United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

Intangible
Cultural
Heritage

13 COM

ITH/18/13.COM/10.a
Paris, 24 October 2018
Original: English

CONVENTION FOR THE SAFEGUARDING OF THE INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE

INTERGOVERNMENTAL COMMITTEE FOR THE SAFEGUARDING OF THE INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE

Thirteenth session
Port Louis, Republic of Mauritius
26 November to 1 December 2018

Item 10.a of the Provisional Agenda:
Examination of nominations for inscription on the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding

Summary

The present document includes the recommendations of the Evaluation Body on nominations for inscription on the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding (Part A) and a set of draft decisions for the Committee's consideration (Part B). An overview of the 2018 files and the working methods of the Evaluation Body is included in document ITH/18/13.COM/10.

Decision required: paragraph 3

A. Recommendations

1. The Evaluation Body recommends that the Committee inscribe the following elements on the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding:

Draft Decision	Submitting State	Nomination	File No.
13.COM 10.a.2	Azerbaijan	Yalli (Kochari, Tenzere), traditional group dances of Nakhchivan	01190
13.COM 10.a.4	Egypt	Traditional hand puppetry	01376
13.COM 10.a.5	Kenya	Enkipaata, Eunoto and Olng'esherr, three male rites of passage of the Maasai community	01390
13.COM 10.a.6	Pakistan	Suri Jagek (observing the sun), traditional meteorological and astronomical practice based on the observation of the sun, moon and stars in reference to the local topography	01381
13.COM 10.a.7	Syrian Arab Republic	Shadow play	01368

2. The Evaluation Body recommends that the Committee refer the following nominations to the submitting States:

Draft Decision	Submitting State	Nomination	File No.
13.COM 10.a.1	Algeria	Knowledge and skills of the water measurers of the foggaras or water bailiffs of Touat and Tidikelt	01274
13.COM.10.a.3	Cambodia	Lkhon Khol Wat Svay Andet	01374

B. Draft decisions

3. The Committee may wish to adopt the following decisions:

DRAFT DECISION 13.COM 10.a.1

The Committee

1. Takes note that Algeria has nominated **Knowledge and skills of the water measurers of the foggaras or water bailiffs of Touat and Tidikelt** (No. 01274) for inscription on the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding:

   The element concerns the knowledge and skills of the water measurers of the foggaras (system of channels), or water bailiffs, of the ksour (village) communities of Touat and Tidikelt. The water measurers are involved in various operations, from calculating water shares to repairing distribution combs and conducting water in the channel. Every foggara connects several categories of social agents and knowledge bearers, including owners, manual workers, accountants and water measurers, but it is the water

measurers' knowledge that appears to be under threat. The water measurers are a key figure in the life of the Saharan ksour because they manage a domain vital to the survival of all. They play both an intellectual and a manual role and can be called upon continuously by the community. However, there is currently a lack of communication between young people and their elders, and several factors have disrupted the proper functioning of the foggara, including changes by the central government to relations of ownership, the effects of urbanization and modernisation, and a lack of consideration as to what steps need to be taken to ensure knowledge is transmitted. The loss of activity for water measurers is directly reflected in their advanced age, which demonstrates a lack of new practitioners entering the business.

2. Decides that, from the information included in the file, the nomination satisfies the following criteria for inscription on the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding:

U.1: The element is closely related to the way of life, economy and survival of the desert area of Algeria. The water measurers enjoy great respect and, despite radical changes seriously endangering the element, their activity remains integral to the culture of the foggaras. Apart from their role in water distribution, they also help maintain social balance, justice, morale and peace.

U.2: The knowledge and skills of the water measurers are closely connected to the historical local land law system, which has been affected by state interventions in oasis agriculture and introduction of technologically advanced underground water extraction methods. Along with the transfer of responsibility from individual owners to the state administration, such changes have entailed a loss of knowledge about traditional water distribution. With the increasing influence of modern agrotechnology, the water measurers' services are in decreasing demand, and the transmission of the element, never recorded in writing, is critically endangered.

U.4: Elected community representatives, members of an association for the protection of the foggaras, students, knowledge bearers and practitioners, in collaboration with researchers from the National Centre for Prehistoric, Anthropological and Historical Research and the institutions of the culture section of the Adrar prefecture all actively participated in preparing the nomination.

