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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 5 of the Provisional Agenda:
Report by the Secretariat on its activities**

Summary

This document provides an overview of the activities undertaken by the Secretariat of the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage from 1 January 2018 to 30 June 2018.

Decision required: paragraph 17

I. Introduction

1. This report concerns the activities of the Secretariat from January to June 2018, with the reporting period being aligned to the Director-General's reports to the Executive Board on the execution of the programme and budget adopted by the General Conference (document 205 EX/4). The report presents an overall strategic assessment of the programme implementation, focusing on the key achievements and overall challenges encountered. Through the annex to the document, the report seeks to demonstrate the relevance of the Secretariat's work in relation to the 39 C/5 results framework and, more specifically, the performance indicators of Expected Result 6 within Major Programme IV. The report is also intended to highlight the progress made in relation to the results framework approved by the Bureau of the Committee ([Decision 13.COM 2.BUR 3](#)) concerning the utilization of the funds made available from the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund for 'Other Functions of the Committee'.
2. This document should be read in tandem with three information documents, namely: outreach and communication (document [ITH/18/13.COM/INF.5.1](#)); the financial report of the Fund of the Convention (document [ITH/18/13.COM/INF.5.2](#)) and; an overview of the current use of the International Assistance mechanism and the global capacity-building programme in relation to elements on the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding (document [ITH/18/13.COM/INF.5.3](#)).

II. Key achievements

Statutory support

3. In terms of support for the governance of the Convention, the Secretariat kept pace with the intense statutory schedule of up to twenty meetings planned for the biennium. The reporting period was marked by the **seventh session of the General Assembly** of the States Parties to the Convention. This session approved the overall results framework for the Convention and revised the Operational Directives to reform the periodic reporting mechanisms. The Assembly also welcomed new initiatives by the Secretariat related to: (a) the operationalization of the International Assistance mechanism; (b) safeguarding intangible cultural heritage in emergencies; (c) intangible cultural heritage in education as a contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and; (d) communications and outreach. The Secretariat also organized two meetings of the **Evaluation Body** to evaluate fifty nomination files for the 2018 cycle. Another set of fifty-one nomination files for the 2019 cycle were administered for technical completeness in time for the statutory deadline. Two meetings of the **Bureau** were also convened to examine 17 International Assistance requests and other governance issues. Furthermore, an exchange and information meeting took place to inform States about the overall results framework before the seventh session of the General Assembly. Support was also provided to the informal ad hoc open-ended working group of the Convention.

Monitoring the implementation and impact of the Convention

4. The adoption of the **overall results framework**, which was achieved through intergovernmental discussions over five years, means that the Convention has gained a substantial monitoring tool to assess its impact and relevance at various levels. Since its approval, the Secretariat has initiated work to facilitate the implementation of that framework, notably through the development of guidance notes to assist States Parties in the collection of relevant information for each of the twenty-six indicators. Given that the usefulness of the overall results framework depends directly on the periodic reporting process, the seventh session of the General Assembly revised the Operational Directives to **reform the periodic reporting mechanism** by moving to a regional cycle of reporting and to align the reporting with the overall results framework. As part of its support for this reform, the Secretariat is reporting to the present session of the Committee on the transition towards this reform (document [ITH/18/13.COM/8](#)).

International Assistance

5. The **significantly higher expenditure rate** of International Assistance, as reported to the present session of the Committee (document [ITH/18/13.COM/INF.5.2](#)), is the result of States Parties having gained easier access to the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund following the increase in 2016 of the ceiling for the amount of International Assistance that the Bureau of the Committee is entrusted to examine, up to US\$100,000. However, the overall underutilization of the International Assistance portfolio of the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund remains a persistent challenge. Following the approval by the General Assembly of the creation of **three extrabudgetary fixed-term posts** financed by the Fund of the Convention, the Secretariat has advanced their recruitment to form a dedicated team to further operationalize the mechanism, particularly the monitoring and evaluation of International Assistance projects. In the meantime, all the requests submitted were administrated promptly and seventeen International Assistance requests were presented to the Bureau, eleven of which were approved (see Indicator 4 in the Annex for their details). Furthermore, the Secretariat has initiated a reflection on the multiple submissions of International Assistance requests by a single State; this issue is brought to the attention of the present session of the Committee (document [ITH/18/13.COM/12](#)).

