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The Committee's second session

The second session of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, which took place on Odaiba Island in Tokyo Bay from 3 to 7 September of this year, had a very full agenda. It was thanks to the goodwill of Committee Members and especially the astute leadership of H.E. Mr Seiichi Kondo, the Chairperson of the Committee and Permanent Delegate of Japan to UNESCO, that the meeting was brought to a successful conclusion, with final decisions taken for almost all items on the agenda. The Committee drew up, for approval by the General Assembly of the States Parties to the Convention, the greater part of the Operational Directives required to implement the Intangible Heritage Convention.

It is hoped that the General Assembly at its second session, in June 2008, will be able to discuss and approve the full set of Directives proposed by the Committee. Only then will the Convention be fully operational, with the first inscriptions on the two intangible heritage lists scheduled for as early as 2009.

The Tokyo session confirmed the directions already chosen by the Committee at its first session in Algeria and its first extraordinary session, held in May of this year in China. This is of major significance: it demonstrates that this will be an operational Convention that concentrates on safeguarding by and for the communities, groups and individuals who create, recreate and transmit living heritage.

While working on the Operational Directives, the Committee often went beyond the strict, legal interpretation of the Convention that had influenced various



The Committee session

documents prepared by the Secretariat. Consequently, some decisions were fundamentally redrafted during the session. The discussions were therefore intense, especially during the first days of the meeting, and the Committee set up several working groups in order to move ahead faster; it also created two subsidiary bodies with specific tasks.

The Committee enthusiastically accepted Turkey's offer to host the next ordinary session in Istanbul in late 2008. Before that date, it will meet once more in extraordinary session; it was happy to accept Bulgaria's offer to host that meeting in Sofia in February 2008. That session will allow the Committee to prepare its biennial report to the General Assembly and finalize the Operational Directives for the Assembly's approval.

Rieks Smeets, Intangible Heritage Section

Participants at the Tokyo meeting

The second ordinary session of the Committee was attended by some 150 persons. They represented:

- 22 Committee Members;
- 16 other States Parties to the Convention;
- 13 UNESCO Member States and Associate Members; and
- 11 non-governmental and other organizations.

A new Bureau for the Committee

At the end of its second session, the Committee elected a new Bureau to serve until the end of the third ordinary session, scheduled for late 2008 in Istanbul.

The new Bureau is composed of:

- Chairperson: H.E. Mr Faruk Logoglu (Turkey)
- Vice-Chairpersons: Hungary, India, Mexico, United Arab Emirates
- Rapporteur: Ms Claudine-Augée Angoué (Gabon)

Extraordinary sessions of the Committee elect their own Bureau, following Article 13 of the Committee's Rules of Procedure.

(Left) Zambia: The Makishi Mascarade
(Right) Nicaragua: El Güegüense



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Operational Directives for the Convention's Lists

The procedures leading to inscription on the Convention's two lists – the Urgent Safeguarding List and the Representative List – were decided in Tokyo, subject to approval by the General Assembly. States Parties and communities alike are eager to see the first inscriptions of ICH elements on these lists. For the Representative List, communities and nations wish to share and promote their living heritage worldwide; for the Urgent Safeguarding List, they see the opportunity to strengthen the viability of elements of that heritage that are facing difficulties. In Tokyo, the Committee drew up procedures and timetables for the submission of nomination files, their examination, and their evaluation and inscription by the Committee.

The Committee decided that an intangible heritage element cannot appear on both lists at the same time, but States Parties concerned may request the transfer of an element from one list to the other. The Committee further decided to propose to the General Assembly that an element that no longer satisfies one or more of the criteria for inscription on a list may be removed from it. While both lists are open-ended, and many of the proposed procedures leading to inscription are similar, the Urgent Safeguarding List will be given priority and its inscription procedures will be more rigorous.

Proposed procedures and timetables for inscriptions on the lists

Although broadly similar, the procedures and timetables for the two lists differ in several ways. The preliminary examination of nomination files for the Urgent Safeguarding List will be entrusted to public or private bodies, individual experts or accredited advisory organizations selected by the Committee; they will then offer their recommendations to it. Proposals for inscription on the Representative List will follow a simpler procedure in which they will be examined by a subsidiary body of the Committee that will similarly make its recommendations. At the end of both procedures, the Committee will evaluate the proposals and recommendations and decide whether or not to inscribe a proposed element.

