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**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 8 of the Provisional Agenda:
Reform of the periodic reporting mechanism**

Summary

The periodic reporting mechanism is currently undergoing a reform to enhance its quality, usefulness and timeliness by aligning the said mechanism to the overall results framework approved at the seventh session of the General Assembly. The amendments to the Operational Directives made at that session also mean that States Parties will submit their report every six years on the basis of a system of regional rotation (instead of every six years after their year of ratification). The present document provides an update on the reform of the periodic reporting mechanism, in particular on the transition period that has just started and will last until 2020, followed by a proposal on how to establish the calendar for the first regional cycle of reporting.

Decision required: paragraph 14

Updates on the reform of the periodic reporting mechanism

1. Periodic reporting provides States Parties with the opportunity to regularly take stock of the progress achieved and challenges encountered when implementing the 2003 Convention and, in general, with activities for the safeguarding of their intangible cultural heritage. It therefore serves as a tool to monitor the operationalization of the Convention at the national level. The open-ended intergovernmental working group on the development of an overall results framework for the 2003 Convention (Chengdu, China, from 11 to 13 June 2017) provided an opportunity not only to develop this framework in detail, but also to debate how its adoption would provide a suitable opportunity to reform the periodic reporting process (document [ITH/17/12.COM WG/5](#)). The working group highlighted the need to reform the periodic reporting mechanism to make it more useful for States Parties and for the Convention as a whole, and made a recommendation in this sense to the Committee (document [ITH/17/12.COM WG/7](#)).
2. At its twelfth session, the Committee endorsed the recommendation of the above-mentioned open-ended intergovernmental working group and decided to reform the periodic reporting process with the aim of enhancing its quality, usefulness and timeliness. It also decided to amend the periodicity of the submission of reports on the implementation of the Convention (Article 29) so that States Parties would submit their report every six years based on a system of regional rotation ([Decision 12.COM 10](#)). It emphasized that this change would make it easier for States Parties in a given region to benefit from collaboration at the regional or sub-regional levels and the capacity-building activities for the reporting exercise would provide an opportunity to foster dialogue and exchanges regarding national experiences. Operationally, the move towards the regional cycle of reporting on the implementation of the Convention and on the status of elements inscribed on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity (hereafter, 'the Representative List') required, firstly, the revision of the Operational Directives on periodic reporting (Chapter V – Reporting to the Committee). The Committee endorsed the proposed amendments to Chapter V and recommended that the General Assembly approve it ([Decision 12.COM 10](#)).
3. At its seventh session in June 2018, the General Assembly of States Parties to the Convention approved the overall results framework for the 2003 Convention ([Resolution 7.GA 9](#)). Moreover, the General Assembly approved the amendments to the Operational Directives on periodic reporting, welcoming the reform of the periodic reporting process initiated by the Committee and endorsing its decision to move towards a regional cycle of reporting ([Resolution 7.GA 10](#)).
4. At that session, the General Assembly indicated a number of areas on which the reform should concentrate. Firstly, the Secretariat is requested to revise Form ICH-10 to align it with the overall results framework itself. The online version of this form will be made available as part of the ongoing reform. Secondly, the Secretariat is encouraged to prepare guidance notes for each of the twenty-four core indicators (two additional indicators will be monitored and reported only at the global level by the Secretariat), and other informational materials to support States Parties and other actors in their implementation of the overall results framework. Thirdly, the Secretariat is invited to develop a capacity-building approach with the necessary materials, which will also be aligned with the overall results framework. Subject to the availability of extrabudgetary funds, capacity-building activities are to be implemented to support States Parties and other actors in their implementation of the overall results framework as well as in their periodic reporting exercise.
5. While taking note of the time needed to set up the new calendar and for the system to become fully operational, the Committee requested to be informed by the Secretariat about its plan for the transition towards a reform of the periodic reporting mechanism at its current session ([Decision 12.COM 10](#)); this transition period started in the second half of 2018 and will last for all of 2019. This means that the submission of periodic reports on the implementation of the Convention and on elements inscribed on the Representative List has been suspended for the deadlines of 15 December 2018 and 2019, including for overdue reports.