U.5: The element has been included in the National Intangible Cultural Heritage Data Bank since 2015, which is managed by the National Centre for Prehistoric, Anthropological and Historical Research. Several other institutions were also involved in identifying the element. The related information is updated through interviews, audiovisual documentation on transmission and reports on the current state of the element.

3. Further decides that the information included in the file is not sufficient to allow the Committee to determine whether the following criterion for inscription on the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding is satisfied:

U.3: Previous safeguarding measures, implemented primarily by public authorities, centered on developing infrastructure and rehabilitating the foggaras with a strong focus on the physical aspects of the element. Moreover, the two parts of the safeguarding plan – documenting the practice and training a new generation of water measurers – are unlikely to ensure the element's viability if the general change in water and land resource management is not addressed. Apart from the water measurers, the local community does not seem to be involved in safeguarding the element as an expression of living heritage. More information is also needed on: how the newly acquired knowledge and skills of trained practitioners will be utilized; how the entire knowledge system will be safeguarded, as the skills of the water measurers are not independent of the broader social context of this element; the financing for the safeguarding plan; the commitment of

the State Party and the objectives and expected impacts of the proposed safeguarding measures.

4. Decides to refer the nomination of **Knowledge and skills of the water measurers of the foggaras or water bailiffs of Touat and Tidikelt** to the submitting State Party and invites it to resubmit the nomination to the Committee for examination during a following cycle;

5. Commends the State Party for recognizing the vital role of traditional knowledge related to water distribution in difficult climatic conditions and further invites it to consider, when planning the safeguarding measures, the full complexity of the knowledge and skills related to the system of the foggaras and the implications of the general changes in water and land resource management in the areas concerned;

6. Reminds the State Party that updating is an important part of the inventorying process and also invites it to include detailed information in its next periodic report on the implementation of the Convention at the national level on how the National Intangible Cultural Heritage Data Bank has been drawn up and regularly updated with the active participation of the communities, groups and non-governmental organizations concerned, in accordance with Article 11(b) of the Convention.

DRAFT DECISION 13.COM 10.a.2

The Committee

1. Takes note that Azerbaijan has nominated **Yalli (Kochari, Tenzere), traditional group dances of Nakhchivan** (No. 01190) for inscription on the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding:

   Yalli, traditional group dances, are dance expressions based exclusively on collective performances. Typically, yalli are performed in a circle, chain or line, and involve elements of games, pantomime (bird or other animal imitations), physical exercises and movements. The community of the yalli dances consists of practising dancers, who enact the dances either spontaneously or in a planned manner at various festivities and celebrations. Some variants of yalli bear a song-like character and are practised by both women and men, while others are practised by men only and imitate pastoralist games with some elements of butting animals. Until the mid-twentieth century, yalli were widely practised but several factors have impacted the transmission of the practice thereafter. They include a gradual loss of social functions for certain types of yalli, a preference for staged performances, external factors such as labour migration and the economic crises of the late 1980s and early 1990s, a shift from informal to formal transmission, and a drastic simplification of the dances, which has entailed a loss of diversity.

2. Decides that, from the information included in the file, the nomination satisfies the following criteria for inscription on the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding:

   U.1: Yalli dances symbolize energy, solidarity and the rhythm of life, reinforcing social cohesion and friendship. Kochari and Tenzere are the most widely practised forms, and as local communities identify with them most intensely their chances of revitalization seem to be highest. The dances are transmitted informally during festivities and celebrations, as well as formally through folk dance groups and school education.

   U.2: Passive knowledge of the element significantly exceeds active knowledge; many yalli dances persist solely in the memories of elderly people and archives. Due to several negative factors, the element was considerably weakened in the second half of the twentieth century, and its practice continues to decline. The main risks include a loss of variety, the use of homogenized, simplified forms, the gradual loss of different roles of practitioners and social functions of the dances, the prevalence

of stage performances and the young generation's preference for other types of entertainment in urban contexts.

U.3: Past safeguarding measures primarily focused on identifying, researching and documenting the element and strengthening its practice in folk dance groups, schools, music schools and culture houses, without any systematic approach and community involvement. The proposed safeguarding plan is well-conceived with clear objectives reflecting the identified needs, a budget and a plan for the central government and the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of Nakhchivan to allocate fifteen employees. The plan aims to create favourable conditions to transmit yalli and sustain their practice in the future, and the establishment of an association and a Yalli Information Centre would allow practitioners to share their experiences and network.