The procedure for the Urgent Safeguarding List will normally take 18 months (24 months for States requesting financial assistance for preparing files). However, the Committee proposed an exceptional timetable so that the first round of nominations will lead to inscription within only 13 months. In this way, the first inscriptions on both lists will take place when the Committee meets at the end of 2009. The accelerated procedure proposed for the first inscriptions on the Urgent Safeguarding List and the standard procedure for the Representative List are presented here. (The Committee had already drawn up the sets of criteria for inscription on the lists during its May session in China: see *Intangible Heritage Messenger* n° 7.)

Exceptional timetable and procedure proposed for the first cycle of inscriptions on the Urgent Safeguarding List

PHASE 1: PREPARATION AND SUBMISSION

- 31 July 2008 Deadline for States Parties to request financial assistance for the preparation of nominations.
- October 2008 Evaluation of preparatory assistance requests by the Committee.
- 15 March 2009 Deadline for nominations to be received by the Secretariat. If a nomination is found to be incomplete, the State Party will be advised to complete it.
- 15 April 2009 Deadline for States Parties to submit additional information, if any, required to complete the nomination.

PHASE 2: EXAMINATION

- April 2009 Selection by the Committee of one or more advisory organizations, research institutes and/or experts to examine the nominations.
- April–June 2009 Examination of nominations.
- 25 June 2009 Deadline for States Parties to submit any supplementary information requested by the examiners for the proper review of a nomination.
- 1 July 2009 The Secretariat transmits the examination reports to the nominating States Parties.
- August 2009 The Secretariat transmits the examination reports – together with comments, if any, from the submitting States Parties – to the Committee Members.

PHASE 3: EVALUATION

- September 2009 The Committee evaluates the nominations and decides whether or not to inscribe the elements.

Timetable and procedure proposed for the first cycle of inscriptions on the Representative List

PHASE 1: PREPARATION AND SUBMISSION

- 31 August 2008 Deadline for nominations to be received by the Secretariat.
- 1 November 2008 Deadline for the Secretariat to process the nominations. If a nomination is found to be incomplete, the State Party will be advised to complete it.
- 15 January 2009 Deadline for States Parties to submit additional information, if any, required to complete the nomination.

PHASE 2: EXAMINATION

- May 2009 Examination of the nominations by a special subsidiary body of the Committee.
- 1 July 2009 The Secretariat transmits the subsidiary body's examination reports to the nominating States Parties.
- 1 August 2009 The Secretariat transmits the examination reports to the Committee Members.

PHASE 3: EVALUATION

- September 2009 The Committee evaluates the nominations and decides whether or not to inscribe the elements.

The items proclaimed Masterpiece of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity will soon be incorporated in the Representative List.

All Masterpieces, including those shown here, are presented on the new website at:
<http://www.unesco.org/culture/cih/ith/MasterpiecesV1.html>

Incorporation of items proclaimed Masterpieces in the Representative List

In accordance with Article 31 of the Convention, the Committee decided to incorporate all items proclaimed Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity in the Representative List as soon as that List is established. It will do so at its third ordinary session in late 2008. The Representative List will make no distinction between former Masterpieces and newly inscribed elements, which all will give rise to the same rights and obligations. States non party to the Convention that have one or more Masterpieces on their territory will have to consent in writing to those obligations and will be able to exclude their Masterpieces from incorporation in the List. A procedure to that effect will be drawn up at the second extraordinary session in Bulgaria (February 2008). The obligations in question will become clear only after the adoption of the Operational Directives by the General Assembly.

The use of the Intangible Heritage Fund

Every two years the Committee will have to submit a proposal for the use of the Fund to the General Assembly, following general guidelines to be issued by the Assembly. In Tokyo, the Committee started to draw up such guidelines for possible adoption by the Assembly, recommending that the Fund's resources should be used primarily for international assistance. The Committee then adopted a plan for the use of the Fund for the period running from June 2008 to June 2010, in accordance with the draft guidelines. It proposed that at least 70 per cent of the available resources should be used for international assistance. The remainder would be allocated for various purposes, including the participation in Committee sessions of experts representing States Parties; the participation of organs and private individuals, including representatives of communities and groups, that the Committee may wish to consult; and advisory services. States Parties' contributions to the Fund are expected to total some US\$3 million by June 2008.

