-up to the recommendations of the Open-Ended Working Group and the Revision of the Rules of Procedure of the General Assembly, in line with some of the recommendations of the Open-Ended Working Group calling for the harmonization of the rules and procedure of the international and intergovernmental bodies of UNESCO and of the External Auditor’s report:

* The Assembly took note of the proposals submitted by six States Parties ([document  ITH/18/7.GA/13](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/ITH-18-7.GA-13-EN.docx)) and requested the Secretariat, amongst other issues, to prepare a consolidated set of draft amendments for examination by the present session of the General Assembly ([Resolution 7.GA 13](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Resolutions/7.GA/13)). The General Assembly at the same time stressed ‘the crucial role of the Culture Sector’ in the preparation of a matrix ‘containing the consolidated amendments to the rules of procedure of the above-mentioned bodies’.
* At the same time, the seventh session of the Assembly also reviewed the status of each recommendation of the Open-Ended Working Group on Governance, Procedures and Working Methods of UNESCO ([document ITH/18/7.GA/12](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/ITH-18-7.GA-12-EN.docx)) and requested that the Secretariat, amongst other issues, propose draft amendments to the Rules of Procedure of the General Assembly ([Resolution 7.GA 12](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/7.GA/12)).

1. Subsequently, the Secretariats of all the culture conventions established a working group to carry out an informal comparative analysis of the Rules of Procedures of these instruments. The work undertaken by the group raised several questions, including about which Rules of Procedure should be used as the baseline for any harmonization.
2. The status of each recommendation of the Open-Ended Working Group was further discussed by the thirteenth session of the Committee in 2018 ([document ITH/18/13.COM/17](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/ITH-18-13.COM-17-EN.docx); [Decision 13.COM 17](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/13.COM/17)). The following year, the fourteenth session ([document LHE/19/14.COM/19](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-19-14.COM-19-EN.docx)) of the Committee took note of the fact that many of the recommendations are now closed, and several of them are considered as good practices, after having received appropriate follow-up actions. Furthermore, a set of mitigating measures have already been taken for most of the outstanding recommendations, while at the same time, some other issues require action by States Parties on a long term-basis.
3. A clear example of the efforts of the Secretariat to continue responding to the recommendations of the Open-Ended Working Group is the inclusion of item 8 in the provisional agenda of the current session of the General Assembly to discuss the contribution made by States Parties to the 2003 Convention to the preparation of the new Medium-Term Strategy 2022-2029 (41 C/4) and draft Programme and Budget 2022-2025 (41 C/5) through the electronic consultation carried out in May 2020 ([document LHE/20/8.GA/8](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-20-8.GA-8-EN.docx)). The electronic consultation and item 8 of the provisional agenda are a direct response to recommendation 74 of the Open-Ended Working Group by which all IIBs should have the opportunity to submit formal inputs to the mid-term strategy C/4 and the draft Programme and Budget C/5 documents of UNESCO.
4. Whilst the issue of ‘harmonization’ figures in a number of recommendations of the working group (e.g., 58, 65, 66, 67, 71 and 96), most of which are considered ongoing, the fourteenth session of the Committee concluded that the governing bodies and the Secretariat have made steady progress in contribution to the sound governance of the 2003 Convention and requested the Secretariat to continue reporting ‘as and when necessary’ on further progress regarding the status of recommendations ([Decision 14.COM 19](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/14.COM/19)).
5. In the meantime, the present session of the General Assembly is asked under Item 7 of its provisional agenda to examine the proposed revision to the Financial Regulations of the Special Account for the Fund for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of the 2003 Convention with a view to aligning them with the Model Financial Regulations for Special Account related to Conventions endorsed by the UNESCO Executive Board ([document LHE/20/8.GA/7 Rev.](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-20-8.GA-7_Rev.-EN.docx)). This can be considered a pertinent example of the effort to harmonize the rules governing the 2003 Convention so that they are coherent to the extent possible with similar rules governing other instruments under the responsibility of the Organization.
6. Considering that the main objective of harmonizing the Rules of Procedure was to respond to the recommendations of the Open-Ended Working Group and further considering that sufficient progress on these recommendations was confirmed by the fourteenth session of the Committee, the Secretariat proposes that this issue can now be considered closed without further need for reporting to the subsequent session of the General Assembly. Needless to say, the Secretariat will continue its efforts to identify further possibilities to harmonize the rules of procedure of the governing bodies of the 2003 Convention with that of other culture conventions as and when relevant and possible, and will report to the governing bodies of the Convention accordingly.
7. The General Assembly may wish to adopt the following resolution:

DRAFT RESOLUTION 8.GA 15

The General Assembly,

1. Having examined document LHE/20/8.GA/15,
2. Recalling documents [LHE/20/8.GA/7 Rev](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-20-8.GA-7_Rev.-EN.docx)., [LHE/20/8.GA/8](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-20-8.GA-8-EN.docx), [LHE/19/14.COM/19](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-19-14.COM-19-EN.docx), [ITH/18/13.COM/17](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/ITH-18-13.COM-17-EN.docx), [ITH/17/12.COM/16](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/ITH-17-12.COM-16-EN.docx), [ITH/18/7.GA/13](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/ITH-18-7.GA-13-EN.docx) and [ITH/18/7.GA/12](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/ITH-18-7.GA-12-EN.docx), Decisions [14.COM 19](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/14.COM/19), [13.COM 17](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/13.COM/17), [12.COM 16](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/12.COM/16) and Resolutions [7.GA 12](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Resolutions/7.GA/12), [7.GA 13](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Resolutions/7.GA/13) and [6.GA 11](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Resolutions/6.GA/11),
3. Further recalling [38 C/Resolution 101](http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/GBS/38GC/pdf/101_Resolution.pdf) and [39 C/Resolution 87](https://en.unesco.org/sites/default/files/39c-res87-governance-eng.pdf),
4. Encourages the Culture Sector to continue its efforts, wherever appropriate, to harmonize the rules of procedure of the governing bodies of the culture conventions in conformity with [Resolution 7.GA 13](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Resolutions/7.GA/13);
5. Considers that sufficient progress has been made with the follow-up to the implementation of the relevant recommendations of the Open-Ended Working Group on the Governance, Procedures and Working Methods of the Governing Bodies of UNESCO that require the attention of the General Assembly and requests that the Secretariat continue reporting as and when necessary on further progress regarding the status of recommendations.

1. . Administration and general questions, programme support and external relations Commission of the General Conference. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)