U.4: The nomination was initiated by the Sharur Folk Yalli Dance Ensemble, representing the community of yalli dancers, which retains and transmits knowledge of the dance to younger generations. Selected practitioners worked directly on preparing the nomination file and other practitioners, communities and stakeholders were involved in the process through consultations in a working group; the practitioners who were most actively involved and several other stakeholders provided their free, prior and informed consent.

U.5: Since 2010, the element has been inscribed on the Register of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of the Republic of Azerbaijan. The inventory is updated through fieldwork as well as requests from relevant communities. Practitioners and several local folk dance ensembles and musical schools helped identify and inventory the element, and Sharur Folk Yalli Dance Ensemble members played a leading role in collecting information among the community.

3. Inscribes **Yalli (Kochari, Tenzere), traditional group dances of Nakhchivan** on the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding;

4. Reminds the State Party that intangible cultural heritage is intrinsically spontaneous and ever-changing and invites it to pay particular heed to ensuring that the large-scale training of new dancers does not lead to the standardization and decontextualization of the dances, the creation of new stereotypes and the further weakening of their spontaneous forms.

DRAFT DECISION 13.COM 10.a.3

The Committee

1. Takes note that Cambodia has nominated **Lkhon Khol Wat Svay Andet** (No. 01374) for inscription on the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding:

Lkhon Khol Wat Svay Andet is practised in one community surrounding a Buddhist monastery, Wat Svay Andet – located about 10km east of Phnom Penh on the Mekong River – and is performed by men wearing masks to the accompaniment of a traditional orchestra and melodious recitation. The specific aim is to propitiate the Neak Ta (guardian spirits of a place and its people), thereby protecting and bringing prosperity to the community, its lands and harvest. When Lkhon Khol is performed, spirit mediums are present and facilitate interactions between the Neak Ta, performers and villagers. When the spirits are satisfied with the performance, villagers are blessed by them; otherwise, the dancers stop, the music continues, and the audience falls silent and carefully listens to the spirits. Lkhon Khol is performed for ritual purposes, mostly linked to the cycle of rice farming and the needs of farming communities. The practice is transmitted orally within the community, and the Head Monk and retired primary school principal recently initiated additional weekend classes and started writing down scripts for selected episodes. After generations of transmission, however, several factors now threaten the viability of the element, including environmental factors, insufficient resources, economic

migration from the community and a fourteen-year break in transmission from 1970 to 1984 due to the war and the Khmer Rouge regime.

2. Decides that, from the information included in the file, the nomination satisfies the following criteria for inscription on the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding:

U.1: The ritual practice of Lkhon Khol Wat Svay Andet unites the local lay population of the Ta Skor and Peam Ta Ek villages with the Buddhist monastic community at Wat Svay Andet, where it has a deep spiritual meaning and social relevance. Lkhon Khol Wat Svay Andet is a prayer for happiness and prosperity, especially rain and a good harvest, and is also considered as a powerful tool to ward off calamities and diseases. As all community members contribute to the successful enactment of the performance, its existence is truly collective. Traditionally, the element has been transmitted orally, but nowadays additional weekend classes also strengthen it.

U.2: The viability of the element was most seriously threatened during the Khmer Rouge regime. The last five masters of the Lkhon Khol continue to transmit their knowledge; however, the majority of them are over seventy years old and some are critically ill. Moreover, as each master artist specializes in performing a specific character, transmission of other roles is very difficult. Many men of a productive age have left the community, which now consists mostly of young children and elderly women. The community's socio-economic situation also directly impacts people's ability to dedicate time and resources to continuing the tradition. The community strives to maintain the social function of the ritual and avoid its commercialization and performing for economic gains, which makes it difficult to finance the acquisition of new costumes and masks and a new performance area.

U.4: The Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts established a working group to cooperate with the local community during the preparation of the nomination file. A research team engaged in close, inclusive consultations with the Wat Svay Andet community and Lkhon Khol representatives. Community representatives, selected master artists, the head monk of Wat Svay Andet and the manager of Lkhon Khol Wat Svay Andet provided their free, prior and informed consent.

U.5: The element has been included in the Inventory of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Cambodia since 2004, and the entry was last updated in 2016. The inventory is periodically updated by the Directorate General of Techniques for Cultural Affairs of the Cambodian Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts, based on information provided by representatives of the Provincial Departments of Culture and Fine Arts, communities and NGOs. Members of the local community, including the monks, collaborated with the researchers in the identification and inventorying process.

