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

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

**Seventh session**

**UNESCO Headquarters, Room II**

**4 to 6 June 2018**

**Item 7 of the Provisional Agenda:**

**Report of the Secretariat on its activities**

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| **Summary**  The present document reports on activities carried out by the Secretariat from January 2016 to December 2017.  **Decision required:** paragraph 29 |

**I. Introduction**

1. Since the time of its previous report to the sixth session of the General Assembly in June 2016 (document [ITH/16/6.GA/6](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/ITH-16-6.GA-6-EN.docx)), the Secretariat has provided a detailed report on its activities in 2016 to the eleventh session of the Committee (document [ITH/16/11.COM/5](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/ITH-16-11.COM-5-EN.docx)) and a cumulative report on its activities from January 2016 to June 2017 to the twelfth session of the Committee (document [ITH/17/12.COM/5.b](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/ITH-17-12.COM-5.b-EN.docx)). The present report provides an update on the latter report and presents activities carried out by the Secretariat from January 2016 to December 2017. This document may be read in parallel with the financial statement regarding the Convention’s Fund for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, included in document [ITH/17/12.COM/7](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/ITH-17-12.COM-7-EN.docx), as well as with document [202 EX/4.INF](http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0025/002588/258802e.pdf).
2. The report seeks to reflect the extent of the Secretariat’s work based on the results framework provided in the Organization’s Programme and Budget for 2016-2017 ([38 C/5](http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0024/002443/244305e.pdf)) and, more specifically, Expected Result 5 within Major Programme IV: *National capacities strengthened and utilised to safeguard the intangible cultural heritage, including indigenous and endangered languages, through the effective implementation of the 2003 Convention*. It also takes into account the results framework that was approved by the Bureau of the Committee of the 2003 Convention concerning the Secretariat’s utilization of the funds made available from the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund for ‘Other Functions of the Committee’ for the period 1 January 2016 to 31 December 2017 ([Decision 11.COM 2.BUR 1](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/ITH-16-11.COM_2.BUR-Decisions-EN.docx)). This framework presents a more specific framework for extrabudgetary funds devoted to assisting the Committee in fulfilling its mission. The latest detailed report on the implementation of that spending plan for ‘Other Functions of the Committee’ was presented to the Bureau of the Committee in May 2017, covering the year 2016. This is available in document [ITH/17/12.COM 2.BUR/INF.3](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/ITH-17-12.COM_2.BUR-INF.3-EN.doc).
3. The present document presents an overall strategic assessment of the programme implementation, focusing on the key achievements and overall challenges encountered during the implementation. A detailed table structured according to the five performance indicators related to the implementation of the 2003 Convention presents an assessment of progress against targets can be found in the Annex to this document.
4. As per Article 10 of the Convention and since 2014, the Section has been composed of two units: a Programme Implementation Unit and a Capacity-building and Heritage Policy Unit. Regional responsibilities are distributed across the two units, with ‘regional officers’ for each of the six electoral groups of UNESCO. The tasks assigned to these Units are described in the Secretariat’s report to the tenth session of the Committee (document [ITH/15/10.COM/7.b](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/ITH-15-10.COM-7.b_EN.docx)) and to the sixth session of the General Assembly (document [ITH/16/6.GA/6](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/ITH-16-6.GA-6-EN.docx)) and have remained unchanged during the reporting period. In addition, a Knowledge Management Service supports the operation of these two Units, including the management of the Convention’s website. The Conventions Common Services Unit (renamed in January 2018 as the ‘Partnerships, Communication and Meetings Unit’), established in mid-2014 (see document [ITH/14/9.COM/6](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/ITH-14-9.COM-6-EN_.doc)), continues to assist the Section in the organization of statutory meetings, as also described in the two aforementioned reports.