Knowledge management

6. The Secretariat has strived to further optimize workflows and the accessibility of data as part of the knowledge management of the Convention. This includes new online interfaces for accredited non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to submit their quadrennial reports. All inscribed elements, International Assistance projects and accredited NGOs were indexed against concepts included in the UNESCO Thesaurus, making it possible to search for information by content-related criteria. The reporting period was also marked by the launch of the Arabic version of the website of the Convention in May 2018. Furthermore, the Secretariat launched a project, '**Dive into Intangible Cultural Heritage**', as an alternative and more meaningful way of visualizing elements of living heritage inscribed on the Lists and Register of the Convention, demonstrating the inter-relatedness of cultural practices enacted by communities in all corners of the world. This project, supported by the Government of Netherlands, will be showcased as a side event during the present session of the Committee. The Secretariat also launched a broad consultation, through an online survey, on **alternative and lighter ways of sharing safeguarding practices** to complement the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices in response to the request by the Committee (Decisions [8.COM 5.c.1](#) and [10.COM 10](#) paragraph 10). A preliminary analysis of a total of 225 responses indicates a high level of interest by the respondent organizations in sharing their wide-ranging experiences in the search for a lighter and more dynamic system. All results will be reported to the next session of the Committee.

Communications and outreach

7. Work is underway to advance in the area of **outreach and communication** (document [ITH/18/13.COM/INF.5.1](#)); the production of six audio-visual clips, distributed via social media, on the importance of safeguarding intangible cultural heritage is an example. In parallel, the Secretariat organized a set of communication events during the seventh session of the General Assembly. Furthermore, a multi-step consultation process was launched to identify and define the **inter alia advisory functions** that accredited NGOs could provide to the governing bodies of the Convention. This process was initiated in April 2018 in cooperation with the ICH NGO Forum and the Committee's informal open-ended ad hoc working group with the preparation of an online survey for all accredited NGOs and States Parties from September to October 2018 (document [ITH/18/13.COM/13](#)). Furthermore, cooperation with **category 2 centres** in the field of intangible cultural heritage continued, most notably through the organization of the training workshops for facilitators mentioned below. The sixth annual coordination meeting for these centres took place on 7 June 2018 to discuss areas of common interest. The Secretariat also continued working on the evaluation and renewal process of four of the centres.

Capacity building

8. Capacity building for the implementation of the Convention at the national level remained a high priority for Member States. With the support of the **global UNESCO capacity-building programme** for safeguarding intangible cultural heritage, forty countries benefitted from multi-year projects (see the [project webpage](#) of the Convention): they were financed by extrabudgetary resources channelled through Funds-in-Trust Agreements (thanks to the European Union, Switzerland, and United Arab Emirates), earmarked contributions to the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund (thanks to Azerbaijan, Netherlands, and Spain), self-benefitting projects (Morocco, Thailand), and the international assistance portfolio of the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund. **Policy support** was one of the areas in which the Secretariat concentrated its efforts, encouraging the integration of the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage into policy development at country level.
9. With a view to further consolidating the programme, the Secretariat focused on strengthening its **global network of facilitators** of the capacity-building programme. Two training workshops for facilitators were organized in collaboration with the International Training Centre for Intangible Cultural Heritage in the Asia-Pacific Region (CRIHAP, a category 2 centre), one in Almaty, Kazakhstan for Central Asian countries, and the other in Hangzhou, China for Asia and the Pacific region at large. Furthermore, networking activities with tertiary educational institutions were extended to the Africa region with the launch of a survey to map the distribution of university programmes and courses on intangible cultural heritage. As part of the development of **capacity-building materials**, mention should be made of a new video animation exploring the relationship between gender and intangible cultural heritage. For use by facilitators, new linguistic versions of various materials were made available, including on the topic of safeguarding intangible cultural heritage and sustainable development, policy support and pilot inventorying activities.