Selection and promotion of best practices

The Committee once again expressed the particular importance it attaches to Article 18 of the Convention, which asks the Committee to select and promote best safeguarding practices. It emphasized that, in the implementation of this article, special attention is to be paid to developing States and to South-South and North-South-South cooperation. The Committee expects the promotion and dissemination of the chosen activities to be crucial in raising awareness of the importance of intangible heritage in general, and promoting its safeguarding. When discussing the uses of the Intangible Heritage Fund, the Committee had already taken into account the preparatory assistance that may be given to States Parties preparing proposals under this article as well as the possible funding of projects and programmes once



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selected. The Committee drafted a detailed set of Operational Directives that – once approved by the General Assembly – will act as guidelines for implementing this important activity.

International assistance

The Committee drew up an extensive set of directives for international assistance (Articles 19-24), with priority to be given to requests concerning:

- the safeguarding of the heritage inscribed on the Urgent Safeguarding List;
- other safeguarding programmes, projects and activities;
- the preparation of inventories; and
- preparatory assistance for States Parties wishing to submit requests for inscriptions on the Urgent Safeguarding List and proposals for the selection of best practices in safeguarding.

Community involvement in the preparation of proposals and requests and in the implementation of proposed activities is an important criterion for the Committee, as are the special needs of developing countries and the principle of equitable geographical distribution.

Advisory and consultative assistance, accreditation & observers

The Committee asked the Secretariat to prepare a list of non-governmental organizations and non-profit-making institutions that are active in the fields covered by the Convention. The Intangible Heritage Section is thus continuing to collect information on such organizations, in cooperation with States Parties to the Convention, especially through their Permanent Delegations to UNESCO and their National Commissions.



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Viet Nam: The Space of Gong Culture

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AGENDA

29–30 NOVEMBER 2007

“Expert Meeting on Current Trends in Linguistic Mapping”, in preparation for the third edition of the Atlas of the World’s Languages in Danger of Disappearing. Paris, France.

11–13 DECEMBER 2007

Regional Meeting on “Safeguarding Intangible Heritage and Sustainable Cultural Tourism: Opportunities and Challenges”, organized by the UNESCO Bangkok Office, in cooperation with the Establishment Initiative for the Intangible Heritage Centre for Asia-Pacific, Seoul. Hue, Viet Nam.

12–14 DECEMBER 2007

Sub-regional Meeting in the Pacific for the promotion of the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. Nadi, Fiji.

FEBRUARY 2008

Second extraordinary session of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. Sofia, Bulgaria.

JUNE 2008

Second ordinary session of the General Assembly of the States Parties to the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. Paris, France.

LATE 2008

Third ordinary session of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. Istanbul, Turkey.

The information will be maintained and regularly updated on a database developed by the Section. The database will be at the disposal of the Committee for any purpose it may consider useful.

The Committee also decided on the functions of those NGOs that it will propose to the General Assembly for accreditation and on the procedure for that accreditation. The Committee explicitly wishes that the functions proposed for NGOs may also be assumed by other knowledgeable entities and private individuals. In this spirit, the Committee established a subsidiary body that will prepare a document for its next session on possible modalities for the participation of communities or their representatives, practitioners, experts, centres of expertise and research institutes in the implementation of the Convention.

The Committee spoke at length about possible regulations for the admission of observers to its meetings; it was eventually decided to discuss the matter further at the next session. For the time being, the Committee invited States Parties to submit names of NGOs that could participate as observers at that meeting. The same decision allows the Committee’s Chairperson to ask the Director-General to invite entities mentioned by the States Parties and those on the Secretariat’s list to attend the next meeting as observers.

An emblem for the Convention

The Intergovernmental Committee decided that the Convention needs an emblem to give greater visibility to intangible heritage and its safeguarding. This emblem will be chosen by means of an open international competition, overseen by a special subsidiary body set up by the Committee. UNESCO is now announcing a competition for the design of an emblem that best reflects the purposes and spirit of the Convention.

UNESCO invites entries from professional and amateur graphic designers, artists, and practitioners of intangible cultural heritage from all its Member States. Each participant may submit a single design, including a black and white and a colour version. The deadline for submissions to reach UNESCO is 15 February 2008.

The competition’s Rules and Procedures and an application form are available on the competition website: www.unesco.org/culture/ich/en/emblem/. For further information, write to ICH-emblem@unesco.org.

At its third session in Istanbul, the Committee will select the winning design and award it with a prize of US\$15,000. This will then serve as the Convention’s official emblem.

For the decisions taken in Tokyo, the report of the Rapporteur, the list of participants, the original working documents and – by mid-November – the Summary Record of the Tokyo session, see <http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/en/2COM/>.

Vanuatu Sand Drawings



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