**II. Key achievements**

**Statutory support**

1. An important portion of the Secretariat’s work has been dedicated to support the governance of the Convention, in particular: (i) the organization of meetings of the General Assembly, the Intergovernmental Committee and its Bureau as well as the Evaluation Body and an open-ended intergovernmental working group; (ii) the treatment of nominations to the two Lists of the Convention, proposals to the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices, International Assistance (IA) requests and periodic reports submitted through statutory mechanisms; and (iii) requests for accreditation and renewal from non-governmental organizations (NGOs).
2. The Secretariat facilitated the work of the governing bodies in taking a set of key decisions in the course of eighteen statutory meetings organized during the reporting period. Among such meetings, the sixth session of the General Assembly held in May/June 2016 was a major landmark. The Assembly adopted substantial revisions to the Operational Directives for the implementation of the Convention, including the increase of the ceiling for IA requests to be submitted to the Bureau of the Committee from US$25,000 to US$100,000, the adoption of a new chapter on safeguarding intangible cultural heritage and sustainable development, and the extension of the referral option (which had been used for the Representative List only) to all mechanisms of the Convention. The Secretariat also supported the preparation and deliberation of the eleventh and twelfth sessions of the Committee, held respectively in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in November/December 2016, and in Jeju Island, Republic of Korea, in December 2017. A draft report on the Committee’s activities from January 2016 to December 2017, which is presented at the present session, includes a summary of the decisions and debates of the Committee on that occasion (document [ITH/18/7.GA/6](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/ITH-18-7.GA-6-EN.docx)). The reporting period also coincided with the intense preparation for and convening of an open-ended intergovernmental working group on developing an overall results framework for the Convention – see paragraph 14 for more information.
3. The Secretariat treated the nominations, proposals and requests for the 2017 cycle according to the statutory deadlines stipulated in the Operational Directives of the Convention. Keeping to the trends for the past several cycles, the treatment of the 2018 cycle files also took place on schedule. The Secretariat also processed the fifty accreditation requests received from NGOs and reviewed forty-four reports submitted by accredited NGOs in view of their renewal. Recommendations for accreditation are presented to the General Assembly at its present session (document [ITH/18/7.GA/11](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/ITH-18-7.GA-11-EN.docx)). The Secretariat presented its proposals for the renewal of accredited NGOs to the twelfth session of the Committee. Following the request by the Committee at its tenth session in 2015 ([Decision 10.COM 10](https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions/10.COM/10)), the Secretariat also prepared some guidelines on inventories for States Parties, which are available through the [Convention’s website](https://ich.unesco.org/en/guidance-note-on-inventorying-00966).
4. In terms of ratification, between January 2016 and December 2017 the Convention witnessed a steady increase in the number of States Parties, with the following eleven Member States ratifying the Convention: Cabo Verde, Cook Islands, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Malta, Saint Kitts and Nevis, South Sudan, Suriname, Thailand, Timor-Leste and Tuvalu. Moreover, an extension of the territorial application of the Convention was made by the Netherlands for Curaçao. At the end of the reporting period the total number of States Parties reached 175. Six of the eleven new States Parties and Curaçao benefitted from capacity-building activities before ratifying the Convention.

**Intangible cultural heritage and sustainable development**

1. The adoption of the new chapter of the Operational Directives on safeguarding intangible cultural heritage and sustainable development at the national level marked an important step forward in the development of the Convention, which is in harmony with the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in September 2015 by the UN General Assembly. The Secretariat has made considerable efforts to reflect this orientation in a number of thematic areas and to identify programmatic entry points with specific indicators of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals. This concerns Goal 4 in relation to education in general and Targets 4.3, 4.4 and 4.7 in particular. The Secretariat also participated in the Culture sector’s initiative regarding measuring the contribution of culture to the 2030 Agenda. The Secretariat has also been working on case studies in order to practically illustrate the links between safeguarding intangible cultural heritage and sustainable development at the national level, notably in the context of the capacity-building programme.

**International assistance**

1. The increase in the ceiling for IA requests, up to US$100,000 as the maximum amount that can be examined by the Bureau and not the Committee, has already proven to be an important step forward, giving States Parties timely access to IA that is more impactful at national level. States Parties are increasingly submitting requests amounting to more than US$25,000 but less than US$100,000 (this rose from 19% of requests submitted in 2014/2015 to 78% during 2016/2017). At the same time, the Secretariat has adapted the working methods for processing IA requests up to US$100,000, for example by scheduling at least three meetings of the Bureau per year (in March, June and October) and by advising the submitting States to take into account the deadlines related to these meetings. There was a promising increase in the number of IA requests examined by the Bureau under the reporting period (twenty requests in total: ten requests in 2016 and ten during 2017) compared to 2014/2015 (twelve requests). It is expected that the raised ceiling will continue to contribute to reversing the persistent trend of under-utilization of the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund.
2. States Parties continue to take advantage of the technical assistance arranged by the Secretariat, which aims to improve the quality of their IA requests. Four countries received such assistance during the reporting period. The Secretariat has also developed specific training materials on developing IA requests, which are available online for capacity-building activities on this topic. It is important to note that while they do help to increase the number of IA requests, these endeavours entail a significantly heavier workload for the Secretariat. At this stage, the Secretariat’s capacities do not allow it to undertake more than a simple administrative follow-up, leaving aside a substantial monitoring and analytical review of the results and impact of IA. More detailed information can be found in document [ITH/18/7.GA/8](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/ITH-18-7.GA-8-EN.docx).