6. Since the seventh session of the General Assembly, the Secretariat has initiated the process on the revisions to Form ICH-10 and the preparation of the guidance notes. These actions are undertaken in parallel since they are interrelated and the advancement of one must inform the other and vice versa; the experiences of other Conventions in the field of Culture and beyond are also being taken into account. The process of revising periodic reporting Form ICH-10, developing the necessary capacity-building approach and materials, and adapting the existing online reporting tool will continue until the end of 2019, while the updates will be reported to the fourteenth session of the Committee. By early 2020, the Secretariat should be ready to roll out the new procedures for periodic reporting on the implementation of the Convention along with the capacity-building activities in the first region.
7. The reform of the periodic reporting mechanism, and in particular the revisions to Form ICH-10, is being supported by a generous voluntary supplementary contribution from the Republic of Korea to the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund, for the amount of US\$300,000, which was approved by the Committee at its eleventh session ([Decision 11.COM 6](#)).
8. For the time being, the change in the periodic reporting mechanism will not affect the procedure for reporting on the status of elements inscribed on the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding (hereafter, 'the Urgent Safeguarding List'). This is mainly because of the reflections the Committee has started on the future of the Lists and some important related procedures, such as the transfer and removal of already inscribed elements ([Decision 12.COM 14](#)) and another on the follow-up of inscribed elements (see document [ITH/18/13.COM/9](#)). Once these reflections have advanced, the Committee will be in a better position to decide whether to harmonize the reporting mechanism related to the Urgent Safeguarding List with the regional calendar or keep it as a separate system as it currently stands, on a quadrennial and inscription year-based schedule. Moreover, no revision has been proposed for the procedure for States non-party to the Convention reporting on elements inscribed on the Representative List; this currently concerns one State only. This will remain a sexennial reporting process, based on the year of incorporation of Masterpieces on the Representative List (2008).

Calendar for the first regional cycle of reporting

9. As per [Decision 12.COM 10](#), the Committee is asked to establish the calendar for the first regional cycle of reports at its current session. One option has already been identified in document [ITH/17/12.COM/10](#) and consists of a six-year calendar, with one year dedicated to each Electoral Group of UNESCO as defined in the groupings of Member States for the purpose of elections to the Executive Board¹ (it being understood that 'Electoral Group V' shall consist of two separate groups for the African States and the Arab States respectively). In this scenario, the cycle would start with actions undertaken in 2020 in the first Electoral Group. Progress in that Electoral Group would be presented to the Committee at its fifteenth session at the end of that year. The reports from States Parties in the first Electoral Group would then be due by 15 December 2020 for examination by the Committee at its sixteenth session in 2021. At the same time, States Parties in the second Electoral Group would start preparing their periodic reports in 2021 for their submission by 15 December 2021. A similar process would be repeated for the rest of the Electoral Groups until the Committee had finished examining the reports from all six Electoral Groups in 2026. The second cycle could then start immediately in 2027.
10. Another option was suggested during the general debate on the revision of the Operational Directives on periodic reporting at the twelfth session of the Committee in 2017. It originates from the differences between the terms 'region' and 'Electoral Group'. This difference between the two concepts has an important impact on the calendar that needs to be established and a clear decision on this is needed in order for States Parties to know exactly when they will have to report. The second option would be to follow the same regional cycle of reporting currently

1. Appendix 2 of the Rules of Procedure of the General Conference included in the UNESCO Basic Texts 2018 edition (p.64): <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0026/002617/261751e.pdf>.

being followed by the 1972 Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, which foresees that Electoral Groups I and II report together in the same year under the region 'Europe'. Accordingly, five reporting regions are identified and they are aligned with the definition of regions with a view to the execution of regional activities, as included in the UNESCO Basic Texts².

11. Taking into consideration the above scenarios, the Committee may choose one of the following options:
 - i) Following a six-year calendar with the Electoral Group structure based on the definition provided in the Rules of Procedure of the General Conference, dedicating each year to a specific Electoral Group (Annex I).
 - ii) Following a six-year calendar based on the reporting structure of the 1972 World Heritage Convention with Electoral Groups I and II reporting together, resulting in five regional groups (Annex II) that would report over five consecutive years. The sixth year could be used as a reflection year dedicated to the evaluation of the periodic reporting mechanism; this pause in the overall cycle would allow the time necessary for revisions, if needed, before the initiation of a new six-year reporting cycle.
12. Additionally, the Committee will have to decide on the specific order, be it among the regions or the Electoral Groups. Given that the 1972 World Heritage Convention follows a similar reporting mechanism, it would be beneficial to avoid a situation in which a given region/Electoral Group has to report to both Conventions at the same time; the ideal situation would be to space out the timing of the reporting period by two or three years for each of the Conventions. This would allow States Parties to both of the Conventions to avoid being over-burdened and constrained in terms of time and resources while meeting their reporting obligations. Applying this consideration based on the options described above, the following two rotational sequences are possible:

Option I

- i. 2020: Electoral Group III (Latin America and the Caribbean)
- ii. 2021: Electoral Group I (North America and Western Europe)
- iii. 2022: Electoral Group V(b) (Arab States)
- iv. 2023: Electoral Group V(a) (Africa)
- v. 2024: Electoral Group IV (Asia and the Pacific)
- vi. 2025: Electoral Group II (Eastern Europe)

Electoral Group	Year of submission 1972 Convention	Year of submission 2003 Convention
V(b): Arab States	2019	2022
V(a): Africa	2020	2023
IV: Asia and Pacific	2021	2024
III: Latin America and the Caribbean	2022	2020
I: North America and Western Europe	2023	2021
II: Eastern Europe		2025

2. Chapter I of the UNESCO Basic Texts 2018 edition (p.141):
<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0026/002617/261751e.pdf>.