Intangible cultural heritage and education

10. Work has advanced on the new funding priority on 'Safeguarding intangible cultural heritage in formal and non-formal education,' approved by the Committee at its twelfth session, which contributes to the attainment of SDG 4.7. In addition to preparing a concept note and contacting potentially interested donors for support, the Secretariat initiated activities through Field Offices in nine countries, two of which were in Africa. Collaboration with UNESCO-UNEVOC and the UNESCO-associated schools project network was strengthened through work on joint project proposals. At the global level, the Secretariat organized a roundtable at the seventh session of the General Assembly on 'Safeguarding intangible cultural heritage in formal and non-formal education' to raise awareness about this new funding priority.

Thematic initiatives

11. **Intangible cultural heritage in emergencies:** Based on the indications given by the eleventh and twelfth sessions of the Committee, the Secretariat has started activities to identify methodologies for the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage in situations of emergency as well as to strengthen cooperation with other entities – UN or otherwise – by sharing experiences. It is proposed that the results of these initiatives will form the basis for convening a meeting of experts in 2019, with support from the Government of the People's Republic of China, to conceptualize the knowledge and experience acquired into methodological guidance for States Parties. During the reporting period, the Secretariat also accompanied the preparation and implementation of emergency International Assistance requests in Colombia, Côte d'Ivoire and Niger (document [ITH/18/13.COM/11](#)).
12. **Intangible cultural heritage in urban contexts:** In May 2018, the Culture Sector began implementing a multi-year extrabudgetary project, 'Intangible Heritage and Creativity for Sustainable Cities', funded by Yong Xin Hua Yun Cultural Industry Investment Co. Ltd (China). The project will, amongst other objectives, focus on the importance of identifying and safeguarding intangible cultural heritage in an urban context. In that regard, the project will cover training on community-based inventorying and the development of pilot inventories in

nine cities over three years. Three pilot cities have been identified for the first year of the project, namely Kingston in Jamaica, George Town in Malaysia, and Harare in Zimbabwe.

III. Key challenges and ways forward

13. The types and volume of the reported activities undertaken by the Secretariat over a short reporting period demonstrate that the Convention continues to enjoy steady growth and a broadening of its scope. The Committee has started to engage in a number of reflections, as signalled in this report. New thematic initiatives launched recently are another example of areas in which the development of the Convention takes place. Furthermore, results-based monitoring and assessment of the impact of the Convention became a reality with the adoption of the overall results framework for the Convention; the information that will be obtained through that framework will further nourish such reflections in the future. As the Convention grows, it must be able to continue to renew itself and adapt to a changing world.
14. Another angle to understand the development of the Convention relates to the involvement of stakeholders that continue to diversify. Three ratifications (Kiribati, Singapore and Solomon Islands) were received during the reporting period, bringing the total number of States Parties to 178. At the same time, the Convention continues to engage with an increasing number of communities, regional or national institutions, research centres, NGOs, and expert-facilitators, amongst others. The Secretariat is acutely aware of the need to step up its efforts to support States Parties and other actors in their initiatives to enhance knowledge and understanding of the Convention; giving a direct voice to communities is of particular importance in this endeavor.
15. Operationally, the demand for the global capacity-building programme continues to grow and the Secretariat feels that the time has come to think seriously and creatively about scenarios to sustain the programme in the long term. Financial sustainability must be sought if States wish to see the programme continue and expand, as funding support has suffered an alarming decline over the last few years. In the longer term, institutional partnerships might provide innovative opportunities as a way forward to allow for a continued expansion of the programme, also taking into account the positive experience of collaborating with category 2 centres. To this end, a feasibility study is planned to explore potential partnerships and partnership modalities. It is worth noting that an increasing number of International Assistance requests include a capacity-building component, building on the global capacity-building programme. Moreover, by now most regions have a core group of competent facilitators in the field of intangible cultural heritage, which should allow for the development of national networks of trainers and the establishment of country-specific capacity-building mechanisms. However, the context of each region has to be analysed carefully, as the possibilities to support countries in their capacity-building efforts vary from region to region. In this respect, the persistent need for more facilitators in some regions, notably in the Arab States, still needs to be addressed.
16. In terms of the human resources, the Secretariat will be reinforced by the creation of three extrabudgetary fixed-term posts when the recruitment will have been completed. The Secretariat also continues to benefit from secondments from China (since 2014) and Japan (between March 2015 and April 2018). Contributions have been received from China, Montenegro and Finland to the sub-fund. While the Secretariat gratefully acknowledges the help received, the level of support is far from meeting the target established by the governing bodies of the Convention, estimated at US\$1,100,000 per year ([Resolution 3.GA 9](#)). The Secretariat still relies mainly on temporary staff: out of twenty-seven employees currently serving the Section with various contractual status, only twelve hold fixed-term positions. The aforementioned three new posts will be entrusted with additional tasks that have not been executed by the Secretariat until now in order to further operationalise the International Assistance mechanism of the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund. This means that the current workload for the rest of the team remains unchanged. In light of this situation, the ability of the Secretariat to accommodate further expansions and development of the Convention continues to be limited.