**Knowledge management**

1. Knowledge management services provided by the Secretariat continue to play a key role in facilitating the statutory processes that are at the core of the Convention’s good governance. They were also central in ensuring the improved visibility of a wide range of initiatives carried out around the world under the auspices of the Convention. There were 7,454,000 page views in 2016-2017, which is an increase of more than 60% compared to the previous biennium. The website of the Convention also served as a much-needed repository of a large amount of information about the Convention and all its stakeholders; the regular maintenance of the system also represents an important part of the operation under the knowledge management services. The Convention’s website was enhanced with a secured and shorter URL (<https://ich.unesco.org/>), improved navigation and ergonomics, an optimized search engine and additional multilingual content. Moreover, online interfaces were developed to better support periodic reporting (see paragraph 13 below). Substantial work was also undertaken for the development of the interface for reporting on capacity-building activities and monitoring the use of capacity-building materials beyond UNESCO’s projects.

**PERIODIC REPORTING**

1. In order to improve the participation of States Parties in the periodic reporting mechanism, the Secretariat initiated a number of actions. These include the development of a [monitoring interface for periodic reports](https://ich.unesco.org/en/submissions-and-deadlines-00861) on the Convention website, an information and awareness-raising session on this mechanism during the sixth session of the General Assembly in 2016, the updating of the guidance provided in the aide-mémoire for completing the reporting form and the customary reminder letters sent to all States with overdue reports. Such efforts seem to have borne fruits, albeit in a modest way: 21% of the periodic reports due under Form ICH-10 (on the implementation of the Convention) were submitted by the statutory deadline of 15 December 2016, against 16% in 2015; and 80% of the reports due under Form ICH-11 (on elements on the Urgent Safeguarding List (USL)) were submitted by the statutory deadline of 15 December 2016, against 33% in 2015. This positive trend seems to be confirmed by the percentage of reports submitted by 15 December 2017: 44% of the reports were indeed submitted under Form ICH-10 as well as 84% under Form ICH-11. The generous contribution by the Republic of Korea to the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund has already allowed and will continue to make it possible for the Secretariat to further improve the periodic reporting mechanism. This concerns the newly developed online submission tool for USL reports (using Form ICH-11). In the eventuality that the present session approves the draft overall results framework for the Convention, the online submission will also be extended to the periodic reports on the implementation of the Convention (using Form ICH-10) (more detailed information can be found in documents [ITH/18/7.GA/9](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/ITH-18-7.GA-9-EN.docx) and [ITH/18/7.GA/10](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/ITH-18-7.GA-10-EN.docx)).

**overall results framework**

1. Despite the growing importance that different stakeholders attribute to the Convention, no reliable conclusions can be drawn about its progress and impact in the absence of a shared monitoring and evaluation framework. The Secretariat initiated reflections on the development of an overall results framework for the Convention with a preliminary expert meeting in 2016, thanks to the generous contribution of the National Commission of the People’s Republic of China. The first results map developed by the experts was welcomed by the Committee at its eleventh session and this served as a basis for the open-ended intergovernmental working group, generously hosted in June 2017 by the Chinese Ministry of Culture and the Centre for Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage in Chengdu, China. With the participation of fifty-three States Parties, the working group reached a consensus on a set of indicators for effectively monitoring the outputs, and assessing the outcomes and impacts of the Convention. The framework also includes indicators to monitor the implementation of the capacity-building programme. The working group also recommended that the results framework serve as a basis for reviewing the periodic reporting mechanism. The draft overall results framework was presented to the Committee at its twelfth session, and the latter recommended that the General Assembly approve it at the present session and initiate steps for its implementation (see document [ITH/18/7.GA/9](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/ITH-18-7.GA-9-EN.docx)).

