**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 8 of the Provisional Agenda:**

**Contribution to the preparation of the new Medium-Term Strategy 2022-2029 (41C/4)  
and draft Programme and Budget 2022-2025 (41C/5**)

|  |
| --- |
| **Summary**  States Parties to the 2003 Convention took part in an electronic consultation in May 2020 to contribute to the preparation of the draft Medium-Term Strategy 2022– 2029 (Document 41 C/4) and draft Programme and Budget 2022–2025 (Document 41 C/5). This consultation was organized in response to an invitation from the 39th session of the General Conference ([Resolution 39 C/87](https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000260889)). This document provides information pertaining to the outcome of the consultation.  **Decision required:** paragraph 17 |

1. The UNESCO General Conference, at its 39th session in 2017, invited the Executive Board, the Director-General, and the governing bodies of UNESCO to implement the recommendations of the Open-Ended Working Group on Governance ([Resolution 39 C/87](https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000260889)), in particular Recommendation 74 as outlined in [Document 39 C/70](https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000260089), which calls for the consultation of all of UNESCO’s international and intergovernmental bodies to propose formal contributions to the draft Medium-Term Strategy 2022–2029 (Document 41 C/4) and draft Programme and Budget 2022–2025 (Document 41 C/5). The present document provides information pertaining to the consultation that was undertaken with the States Parties to the 2003 Convention.
2. An agenda item was included in the current **session of the General Assembly** (originally scheduled to take place from 9 to 11 June 2020), following [Decision 14.COM 19](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/14.COM/19), in order to facilitate the discussion with States Parties and give them the opportunity to provide input to the preparation of the draft 41 C/4 and 41 C/5 documents. However, due to the re-scheduling of that session and the required date for completing the consultation process with international and intergovernmental bodies (by the end of June 2020), the Secretariat of the 2003 Convention proceeded with an electronic survey, which was carried out from 4 to 29 May 2020.
3. The survey, which States Parties completed online in either [English](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/48435-EN.pdf) or [French](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/48435-FR.pdf), resulted in a high return rate: 47 per cent (83 out of 178) of States Parties responded, demonstrating their support to the work of the 2003 Convention. Of the responses, 19 per cent were from E.G. I, 15 per cent from E.G. II, 17 per cent from E.G. III, 16 per cent from E.G. IV, 25 per cent from E.G. V(a) and 8 per cent from E.G. V(b).
4. Based on the responses and data collected through the survey, a thorough analysis was conducted by the Secretariat to gain strategic insights and recommendations for the future work of the 2003 Convention, which are provided in the sections below. The substantial information and feedback obtained through the respective consultation processes with each governing body will be collected at the Culture Sector level and fed into the Director-General’s preliminary proposal for the draft 41 C/4 and 41 C/5 documents, which will be discussed at the 210th session of UNESCO’s Executive Board.
5. **Achievements and emerging challenges**
6. The majority of States Parties expressed that the Convention has more important functions (Question 1) as a standard setter and capacity builder in the field of culture than as a laboratory of ideas and clearing house, confirming the Convention’s prominent normative and operational functions. In line with this response, the following were considered as the most pertinent results achieved during the current 37 C/4 Medium-Term Strategy (2014–2021) (Question 2): ‘Community involvement in safeguarding living heritage’ (74 per cent of responses); ‘Reinforced institutional/human capacities for safeguarding’ (69 per cent); and ‘Integration of ICH safeguarding into national policies’ (65 per cent).
7. At the same time, many States Parties signalled the following ongoing and emerging challenges as key issues to be addressed in the next Programme and Budget (Question 4.a): ‘Expanding the reach of its capacity-building programme and finding diverse and innovate ways of delivering it’ (83 per cent of responses); ‘Monitoring the implementation of the Convention at the country and community levels’ (81 per cent); and ‘Sustaining the delivery of the Convention’s programmes and mechanisms at the country level’ (79 per cent). In order to address these challenges, some of the concrete actions proposed by States Parties were: i) customized capacity-building support, catered to the needs of the communities and countries; ii) cross-sectoral, inter-institutional and multi-stakeholder approaches to safeguarding intangible cultural heritage; and iii) knowledge-sharing and collaboration between relevant actors to strengthen countries’ implementation at the national level (Question 4.b).
8. **2003 Convention and the Sustainable Development Goals**
9. Throughout the questionnaire, the States Parties acknowledged the cross-cutting nature of intangible cultural heritage and affirmed its distinct relevance and alignment with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The responses also recommended ‘sector-specific interventions in the delivery of capacity-building activities’ and ‘solid policy advice on the integration of intangible cultural heritage in national development plans and policies’ as key actions, which could be undertaken under the 2003 Convention to support States in their implementation of the 2030 Agenda (Questions 6.a and 6.b). The SDGs 4, 5, 8, 11, 16 and their corresponding targets were highlighted as most pertinent, in response to questions 5.a and 5.b (Figure 1), including:

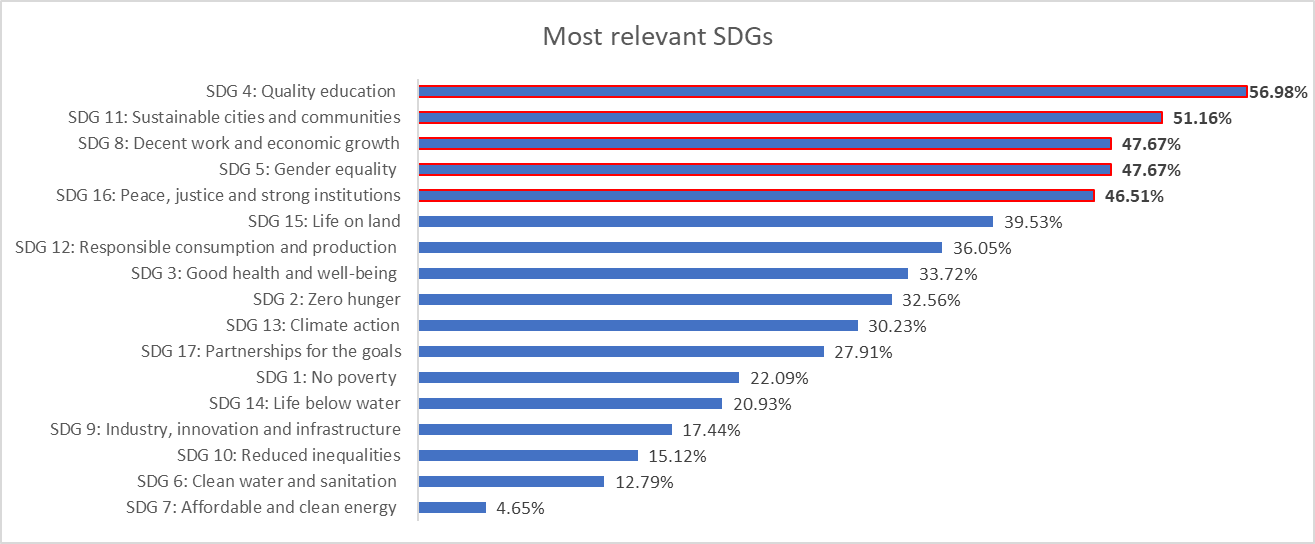
* Target 4.7 Education for sustainable development;
* Target 11.4 Safeguarding cultural and natural heritage;
* Target 8.9 Policies to promote sustainable tourism;
* Target 5.1 End discrimination against women and girls; and
* Target 16.7 Ensure inclusive and participatory decision-making at all levels.

Figure 1 Relevance of the 2003 Convention to the Sustainable Development Goals

1. With particular emphasis on target 4.7 (Education for sustainable development), the inter-sectoral work on intangible cultural heritage and education with the Education Sector was highly appreciated and the survey responses reiterated States’ support to continue working on this theme (Questions 5.b, 6.b, 7.a and 9.a). States underlined that incorporating intangible cultural heritage in formal/non-formal education programmes can make education more inclusive and equitable, thus promoting lifelong learning opportunities (i.e., vocational training on traditional craftsmanship). They also raised the importance of fostering inclusive societies by ensuring access to education for marginalized and vulnerable groups (i.e., indigenous peoples, displaced populations) through the community-based approaches of intangible cultural heritage.
2. The crucial role intangible cultural heritage can play in maintaining peace and security in society was also highlighted through the survey (Questions 7.a and 7.b). States Parties expressed living heritage as an essential foundation for building tolerance, resilience, dialogue and social cohesion among communities, and as an effective enabler for fostering peaceful societies (SDG 16). This reflects the ongoing work of intangible cultural heritage in emergencies, with the objectives of mitigating threats to living heritage and enhancing the role it may play as a powerful tool for resilience and recovery.
3. **Synergies and opportunities for cooperation**
4. Among other UNESCO programmes beyond the Culture Sector, the Man and Biosphere Programme of the Science Sector was considered as one of the most pertinent for collaboration during the 2022–2029 period, in line with the proposed thematic area ‘intangible cultural heritage and environmental sustainability’. For example, the local and traditional knowledge systems of indigenous communities, which make equitable use of natural resources (water, land, agriculture, etc.) and respect ecosystems and biological diversity, were recognized as important for adapting to environmental challenges and possibly mitigating climate change (SDGs 12, 13 and 15).
5. Within the Culture Sector, the States Parties stressed the importance of better collaboration and synergies with other UNESCO cultural conventions, while recognizing the holistic and socio-economic perspectives related to the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage (Question 9.a). Collaboration with the 1972 Convention was considered crucial in order to pursue a comprehensive approach to the protection of cultural heritage (SDG 11). The community-based safeguarding plans of the 2003 Convention, as well as communities’ knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe, are expected to strengthen the links between the tangible environment and the intangible cultural values of communities as well as their livelihoods. The States Parties also raised the pertinence of joint collaboration between the 2003 and 2005 Conventions, considering the various economic aspects related to living heritage such as crafts, musical practices and performing arts, which provide the communities concerned with a source of income. While respecting the social functions and cultural meanings of living heritage, the linkages could contribute to inclusive and sustainable economic growth (SDG 8).
6. **Future orientations**
7. The survey responses showed that States Parties are very interested in the 2003 Convention moving towards thematic actions (Figure 2). In addition to intangible cultural heritage and education, a wide range of thematic areas – such as intangible cultural heritage and indigenous peoples, climate change, emergencies, tourism and agriculture/food security – are noted as significant for the future work of the 2003 Convention (Questions 7.a and 7.b).