17. The Committee may wish to adopt the following decision:

DRAFT DECISION 13.COM 5

The Committee,

1. Having examined document ITH/18/13.COM/5 as well as documents [ITH/18/13.COM/INF.5.1](#), [ITH/18/13.COM/INF.5.2](#) and [ITH/18/13.COM/INF.5.3](#),
2. Welcomes the three States – Kiribati, Singapore and the Solomon Islands – that ratified the Convention during the reporting period;
3. Commends the Secretariat for the support provided for the sound governance of the Convention and for the management of the Convention's mechanisms, and notes with satisfaction the efforts made by the Secretariat to roll out the overall results framework for the Convention and operationalize the International Assistance portfolio of the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund;
4. Welcomes the progress made in enhancing national capacities to safeguard intangible cultural heritage, including by strengthening the global facilitators' network, thanks the category 2 centres for their collaboration, and encourages States Parties, as a next step, to ensure the sustainability of the programme and to support the organization of national networks of trainers within their countries;
5. Takes note of the persisting shortage of facilitators in some regions, and the need for further training in new thematic areas resulting from constantly evolving capacity-building needs, and therefore calls on States Parties to host regional training workshops for facilitators, co-organized with the Secretariat, to effectively strengthen and expand the regional network chapters;
6. Expresses concern regarding the continued decline in extra-budgetary support for the implementation of the capacity-building programme and calls on States Parties to provide further resources, particularly in the form of voluntary supplementary contributions to the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund for operational projects;
7. Also welcomes the progress made in advancing the implementation of the new funding priority as approved at the last session of the Committee concerning the safeguarding and transmission of intangible cultural heritage through formal and non-formal education, and underlines its importance for the attainment of SDG 4.7;
8. Further takes note of the activities undertaken in the area of outreach and communication and encourages the Secretariat to continue its efforts in this regard;
9. Also takes note of the current use of the International Assistance mechanism and the global capacity-building programme in relation to elements inscribed on the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding and encourages States Parties to make full use of these mechanisms and programmes for the elements of their living heritage that are in need of urgent safeguarding;
10. Appreciates the initiative 'Dive into Intangible Cultural Heritage', thanks the Government of the Netherlands for its financial support to the initiative, which made its public release during this session possible, and invites the Secretariat to further develop it;
11. Notes the initiative on intangible cultural heritage in urban contexts, thanks the private sector company in the People's Republic of China for its generous contribution towards it and invites the Secretariat to pursue its efforts in this regard;
12. Further notes the progress made by the Secretariat towards developing alternate, lighter ways of sharing safeguarding experiences and requests that the Secretariat present the results of the analysis of the online survey at the fourteenth session of the Committee;
13. Reiterates its call to States Parties to continue supporting the implementation of the Convention, notably through voluntary supplementary contributions to the Intangible

Cultural Heritage Fund for operational and thematic projects and to the sub-fund for enhancing the human resources of the Secretariat.

Annex**Assessment by Performance Indicator**

39C/5 Performance Indicator 1	Sound governance exercised through the adoption and implementation of strategic resolutions/decisions of the governing bodies of the 2003 Convention.		
Assessed according to the following:	Baselines	Targets 2018-2019	Assessment of progress: 01/01/2018 to 30/06/2018
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthened ability to provide strategic guidance to States Parties for the implementation and monitoring of the Convention, including through examination of submitted periodic reports Working methods of the governing bodies improved Level of funding to the implementation of decisions adopted by the governing bodies Level of contribution of non-governmental organizations, with recognized competence in the field of intangible cultural heritage, to the Convention's governance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partially 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overall results framework established through intergovernmental consultation processes and Operational Directives revised to improve the periodic reporting mechanism Creation of three fixed-term posts approved to operationalize the International Assistance mechanism 57 nomination files submitted from 57 States Parties for the 2018 cycle and 55 nomination files from 64 States were submitted for the 2019 cycle. 6 statutory meetings organized Analysis underway concerning 32 reports on the implementation of the Convention and the status of elements inscribed on the Representative List submitted by States Parties for the 2018 cycle, in addition to 16 reports on the status of elements inscribed on the Urgent Safeguarding List