**category 2 centres**

1. To support the category 2 centres, two annual coordination meetings were organized (in June 2016 at UNESCO Headquarters and in September 2017 in Shiraz, Iran; the latter generously hosted by the Regional Research Centre for Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage in West and Central Asia under the auspices of UNESCO), as has been the custom since 2013. These annual meetings provided a good opportunity to exchange information on recent developments in the life of the Convention and to discuss new perspectives for fields of cooperation and future synergies amongst the centres as well as between UNESCO and the centres. During the reporting period, the Secretariat also continued working on the evaluation and renewal process of six category 2 centres under the auspices of UNESCO in the field of intangible cultural heritage. Furthermore, the centres related to the 2003 Convention took part in the second Coordination Meeting for all the category 2 centres and UNITWIN/UNESCO Chairs in the field of culture, organized by UNESCO at its Headquarters in November 2017.

**capacity building**

1. During the reporting period, capacity building for the implementation of the Convention at the national level remained a high priority for the Secretariat and Member States. Activities were initiated or implemented through UNESCO Field Offices with backstopping from Headquarters in 70 countries during the last biennium, covering all regions of the world. Africa received particular attention in this regard, with twenty-eight beneficiary countries.
2. Forty countries benefitted from multi-year projects based on the [global UNESCO capacity-building programme for safeguarding intangible cultural heritage](https://ich.unesco.org/en/capacity-building) with the support of extrabudgetary resources channelled either through Funds-in-Trust Agreements (thanks to Azerbaijan, Flanders-Belgium, Japan and the United Arab Emirates) and earmarked contributions to the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund (thanks to Norway and Spain – including the Government of Catalonia). More information is available on the Convention’s [project webpage](https://ich.unesco.org/en/project). Two of the multi-country projects, one in Portuguese-speaking Africa and the other in the Asia and the Pacific region, were evaluated. The results of these evaluations highlighted, amongst a broader set of recommendations and lessons learnt, the importance for benefitting countries of developing a national mechanism to continue undertaking training activities once the international support has ended.
3. Other activities, namely needs assessments, policy support and training workshops, were financed through the Regular Programme decentralized to Field Offices or with matching funds from national authorities or category 2 centres. One of the main achievements is the completion of in-depth needs assessments in fifteen countries. These projects generally show that significant progress has been made in the areas of mobilizing stakeholders, strengthening the institutional infrastructure required for safeguarding (i.e. dedicated departments and consultative bodies), developing community-based inventorying frameworks and collaboration among the project countries. However, they also brought to the fore that more support is required to strengthen capacities in the areas of preparing safeguarding plans and developing policies and legislation across multiple sectors in the context of national development strategies.
4. The implementation of the capacity-building strategy is supported by the global network of facilitators, who deliver training and advisory services upon request to the beneficiary countries. This network has evolved to become a dynamic entity with a growing membership. The Secretariat organized three regional workshops for facilitators during the biennium to share lessons learnt and update their knowledge on recent developments in the life of the Convention and familiarize them with curriculum materials recently developed by the Secretariat in relation to safeguarding plans, gender and policy advice. They benefitted from the generous support from Bulgaria, Kyrgyzstan and Peru. Furthermore, the Secretariat organized, in March 2017 in Bangkok, Thailand, a strategy workshop with facilitators from all regions, entitled ‘Envisioning the future of the global capacity-building programme and its facilitators’ network’. The purpose of the workshop was to take stock and reflect on the experiences and lessons learnt during the six years of implementing the capacity-building programme and the meeting highlighted several new strategic directions for the network and for the delivery of the programme at the country level. Strategic changes include a stronger focus on strengthening institutional capacities and developing national networks of trainers to sustain the support provided through the global facilitators’ network. The updated programme document, entitled ‘Strengthening capacities to safeguard intangible cultural heritage and contributing to sustainable development’ was adopted by the Committee at its twelfth session ([Decision 12.COM 6](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/12.COM/6)) as one of the two funding priorities for the implementation of the Convention for the period 2018-2021.
5. Tertiary educational institutions play a key role in developing future administrators and decision-makers for safeguarding intangible cultural heritage. This is the reason why the Secretariat supports networking and partnerships with them in the context of its capacity building work. However, specialization in the field of intangible cultural heritage is currently dispersed across different disciplines. The Secretariat has continued to build partnerships with universities in order to gain knowledge on how to integrate intangible cultural heritage into tertiary educational programmes and support networking in this field. The UNESCO Office in Bangkok carried out a survey, supported by the International Information and Networking Centre for Intangible Cultural Heritage in the Asia-Pacific Region under the auspices of UNESCO (ICHCAP), to this end. A second survey was initiated in Latin America and the Caribbean by UNESCO Office in Montevideo. UNESCO then organized a regional meeting on cooperation mechanisms for intangible cultural heritage and higher education in Buenos Aires, Argentina, in November 2017, in cooperation with the Regional Center for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Latin America under the auspices of UNESCO (CRESPIAL), UNESCO’s International Institute for Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean (IESALC) and the Latin American Social Sciences Institute (FLACSO). The Secretariat has been accompanying the European Network of Cultural Administration Training Centres (ENCATC) in carrying out a similar survey in Europe, with funding from UNESCO’s Participation Programme.