Option II

- i. 2020: Latin America and the Caribbean
- ii. 2021: Europe
- iii. 2022: Arab States
- iv. 2023: Africa
- v. 2024: Asia and the Pacific
- vi. 2025: Reflection year

Region	Year of submission 1972 Convention	Year of submission 2003 Convention
Arab States	2019	2022
Africa	2020	2023
Asia and the Pacific	2021	2024
Latin America and the Caribbean	2022	2020
Europe	2023	2021
<i>Reflection year</i>	2024	2025

13. Regardless of the option selected by the Committee, States that newly ratified or will ratify the Convention during the transition period will be given due consideration in terms of the amount of time between ratification and their first due report. According to the analysis of the Secretariat on the States that ratified the 2003 Convention most recently and from 2016 onwards, both of the above options allow the regions with the highest number of newly ratified States to report later in the calendar, namely Group V(a) – Africa (with four new States Parties) in 2023 and Group IV – Asia and the Pacific (with seven new States Parties) in 2024.
14. The Committee may wish to adopt the following decision:

DRAFT DECISION 13.COM 8

The Committee,

1. Having examined document ITH/18/13.COM/8,
 2. Recalling Articles 7(f), 29 and 30 of the Convention,
 3. Further recalling [Decision 12.COM 10](#) as well as [Resolution 7.GA 10](#),
 4. Taking note of the debates at its twelfth session as well as those during the seventh session of the General Assembly on the revisions of the Operational Directives and the associated reform of the periodic reporting to move towards a regional cycle of reporting,
 5. Welcomes the progress made in the reform of the periodic reporting mechanism;
 6. Expresses its gratitude to the government of the Republic of Korea for its contribution to supporting the reform of the periodic reporting mechanism;
 7. Requests that the Secretariat update the Committee on the reform of the periodic reporting mechanism at its fourteenth session;
 8. **Option I:** Decides to follow a regional reporting structure based on the Electoral Groups as defined in the Rules of Procedure of the General Conference of UNESCO and to have a six-year regional cycle of reporting with Electoral Groups I and II reporting in two separate years;
- Option II:** Decides to follow a reporting structure similar to the one adopted in the framework of the 1972 Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and

Natural Heritage based on regions as defined in Chapter I of the UNESCO Basic Texts, with Electoral Groups I and II reporting together in the same year as the region 'Europe';

9. Also decides to adopt the following calendar for the regional cycle of reporting under the 2003 Convention:
 - i. 2020: XXX
 - ii. 2021: XXX
 - iii. 2022: XXX
 - iv. 2023: XXX
 - v. 2024: XXX
 - vi. 2025: XXX
10. Takes note that States Parties from the XXX region/Electoral Group XXX will submit their periodic reports on the implementation of the 2003 Convention and on the status of elements inscribed on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity by 15 December 2020 for examination by the Committee at its sixteenth session in 2021.

Annex I

**Classification of States Parties to the 2003 Convention (as of 30 September 2018)
based on Electoral Groups (Appendix 2 of the Rules of Procedure of the
General Conference of UNESCO)**

Electoral Group I	22	Andorra, Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Malta, Monaco, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey
Electoral Group II	24	Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czechia, Estonia, Georgia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Montenegro, Poland, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Tajikistan, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Ukraine, Uzbekistan
Electoral Group III	32	Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Grenada, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, Uruguay, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)
Electoral Group IV	40	Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, China, Cook Islands, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Fiji, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Japan, Kazakhstan, Kiribati, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), Mongolia, Myanmar, Nauru, Nepal, Pakistan, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Samoa, Singapore, Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Tonga, Turkmenistan, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, Viet Nam
Electoral Group V(a)	42	Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cabo Verde, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Seychelles, South Sudan, Togo, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe
Electoral Group V(b)	18	Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, Yemen

Annex II

Classification of States Parties to the 2003 Convention (as of 30 September 2018) which follows a regional reporting structure similar to that of the 1972 World Heritage Convention based on regions as defined in Chapter I of the UNESCO Basic Texts

Europe	44	Albania, Andorra, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Monaco, Montenegro, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, Ukraine
Latin America and the Caribbean	32	Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Grenada, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, Uruguay, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)
Asia and the Pacific	42	Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, China, Cook Islands, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Fiji, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Japan, Kazakhstan, Kiribati, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), Mongolia, Myanmar, Nauru, Nepal, Pakistan, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Samoa, Singapore, Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka, Tajikistan, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Tonga, Turkmenistan, Tuvalu, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu, Viet Nam
Africa	42	Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cabo Verde, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Seychelles, South Sudan, Togo, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe
Arab States	18	Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, Yemen