3. Further decides that the information included in the file is not sufficient to allow the Committee to determine whether the following criterion for inscription on the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding is satisfied:

U.3: The clearly structured safeguarding plan is centered on community participation, and the safeguarding measures concentrate on increasing opportunities for performances, raising public awareness and, most importantly, intensifying transmission and providing the necessary material background. The community is willing to learn from good safeguarding practices by networking with others with similar experiences. The sustainable safeguarding strategy presented does not seem to require large financial inputs, preventing dependence on external resources. Nevertheless, though financial requirements are presented, a clearly defined budget is completely missing.

4. Decides to refer the nomination of **Lkhon Khol Wat Svay Andet** to the submitting State Party and invites it to resubmit the nomination to the Committee for examination during a following cycle;

5. Appreciates that the file presented a well-conceived and community-based safeguarding plan, regrets the absence of a budget supporting its implementation and further invites the State Party to ensure that appropriate financial resources are allocated to it with a view to sharing expenses between the government and local communities, as envisaged.

DRAFT DECISION 13.COM 10.a.4

The Committee

1. Takes note that Egypt has nominated **Traditional hand puppetry** (No. 01376) for inscription on the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding:

   Al-Aragoz is an old form of Egyptian theatre using traditional hand puppetry. Performances are highly popular events during which puppeteers remain hidden inside a small portable stage while an assistant interacts with the puppets and crowd. Al-Aragoz takes its name from the main puppet, whose distinctive voice is created with a voice modifier. Performers and the audience interact dynamically throughout the shows, which have a comic and entertaining atmosphere, and practitioners must be skilled in manipulating and maintaining the puppet, as well as in improvisation and music. Shows explore a variety of themes relating to daily life, with a recurring theme being the struggle against corruption. The art used to be presented by groups of travelling performers, who moved from one folk celebration to another. However, when these performances began to dwindle, performers and their assistants settled permanently in fixed places, mostly in Cairo. The viability of the practice is threatened by the changing social, political, legal and cultural circumstances of its enactment, such as laws concerning public gatherings, the rise of religious radicalism, an overall decrease in interest among younger generations, and the advanced age of its active practitioners. The number of surviving practitioners has diminished while many of those who once-performed stories have now disappeared.

2. Decides that, from the information included in the file, the nomination satisfies the following criteria for inscription on the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding:

   U.1: Besides its entertainment function, primarily for children of different social backgrounds, traditional hand puppetry Aragoz transmits moral principles, social norms and cultural values, addresses family relations and conveys messages about negative social behaviour and other topical issues. Related knowledge and skills are passed on orally from masters to apprentices. Although the practice of Aragoz has become somewhat scarce and the last practitioners find it hard to attract new apprentices, the element still constitutes an important and contemporary component of the identity of communities concerned.

   U.2: Despite the efforts of the communities, groups and individuals concerned, the viability of the element is at risk due to the changing social, political, legal and cultural circumstances of its enactment, such as laws concerning public gatherings, the upsurge of religious radicalism and an overall decrease in interest among younger generations. The disappearance of traditional venues and occasions for performing hand puppetry is accompanied by an absence of documentation. Nowadays, regular performances are limited to Al-Suhymi House in Cairo and rely on fewer than ten active performers, mostly of an advanced age, and there is an absence of professional puppet makers. Due to the age and scarcity of practitioners, Aragoz is not developing in response to changes in modern society.

U.3: In the last decade, steps have been taken to safeguard the element through the identification and description of its contemporary state, scientific research and related publications. The nomination presents a sophisticated strategy to return Aragoz to its former viability, concentrating on training a new generation of performers, linking them to the market and creating new performance venues and opportunities. The safeguarding plan aims to promote and raise the visibility of Aragoz and encourage experience sharing among new practitioners.

U.4: During a series of meetings and training sessions, Aragoz practitioners learned about the principles of the Convention and the impacts of the potential inscription. They participated in identifying the obstacles to the development of the art and threats to its viability and suggested how the training programme could be drawn up. Several practitioners and three NGOs provided their free, prior and informed consent to the nomination and offered their premises for the training sessions and meetings.

U.5: The element is included since 2012 and 2013 in two inventories respectively maintained by the Egyptian Society for Folk Traditions and the Egyptian National Commission for Education, Culture and Science. The element was identified in partnership with the practitioners, who served as informants during the thorough research conducted. Updates are made whenever new information is available or researchers report new developments in the field.