**Intangible cultural heritage and education**

1. In order to give due attention to Articles 2.3 and 14 of the Convention, the Secretariat developed partnerships with educational institutions to support them in integrating the transmission of and respect for intangible cultural heritage in formal and non-formal education, in line with the safeguarding measures mentioned in the Convention. Following a round-table discussion organized with UNESCO’s International Capacity-Building Institute for Education in Africa (IICBA) at the eleventh session of the Committee, an intersectoral meeting was convened at UNESCO Headquarters in May 2017 with the Education Sector and representatives of UNESCO’s Category 1 Centres specializing in the field of education. The meeting resulted in a shared understanding of the interface between intangible cultural heritage and education and of how integrating intangible cultural heritage into education for all age groups and situations can contribute to achieving SDG Goal 4 on quality education. As part of the future work to be carried out in partnership with the Education Sector, the Committee, at its twelfth session, approved a second funding priority dedicated to the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage in formal and non-formal education ([Decision 12.COM 6](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/12.COM/6)).

**Intangible cultural heritage in EMERGENCIES**

1. The Secretariat has been increasingly called upon to contribute to UNESCO’s global response to situations of emergency, which is framed largely by the Strategy that the 38th session of UNESCO’s General Conference adopted in 2015 to reinforce UNESCO’s action for the protection of culture and the promotion of cultural pluralism in the event of armed conflict, and its Addendum concerning emergencies associated with disasters caused by natural and human-induced hazards. Following the encouragement by the Committee at its eleventh session ([Decision 11.COM 15](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/11.COM/15)), the Secretariat initiated a reflection on the role communities play in safeguarding intangible cultural heritage at risk in situations of emergency and how this can be mobilized as a tool for preparedness, resilience and reconciliation. In particular, a pilot survey and a desk study were conducted in order to achieve a better understanding of the changing role and function of living heritage in the context of displacements and natural disasters. The Secretariat has also continued to support the preparation and implementation of emergency International Assistance requests in Côte d’Ivoire, Mali, Niger and Vanuatu (see document [ITH/17/12.COM/15](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/ITH-17-12.COM-15-EN.docx) for more details).

**outreach and communications plan**

1. Designing a robust outreach and communications plan is essential for promoting the objectives of the Convention. The Secretariat took an initiative to develop such a plan; the objective is to help various stakeholders enhance their knowledge of intangible cultural heritage and its safeguarding, to raise awareness about its importance and ensure mutual appreciation thereof, in accordance with the letter and spirit of the Convention. Concretely, the Secretariat identified a partner company through a rigorous selection process, with which a strategic communications and outreach plan is being developed. As part of the process, fifty stakeholders, including State Parties, donors, accredited NGOs, national institutions, heritage professionals and community members were interviewed with a view to gaining insights into what the 2003 Convention means for various stakeholders. This was followed by a benchmark meeting held in March 2017 to review the results and the production of a synthesis report, which presents strategic orientations and preliminary guidelines for priority actions and tools to be developed in the next step. An example of the products developed under the reporting period is a short video clip that was distributed through social media on the youth’s appreciation of intangible cultural heritage. An initial reflection also took place on the development of key messages under the 2003 Convention and graphic orientations for future communication materials (see document [ITH/18/7.GA/INF.7](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/ITH-18-7.GA-INF.7-EN.docx) for more details).