39C/5 Performance Indicator 2		Number of supported Member States utilizing strengthened human and institutional resources for the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage		
Assessed according to the following:	Baselines	Targets 2018-2019	Assessment of progress: 01/01/2018 to 30/06/2018	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthened or newly established institutional frameworks for the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage Community-based approaches adopted or strengthened for inventorying intangible cultural heritage or developing safeguarding plans, including those reflecting a gender-sensitive approach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 70, of which 30 in Africa and 5 SIDS (Small Island Developing States) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 55 of which 25 in Africa and 10 SIDS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 69 Member States supported, including 27 in Africa and 12 SIDS. Of these, 28 adopted a gender-sensitive approach, while 13 were gender-responsive 23 Member States supported in the field of policy advice, of which 13 in Africa and 5 SIDS 40 Member States supported through multi-year projects capacity-building projects 	

39C/5 Performance Indicator 3		Number of supported Member States which have integrated intangible cultural heritage into their plans, policies and programmes, in particular as a contribution towards the achievement of SDGs in a gender-responsive manner		
Assessed according to the following:	Baselines	Targets 2018-2019	Assessment of progress: 01/01/2018 to 30/06/2018	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Convention-related reports address plans, policies and programmes aimed at integrating the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage with a gender-sensitive approach, including in emergency contexts, and provide evidence towards the attainment of SDG targets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 15, of which 5 in Africa and 2 SIDS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 25 of which 8 in Africa and 5 SIDS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 23 Member States supported, including 13 in Africa and 5 SIDS. Of these, 10 adopted a gender-sensitive approach, while 5 were gender-responsive 9 initiatives were designed to incorporate intangible cultural heritage into formal and non-formal education 	

Assessed according to the following:	Baselines	Targets 2018-2019	Assessment of progress: 01/01/2018 to 30/06/2018
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partnerships established, within and outside the culture sector, with a view to strengthening the role of intangible cultural heritage as an enabler and guarantee of sustainable development and supporting national plans to achieve the SDGs Initiatives designed and implemented, resulting in the incorporation of intangible cultural heritage in formal and non-formal education (SDG 4.7) 			

39C/5 Performance Indicator 4	Number of States Parties which have effectively implemented international assistance, including from the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund, complementing their national safeguarding efforts		
Assessed according to the following	Baselines	Targets 2018-2019	Assessment of progress: 01/01/2018 to 30/06/2018
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund used by States Parties to effectively complement their national safeguarding efforts Preparatory/technical assistance from the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund used by States Parties to elaborate International Assistance requests to effectively complement their national safeguarding efforts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 15, of which 10 in Africa and 1 SIDS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 15 of which 10 in Africa and 2 SIDS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 States Parties completed the implementation of an International Assistance project 17 International Assistance requests for up to US\$100,000 treated and submitted to the Bureau of the Intergovernmental Committee of the Convention, out of which 11 were approved, including 5 for Africa and 1 SIDS 2 requests received technical assistance, including 1 from Africa

39C/5 Performance Indicator 5	Number of initiatives undertaken by supported Member States which have enhanced knowledge and understanding of intangible cultural heritage safeguarding and of the 2003 Convention		
Assessed according to the following:	Baselines	Targets 2018-2019	Assessment of progress: 01/01/2018 to 30/06/2018
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of programmes, projects or initiatives for the safeguarding of heritage reflecting the principles and objectives of the 2003 Convention with proven effectiveness to contribute to the viability of the intangible cultural heritage concerned • Communication and/or awareness-raising initiatives developed in line with the Convention's communications and outreach strategy • Level of engagement of all actors (governmental and non-governmental) concerned with the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage in related initiatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15 of which 10 in Africa and 5 SIDS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activities in the area of outreach and communication for the 2003 Convention currently under development