3. Inscribes **Traditional hand puppetry** on the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding;

4. Commends the State Party for the submission of an improved file following the decision of the Committee not to inscribe the element in 2015;

5. Invites the State Party to avoid the use of inappropriate vocabulary and concepts when referring to intangible cultural heritage, such as ‘unique dialect’, which are contrary to the definition of intangible cultural heritage under Article 2.1 of the Convention.

DRAFT DECISION 13.COM 10.a.5

The Committee

1. Takes note that Kenya has nominated **Enkipaata, Eunoto and Olng’esherr, three male rites of passage of the Maasai community** (No. 01390) for inscription on the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding:

Enkipaata, Eunoto and Olng’esherr are three interrelated male rites of passage of the Maasai community: Enkipaata is the induction of boys leading to initiation; Eunoto is the shaving of the morans paving the way to adulthood; and Olng’esherr is the meat-eating ceremony that marks the end of moranism and the beginning of eldership. The rites of passage are mainly practised by young men of the Maasai community aged between fifteen and thirty, but women also undertake certain tasks. By educating young people about their future role in Maasai society, the rites serve to induct them first to moranhood, then as young elders, and finally as senior elders. Respect and responsibility, safeguarding of the lineage, transfer of powers from one age set to the next and the transmission of indigenous knowledge, such as in relation to livestock rearing, conflict management, legends, traditions and life skills, are some of the core values embedded in those rites of passage. However, while the rites still attract relatively sizeable crowds, the practice appears to be rapidly declining due to the fast emergence of agriculture as a main source of income, reforms of the land tenure system and the impact of climate change that affects the survival of cattle.

2. Decides that, from the information included in the file, the nomination satisfies the following criteria for inscription on the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding:

   U.1: Through the practice, young men acquire the knowledge, skills and social values needed to become respected and responsible members of the community, and to understand and fulfil their role in society. Knowledge concerning Maasai culture is transmitted together with the three rites. Although the element has seen its transmission weakened and the circumstances of its practice changed profoundly due to general changes in society, the practice has maintained its meaning and purpose, while respecting the special categories of bearers and their roles, and its transmission remains integral to the social and cultural integration of individuals into Maasai society.

   U.2: The conditions of the practice have changed significantly, leading to a serious decrease in the number of practitioners and changes to its traditional modes of transmission. Such methods are no longer feasible for practical reasons such as compulsory school education and the recent prevalence of agricultural activities in the local economy. Moreover, changes in the land tenure system and the current sub-division of communal land have reduced the number of places formally used to practise the tradition and preparations for the rituals have partially moved from the community to the family environment. As a result, the practice of the element has been declining since 1980s and is threatened with further deterioration and gradual loss.

   U.3: The safeguarding plan draws on a project co-funded by the government of Kenya, the Maasai community and UNESCO, based on capacity building and training participants from all nine clans in community-based inventorying. Apart from the documentation and dissemination of the knowledge collected and information about the project's outcomes, the sacred sites where the rituals take place will also be identified and a sustainable protection system established, to ensure the spaces are protected. Educating young people is a vital part of the plan. The safeguarding plan is clearly structured, identifies a budget and the bodies responsible for each activity and counts on full community participation throughout. It would provide trained human resources, who should periodically revisit and update it in the future with a view to enhancing transmission and securing the viability of the element.

   U.4: The file attests to an active dialogue and cooperation among the Maasai community, the Department of Culture, the Cultural Initiative for Biodiversity Conservation, the Maasai Cultural Heritage and other stakeholders throughout the nomination process. Representatives from all nine Maasai clans participated in the preparation of the file and endorsed the nomination; their consent is attached in a written and audio-visual form.

   U.5: The practice is inventoried together with other aspects of Maasai culture, and has been included in the National Inventory of Intangible Cultural Heritage Elements since 2012. The inclusion in this inventory was carried out with the participation of members of nine Maasai clans. The inventory is updated every two years by the Ministry of Sports, Culture and the Arts in collaboration with the Kenya National Commission for UNESCO.

3. Inscribes **Enkipaata, Eunoto and Olng'esherr, three male rites of passage of the Maasai community** on the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding;

4. Commends the State Party for the submission of an improved file following the decision of the Committee not to inscribe the element in 2013.