**III. Key challenges and ways forward**

1. Under the reporting period, the core activities of the Secretariat have continued to focus on two main axes, while extending its attention to several new areas. The first of such axes concerns support for the governance of the Convention, in particular the organization of a high number of statutory meetings, and the treatment of nominations, requests and reports submitted through the statutory mechanisms. A series of adjustments made to improve the working methods, as described in this document, has allowed the Secretariat to respond to a demanding volume of complex statutory tasks in a timely manner. The second axe relates to the sustained implementation of the global capacity-building programme with an enhanced geographical reach and greater involvement of various and new partners. The programme has benefitted over seventy countries which is a substantial achievement in itself. Having completed the sixth year of implementation, the Section has undertaken activities to evaluate its relevance and identified strategic ways forward. In addition to these two core activities, the Secretariat’s work has contributed to broadening of the implementation of the Convention as described above, such as the development of the overall results framework, a new thematic consideration on intangible cultural heritage in emergencies and another on intangible cultural heritage in education, as well as the development of an outreach and communications plan. The pioneering nature of these interventions meant that the Secretariat needed to undertake careful research, consultations and reflections so that meaningful proposals could be presented to the governing bodies of the Convention for their considerations.
2. Three main challenges can be identified in the current work of the Secretariat. One is the persistent low implementation of IA under the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund. Conscious of the urgent need to ensure easier access to this resource for States Parties, the Secretariat has addressed this issue through creative solutions, as mentioned earlier in this document. New remedial actions are also being presented at the present session of the General Assembly. The other challenge concerns the implementation of the capacity-building strategy, as the demands still exceed the delivery capacity. Since a large part (65%) of the Regular Programme budget of the biennium for the Intangible Cultural Heritage Section is dedicated to covering the costs of the statutory requirements of the Convention, the Secretariat’s resource mobilization efforts have been concentrated essentially on extending the reach and effectiveness of the global capacity-building strategy. This situation is highly critical and the Secretariat hereby renews its earnest call to urge potential donors to contribute to the 2003 Convention. Another challenge relates to outreach and communication, which is crucial not only for enhancing the recognition of the importance of safeguarding intangible cultural heritage but also as a safeguarding measure in its own right. The Secretariat has undertaken a new initiative to develop a communication and outreach plan to be able to better advocate for the objectives and development of the Convention and to mobilize financial support in the long run.
3. The life of the Convention is not static. Rather, it grows continuously, in response to the needs of the international community; in turn, the work of the Secretariat evolves around such developments. In the beginning, a great deal of effort was put into encouraging ratifications in order to obtain international support for the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage, a new concept at the time. The next step was to establish procedures by drafting the Operational Directives and gain experience with the Lists and other mechanisms; the latter part of this phase also coincided with the development of the capacity-building strategy, driven by the Secretariat. Having celebrated the tenth anniversary of its entry into force in 2016, the Convention now finds itself at the beginning of yet another stage, which calls for a systematic and broad stock taking of the impact of the Convention at various levels. In this sense, the development of an overall results framework for the Convention is an ambitious undertaking that should allow for a much enhanced monitoring of the impact of the Convention at various levels.
4. The Secretariat continues to aim to ensure that the Convention makes a meaningful contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals; this will be all the more pertinent in the near future as the current Programme and Budget of UNESCO (39 C/5) includes specific attention to the issue. For example, the operationalization of the new chapter on safeguarding intangible cultural heritage and sustainable development at the national level has been initiated, most prominently in the field of intangible cultural heritage and education. While schools and non-formal educational programmes can play an important role in safeguarding intangible cultural heritage, its integration into educational programmes can be key for improving the relevance and quality of education. The reflection that the Secretariat has initiated on intangible cultural heritage in emergencies is another example of the relevance of the Convention in the current international context, and also for communities for whom intangible cultural heritage could be an important source of preparedness, resilience and recovery.
5. The situation concerning the human resources of the Intangible Cultural Heritage Section remains a major challenge. In addition to the permanent staff, the Section must rely on a number of persons working under various temporary assignments even to assume the core functions of the Secretariat. The situation has worsened over the years in light of the persisting financial constraints faced by UNESCO, with the depletion of the sub-fund for enhancing the human capacities within the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund and the ever-increasing workload reflected by the quasi-universal ratification rate. If the Secretariat is to respond to the ambitions and wishes of the governing organs of the 2003 Convention for broad reflections to be initiated on a number of issues to review the impact of the Convention and to ponder on future directions and sustained support from State Parties to the human resource requirements of the Secretariat must be sought. Solutions are being sought for the consideration of the General Assembly at this session to address one of the most acute gaps in the operations of the Secretariat (see document [ITH/18/7.GA/8](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/ITH-18-7.GA-8-EN.docx)). This concerns the need to better manage some of the core functions of the Secretariat, notably the International Assistance mechanism that could be better used for strengthening knowledge and capacities for the effective safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage.
6. The General Assembly may wish to adopt the following resolution:

**DRAFT RESOLUTION 7.GA 7**

The General Assembly,

1. Having examined document ITH/18/7.GA/7,
2. Commends the Secretariat for the continued and timely support provided for the sound governance of the Convention and for having managed various mechanisms under the Convention, acknowledging a number of new initiatives taken to improve the working methods and the high level of resources it requires;
3. Further commends the Secretariat for the efforts made to support the International Assistance mechanism and encourages the Secretariat to continue such endeavours, while aiming to ensure better access of States Parties to the Fund with improved monitoring and impact assessment of International Assistance projects;
4. Thanks the Secretariat for the essential support provided for the development of an overall results framework for the implementation of the Convention, which will provide an important tool to assess the impacts of the Convention at various levels;
5. Appreciates the persistent efforts made by the Secretariat to reinforce the national capacities of States Parties to safeguard intangible cultural heritage through the global capacity-building programme and its global facilitators network and commends the work undertaken to re-orient the strategic approach so as to ensure that the programme continues to be relevant to the evolving capacity-building needs of States Parties as well as the overall international context in which the Convention is implemented;
6. Underlines the primary role education plays in the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage through its transmission and welcomes the new funding priority for the implementation of the Convention in this regard;
7. Welcomes the initiative carried out to develop an outreach and communications plan aiming to enhance awareness about and the visibility of the Convention;
8. Takes note of the growing relevance of the Convention in the international context of emergencies and recognizes the role of intangible cultural heritage as a powerful leverage for resilience and recovery;
9. Calls on States Parties once again to provide support, particularly by making contributions to the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund for operational projects and contributions to the sub-fund to enhance the human capacities of the Secretariat in order to allow it to address the growing demands for the continued effective governance and implementation of the Convention.
10. Requests the Secretariat to report on its activities for the period between January 2018 and December 2019 for examination by the General Assembly at its eighth session.

**Annex**

**Assessment by Performance Indicator**

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| **38C/5 Performance Indicator 1** | **Governing bodies of the 2003 Convention exercise sound governance thanks to effective organization of their statutory meetings** |

| **Target** | **Assessment of progress: 01/01/2016 to 31/12/2017** |
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| * Decisions providing strategic guidance and/or financial support for the implementation of the Convention taken in a dozen statutory meetings. * 100 safeguarding plans for intangible cultural heritage, including indigenous and endangered languages, developed and/or implemented by Member States. * 30 International Assistance requests submitted and 5 effectively implemented by Member States; 65 nominations submitted by Member States and processed, including one good safeguarding practice promoted and disseminated. | * 18 statutory meetings held with decisions providing strategic guidance and/or financial support for the implementation of the Convention: * One General Assembly (30 May to 1 June 2016); * Two Intergovernmental Committees (28 November to 2 December 2016; 4 to 9 December 2017); * Six meetings of the Evaluation Body (March/June/September 2016, and March/June/September 2017); * Three face-to-face meetings of the Bureau of the Committee (June 2016; October 2016; and October 2017); * Five electronic consultations of the Bureau of the Committee (March to April 2016; June 2016; February to March 2017; May 2017; and August to September 2017); * One open-ended intergovernmental working group meeting (Chengdu, 11 to 13 June 2017). * Plans for the use of the resources of the Fund adopted; Operational Directives (OD) revised concerning the increase in the ceiling for International Assistance (IA) to be examined by the Bureau; a new OD chapter adopted on the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage and sustainable development at the national level. * 87 nominations, 11 proposals to the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices (GSP), and 36 IA requests submitted and 24 IA requests processed, each including a safeguarding plan (2016 to 2017 cycle). * 20 IA requests processed/analysed and presented to the Bureau, of which 14 approved (11.COM BUR 1-3 and 12.COM BUR 1,2 & 4), 10 effectively implemented by Member States and 13 still under implementation. * [New monitoring interface](https://ich.unesco.org/en/submissions-and-deadlines-00861) launched concerning periodic reporting, allowing all stakeholders to review the reports submitted, consult the future submission schedules and search by mechanism, status and country; online tool for the submission of USL reports for the 2018 cycle. |