Figure 2: The 2003 Convention and thematic areas

1. In coherence with the cross-cutting approach to safeguarding, inter-sectoral and inter-institutional cooperation was underlined as one of the main operational modalities for the future implementation of the 2003 Convention. A considerable number of States Parties suggested establishing strategic cross-sectoral partnerships at local, national, regional and international levels to foster effective interventions for safeguarding living heritage. The cooperation could first capitalize on the Convention’s solid network of implementation partners, which includes government institutions, communities, civil society, experts, category 2 centres, as well as academia and the private sector (Questions 10.a and 10.b). Collaboration with different sectors – education, science, agriculture, health, tourism, industry and so on – could equally facilitate inter-ministerial cooperation and inter-agency cooperation with other UN bodies in jointly implementing the 2030 Agenda.
2. Cross-sectoral cooperation was also considered for the implementation of the two global priorities, Africa and Gender Equality (Questions 8.a, 8.b and 8.c) (Figure 3). The Convention’s work is observed to have a high impact in Africa. This is a result of the fruitful capacity-building actions that have been undertaken in the region and States requested intensifying these actions in the future with even greater participation of communities. For Gender Equality, the survey showed that there was still room for improvement in mainstreaming gender issues in the programmes and mechanisms of the Convention through awareness-raising initiatives and capacity-building activities. To strengthen the impact in Africa for the next Medium-Term Strategy, States called for the active involvement of youth in the safeguarding and transmission of living heritage. Together, youth and indigenous peoples were highlighted as main priority groups for the future work of the Convention (Question 8.d). The empowerment of youth equally raised the essential need for alternative approaches and innovative measures for safeguarding, especially through digital technology in order to foster inter-generational transmission in an engaging and inclusive manner.

Figure 3: The 2003 Convention and the global priorities of UNESCO

1. Another important recommendation emanating from the survey is the need to establish strategic regional and inter-regional alliances with regional bodies. The cooperation with regional financial bodies, such as regional development banks, was proposed as one of the key funding opportunities to explore for mobilizing critical resources for the 2003 Convention (Questions 11.a and 11.b). The expectations and demands for safeguarding intangible cultural heritage at the country and community levels are growing rapidly, whereas the institutional capacity and available resources of UNESCO are limited. While States still consider voluntary contributions as a basic source of funding for the Convention, public-private partnerships and targeted sector-specific partnerships with corporate entities and foundations were also mentioned as important funding opportunities. Furthermore, an enlarged scope of inter-sectoral cooperation with greater involvement of higher education institutions and media organizations was suggested, in addition to specific fundraising initiatives that could raise donations from private and philanthropic entities. Lastly, alternative funding opportunities included joint fundraising possibilities across different programmes and conventions, as well as resource mobilization at the national level in cooperation with States Parties.
2. The results of the survey demonstrated that the mandate and mission of the 2003 Convention remain highly relevant in today’s society, playing an important role in countering global challenges and contributing to sustainable development. **The survey covered several key issues and considerations that States Parties may wish to take into account as ways forward for the future development of the 2003 Convention. They are expected to provide solid grounds for reflection on strategic views and programmatic orientations, as well as well-informed decisions for the governing bodies, for the work of the 2003 Convention during the 2022–2029 period.**
3. The General Assembly may wish to adopt the following resolution:

DRAFT RESOLUTION 8.GA 8

The General Assembly,

1. Having examined document LHE/20/8.GA/8,
2. Recalling the [Resolution 39 C/87](https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000260889) of UNESCO’s General Conference (2017), which invites the Executive Board, the Director-General, and the governing bodies of UNESCO to implement the recommendations of the Open-Ended Working Group on Governance, in particular Recommendation 74, as well as [Decision 14.COM 19](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/14.COM/19),
3. Thanks the States Parties that have participated in the electronic consultation for the preparation of the draft Medium-Term Strategy 2022–2029 (41 C/4) and draft Programme and Budget 2022–2025 (41 C/5) and appreciates the efforts of the Secretariat for rolling out the consultation in a timely manner and for conducting the analysis of the results;
4. Takes note of the outcomes of the consultation and welcomes the strategic views, programmatic orientations and concrete recommendations gained through this analysis, which could guide the future work of the 2003 Convention.