DRAFT DECISION 13.COM 10.a.6

The Committee

1. Takes note that Pakistan has nominated **Suri Jagek (observing the sun), traditional meteorological and astronomical practice based on the observation of the sun, moon and stars in reference to the local topography** (No. 01381) for inscription on the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding:

   Suri Jagek, literally translated as 'observing the sun', is the traditional Kalasha meteorological and astronomical knowledge system and practice – enacted predominantly in the Hindu Kush mountain range – based on the observation of the sun, moon, stars and shadows with respect to the local topography. The system is a complex structure of empirically observed knowledge and is repeatedly referenced to allow the Kalasha people to predict the appropriate time for sowing seeds, animal husbandry and natural calamities. It is also used to govern the Kalasha calendar by determining the dates of important social events, festivals, feasts and religious ceremonies. The practice demonstrates the relationship of the Kalasha people with their surroundings and the importance of their immediate geographical context to sustain their way of life. The viability and transmission of the knowledge system rest on an innovative transfer of information through folk stories, songs, proverbs and rhetoric and certain aspects of it – such as the study of shadows and its use in rearing cattle and livestock – are being recreated to fit into modern society. However, with the advent of the digital age, people are increasingly opting for more technologically 'advanced' means of predicting weather conditions. While the practice remains visible as an oral tradition, there is currently a lack of awareness among the younger generation about its cultural significance and benefits.

2. Decides that, from the information included in the file, the nomination satisfies the following criteria for inscription on the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding:

   U.1: Despite modernization and new global forecasting methods, Suri Jagek still plays an important role in the life of the Kalasha community, comprising fundamental knowledge that helps sustain their way of life. It also constitutes a repository of the history of the region transmitted through songs, folk stories and proverbs, serving spiritual and utilitarian purposes. Suri Jagek strengthens solidarity among people and reinforces a sense of identity by pointing towards shared histories and deeply rooted cultural connections.

   U.2: The viability and transmission of the element rest on an innovative transfer of information through storytelling, particularly when the community gathers to observe the rising and setting sun. The element is transmitted exclusively orally and via physical observation; no documentation or formal means of education exist. Young people lack interest in the element as formal education alienates them from their culture and an awareness of the benefits of Suri Jagek. There are two to five experts per village, aged over sixty years old. Global, technologically 'advanced' weather prediction methods have replaced traditional knowledge, the ancient observatories are threatened by increased construction in the valleys and the impact of climate change has also affected the practice.

   U.3: Past and current safeguarding efforts have been based on joint activities by the local communities and the State Party, including inventorying intangible cultural heritage in the region, collecting oral traditions and developing sustainable eco-tourism. The proposed safeguarding plan has been carefully prepared and clearly demonstrates community participation. It includes four objectives that match the identified threats: strengthening traditional community-based networks; reinforcing the transmission of related knowledge to young people; raising awareness of the pivotal role of the element for ecological sustainability and biodiversity; and strengthening physical infrastructure through community spearheaded interventions.

U.4: The initiative to nominate Suri Jagek came from community members who participated in a workshop on community-based inventorying. The nomination involved the widest possible participation of members of the Kalasha community, academics, NGOs and the Pakistani government. During a series of consultative meetings, many aspects of the element were discussed and detailed documentation was conducted based on extensive field research. Qazis, farmers, shepherds, village elders and school teachers played an important role in preparing the file, and representatives of the Kalasha as well as Muslim communities in the three valleys provided their free, prior and informed consent. Though there is some sensitive information relating to the element, there are no customary practices which restricted access.

U.5: The element was identified with the participation of the communities and is included in the National ICH Inventory of Pakistan. The inventory extract provides a description of the element, its practitioners and location. Community members from three valleys (Bumburet, Birir, and Rumbur) – including bearers, schoolteachers and representatives of community-based organizations – partook in meetings dedicated to the inclusion of the element in the inventory.

3. Inscribes **Suri Jagek (observing the sun), traditional meteorological and astronomical practice based on the observation of the sun, moon and stars in reference to the local topography** on the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding;

4. Commends the State Party for submitting a well-prepared file, notably in relation to the description of the threats to the element, and underlining the collaboration between the community and researchers;

5. Reminds the State Party that updating is an important part of the inventorying process and invites it to include detailed information in its next periodic report on the implementation of the Convention at the national level on how the National ICH Inventory of Pakistan is regularly updated with the active participation of the communities, groups and non-governmental organizations concerned, in accordance with Article 11(b) of the Convention.