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| **38C/5 Performance Indicator 2** | **Number of supported Member States utilizing strengthened human and institutional resources for intangible cultural heritage and integrating intangible cultural heritage into national policies** |

| **Target** | **Assessment of progress: 01/01/2016 to 30/06/2017** |
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| * Policies developed or revised in 15 States and human and institutional resources strengthened in 25 States. * 20% of UNESCO-trained female cultural professionals contributing to national-level decision-making processes in the field of culture. | * Policies developed or revised in 19 of the 41 States that received policy support under the capacity-building programme. Human and institutional resources strengthened in 40 States that benefitted from comprehensive multi-year projects. In 31 of the States, projects were completed and in 9 they are ongoing. * 45% of UNESCO-trained cultural professionals are female: no data available on their contribution to the decision-making process; mechanism under development. * Facilitators’ network strengthened through four training workshops for facilitators (one global and three regional) and the development and dissemination of audio-visual tutorials on safeguarding plans for intangible cultural heritage, policy development and gender. * Core curriculum materials updated to reflect the decisions of statutory meetings (15 units; 3 languages). |

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| **38C/5 Performance Indicator 3** | **Number of periodic reports on implementation of the Convention at national levels submitted by States Parties and examined by the Committee, and number addressing gender issues and describing policies promoting equal access to and participation in cultural life** |

| **Target** | **Assessment of progress: 01/01/2016 to 31/12/2017** |
| --- | --- |
| * 30 reports, of which 20 address gender issues. | * 35 reports submitted and examined by the Committee, of which 14 address gender issues. These are: * 6 periodic reports submitted on the implementation of the Convention at the national level, processed by the Secretariat and examined by the Committee at its eleventh session; 1 of them addressed gender issues. * 11 periodic reports submitted on the implementation of the Convention at the national level, processed by the Secretariat and examined by the Committee at its twelfth session; 3 of them addressed gender issues. * 6 periodic reports submitted on elements inscribed on the USL, processed by the Secretariat and examined by the Committee at its eleventh session; 3 of them addressed gender issues. * 12 periodic reports submitted on elements inscribed on the USL, processed by the Secretariat and examined by the Committee at its twelfth session; 7 of them addressed gender issues. |

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| **38C/5 Performance Indicator 4** | **Number of States Parties to the Convention increased** |

| **Target** | **Assessment of progress: 01/01/2016 to 31/12/2017** |
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| * 5 new ratifications, including 2 from Africa. | * 11 new ratifications (Cabo Verde, Cook Islands, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Malta, Saint Kitts and Nevis, South Sudan, Suriname Thailand, Timor-Leste and Tuvalu), including 4 from Africa. An extension of the territorial application of the Convention made by the Netherlands for Curaçao. |

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| **38C/5 Performance Indicator 5** | **Number of organizations within and outside the United Nations system, civil society, and the private sector contributing to programme delivery** |

| **Target** | **Assessment of progress: 01/01/2016 to 31/12/2017** |
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| * 8 NGOs accredited; 20 NGOs renewed; 4 category 2 centres fully contributing to supporting UNESCO’s programme for the effective implementation of the 2003 Convention. | * Facilitated the accreditation of 24 NGOs by the sixth session of the General Assembly in 2016 as well as the review of 50 requests for accreditation by the Committee in 2017. * Facilitated the renewal of 42 NGOs by the Committee in 2017, out of 59 requests processed. * 6 category 2 centres contributing to supporting UNESCO’s programme for the effective implementation of the 2003 Convention. |