DRAFT DECISION 13.COM 10.a.7

The Committee

1. Takes note that the Syrian Arab Republic has nominated **Shadow play** (No. 01368) for inscription on the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding:

Shadow play is a traditional art consisting of handmade puppets moving behind a thin translucent curtain or screen inside a dark theatre, now practised mainly in Damascus. A light from behind the stage projects the shadows of the puppets onto the screen as they move along to an oral script and music. The theatrical content of Shadow play revolves around humorous social criticisms – employing elements of suggestion, poetry, prose, singing and music – and satire is employed to relay narratives between the two main characters, the naïve Karakoz and his clever friend Eiwaz. Other characters include female personalities and talking animals. Performances are traditionally held in popular cafes, where people gather to watch stories about everyday life. The prevalence of Shadow play has declined over the years, however, notably due to the spread of modern technology and digital forms of entertainment, and the mass displacement of Syrian people both inside and outside the country as a result of armed conflicts in Syria. Performances in popular cafes have waned and are now mostly confined to festivals, special holidays and theatres. The confluence of these factors has negatively affected the sustainability of the element, to the point that there is only one active Mukhayel (puppeteer) left in Damascus.

2. Decides that, from the information included in the file, the nomination satisfies the following criteria for inscription on the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding:

   U.1: Shadow play is a popular Syrian traditional performing art. Formerly transmitted from fathers to sons, nowadays Shadow play is also taught at the Syrian Higher Institute for Dramatic Arts and through workshops and other community-based public activities, especially for children and young people. Shadow play has a deep social and cultural meaning which conveys social, religious and political content and teaches people about proper social behaviour through satire. Its practitioners are skilled storytellers, musicians and craftsmen. Shadow play safeguards traditional Syrian oral heritage, helps strengthen social bonds and encourages interaction between the Mukhayels (puppeteers) and their audience.

   U.2: The practice and popularity of the element have been declining since the 1940s due to modern technology and new forms of entertainment. However, the situation worsened when the war broke out, forcing practitioners to migrate. In this situation, humanitarian needs are naturally prioritized before the safeguarding of living heritage. Non-formal modes of transmission within families are being lost together with almost all the Mukhayels. Due to its complexity and war conditions, the combination of these skills in individual artists is very rare; only one puppeteer masters the element in its former complexity. Deteriorating security conditions and the inaccessibility of certain areas have also interrupted Shadow play roadshows. Knowledge transfer-related challenges are accompanied by a lack of puppet-making workshops, and a body is needed to regulate the practice and protect practitioners' rights.

   U.3: The safeguarding measures are based on practitioners' recommendations and prepared in collaboration with a wide range of stakeholders including dramatists, civil society organizations, artisans and representatives of the Ministry of Culture. The proposed plan includes: training new puppeteers; increasing performances; participation in international festivals; documentation; transmitting knowledge; launching a website; returning performances to cafes, networking and building a legislative framework to manage living heritage. The plan is realistic, fully reflects the current situation and is centered on practical activities. If implemented systematically, the activities to encourage transmission and increase performances could produce a new generation of puppeteers and revitalize traditional venues and related events.

   U.4: The last known active puppeteer was involved in the nomination process and the safeguarding plan largely relies on his active engagement. The nomination was drawn up by governmental organizations in partnership with artists, cultural associations and civil society organizations. A wide range of expressions of consent from different groups, individuals, communities and associations as well as governmental organizations are provided, confirming the significance of the element for Syrian people and their commitment to safeguarding and revitalizing it.

   U.5: The element was included in the National Inventory for Intangible Cultural Heritage Elements in 2017. The Syrian Cultural Heritage Support & Development Unit at the Ministry of Culture is responsible for maintaining and updating the inventory every two years in collaboration with the 'Rawafed' Cultural Project at the Syria Trust for Development and local communities. Shadow play was identified with the help of the practitioners and different governmental and non-governmental organizations.

3. Inscribes **Shadow play** on the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding;

4. Reminds the State Party that it is responsible for the correct translation of all parts of the nomination file, including the consent letters, and underlines that references to the 'World Heritage Convention' in consent letters could undermine the claim of informed consent;

5. Invites the State Party to prioritize the proposed safeguarding measures according to the urgency of particular needs and to ensure the sustainable development of the element after the four-year safeguarding plan has been accomplished.