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

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

**Eighth session**

**UNESCO Headquarters, Room I**

**8 to 10 September 2020**

**Item 10 of the Provisional Agenda:**

**Revision of the Operational Directives for the implementation of the Convention**

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| **Summary**  At its fourteenth session, the Intergovernmental Committee took stock of the provisional dialogue process initiated for the 2019 nomination cycle on an experimental basis. The Committee acknowledged the positive experience this mechanism brought to the evaluation and inscription process, and recommended that the General Assembly revise the Operational Directives for the implementation of the Convention to formalize the dialogue process ([Decision 14.COM 14](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/14.COM/14)) as contained in Annex to the present document.  **Decision required:** paragraph 7 |

1. The Committee recognized, at its eleventh session in 2016, the need to include an additional step in the nomination cycle to allow for dialogue between the Evaluation Body and submitting States. The Committee requested that the Secretariat propose an appropriate procedure in this regard and at the same time established an informal ad hoc working group to discuss the matter ([Decision 11.COM 10](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/11.COM/10)). This decision was made against the backdrop of an unprecedented high number of decisions taken by the Committee to reverse the recommendations of the Evaluation Body on nominations, proposals and requests. The intention behind the dialogue process is to provide States Parties whose files would have been referred due to minor technical aspects with an opportunity to address them during the nomination cycle rather than having to wait an additional two years before the Committee can examine their files again.
2. The position of the Committee ([Decision 12.COM 13](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/12.COM/13)) at its twelfth session in 2017 was to take more time for a number of adjustments introduced in the evaluation methodology to come into effect (notably in terms of guiding questions for some of the criteria in the nomination forms), before establishing a formal ‘dialogue’ process. On the same occasion, the Committee decided to continue the informal ad hoc working group until 2018, making it open to all States Parties. As part of its mandate, the group was asked to further reflect on an appropriate ‘dialogue’ mechanism in consultation with the Evaluation Body and taking into account the respective resolutions by the seventh session of the General Assembly in June 2018. At that same session, the General Assembly fully recognized the importance of dialogue to strengthen the transparency and credibility of the evaluation process and requested that the working group present its deliberations and recommendations to the thirteenth session of the Committee in November/December 2018 ([Resolution 7.GA 6](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/7.GA/6)).
3. At its thirteenth session, following the examination of several nominations that were referred after long deliberations, the Committee reiterated its desire to see improvements in the evaluation and decision making procedures related to inscription, selection and approval of submitted files. On the one hand, the Committee decided to initiate a long-term global reflection – that would last until at least 2022 – on listing mechanisms with the financial support of Japan (see [document LHE/20/8.GA/11](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-20-8.GA-11-EN.docx)). On the other hand, the Committee wished to experiment with a possible dialogue process for the following cycle as part of an ‘early harvest package’ for the global reflection, which could be reflected in an amendment to the Operational Directives for adoption by the General Assembly at its eighth session ([Decision 13.COM 10](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/13.COM/10); paragraphs 14 to 18). At the same time, the mandate of the informal open-ended ad hoc working group was extended again until 2019 to also ‘exchange with the Secretariat and the Evaluation Body on the implementation of the experimental dialogue mechanism’ ([Decision 13.COM 16](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/13.COM/16)).
4. Concretely, the Evaluation Body was given the mandate to conduct a provisional dialogue ([Decision 13.COM 14](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/13.COM/14); Annex, paragraph 6) through its evaluation of files submitted for the 2019 cycle. The Body initiated the process whenever it considered that although the information included in a file is not sufficient to assess whether a criterion is satisfied (referral), a short question and answer process with the submitting State(s) could influence the result of its evaluation. The Secretariat was requested to transmit the Evaluation Body’s questions to the States Parties concerned after the second meeting of the Evaluation Body in 2019. The States Parties concerned were asked to submit clarifications before the third meeting of the Evaluation Body in 2019. Accordingly, the Evaluation Body applied the provisional upstream dialogue procedure for six nominations under the 2019 cycle.
5. Bearing in mind the provisional character of the upstream dialogue and to ensure compliance with the Operational Directives, in particular paragraph 55, a specific methodology that was presented to States Parties at an information and exchange session that took place on 1 March 2019 was used. Since the conclusion of the Body’s second meeting in June was considered final, the opinion of the 2019 Evaluation Body on the dialogue cases was published as an information document, separately from the recommendations on individual nominations. In this way, the Committee could benefit from the opinion of the Evaluation Body on the dialogue cases even after the latter had finalized its evaluation in June 2019. The Evaluation Body considered that the dialogue process had made it more confident in its decisions. In turn, the Committee was reassured that nominations that benefitted from the dialogue process did not necessarily need to wait an additional two-year period to be re-evaluated.
6. Based on the 2019 cycle’s positive experience concerning the dialogue process, at its fourteenth session the Committee decided to propose to the eighth session of the General Assembly a set of amendments to Chapter I.15 of the Operational Directives annexed to the draft resolution ([Decision 14.COM 14](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/14.COM/14) and [Decision 14.COM 16](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/14.COM/16)). The inclusion of this intermediary step in the evaluation cycle will make it possible for the Evaluation Body to change and finalize its recommendations for files concerned by the dialogue process during its third and last meeting. For the files not concerned by the dialogue process, however, the Evaluation Body will continue to follow the existing evaluation procedure and timetable and will finalize its evaluation during its second meeting.
7. The General Assembly may wish to adopt the following resolution:

DRAFT RESOLUTION 8.GA 10

The General Assembly,

1. Having examined document LHE/20/8.GA/10,
2. Acknowledges the positive experience that the ‘provisional upstream dialogue’ process of the 2019 cycle brought to the evaluation and inscription process and endorses the proposal to include an additional intermediary dialogue process in the nomination cycle;
3. Approves the amendments to the Operational Directives as annexed to this Resolution.

**ANNEX**  
Proposed amendments to the Operational Directives for the implementation of the Convention

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|  | **Operational Directives** | |  | **Proposed amendments** | |
| **I.15** | **Timetable – Overview of procedures** | | **I.15** | [No change.] | |
|  |  |  | 54. | [No change.] |  |
| 55. | Phase 2: | Evaluation | 55. | Phase 2: | Evaluation |
|  | December Year 1 to May Year 2 | Evaluation of the files by the Evaluation Body. |  | December Year 1 to May Year 2 | **Individual** evaluation of the files by the Evaluation Body **members**. |
|  | April – June Year 2 | Meeting for final evaluation by the Evaluation Body. |  | June Year 2 | Meeting~~for final evaluation by the Evaluation Body~~ **at which the Evaluation Body collectively finalizes its evaluation of the files and decides which files will be included in the dialogue process. Only the evaluation of those files included in the dialogue process will still be pending until the final meeting of the Evaluation Body.**  **The dialogue process is initiated when the Evaluation Body considers that a short question and answer process with the submitting State(s), conducted in writing through the Secretariat, could influence the result of its evaluation.** |
|  |  |  |  | **Two weeks after the June meeting  Year 2** | **Deadline by which the Evaluation Body shall transmit, through the Secretariat, its questions to the States Parties concerned by the dialogue process, in one of the two working languages of the Convention.** |
|  |  |  |  |  | **States Parties shall respond to the requests of the Evaluation Body, through the Secretariat, within four weeks following the receipt of the letter, in the two working languages of the Convention.** |
|  |  |  |  | **Latest by September Year 2** | **Meeting at which the Evaluation Body finalizes its evaluation of the files concerned by the dialogue process and its report on the evaluation of all files.** |
|  | Four weeks prior to the session of the Committee | The Secretariat transmits the evaluation reports to the members of the Committee and makes them available on-line for consultation. |  | Four weeks prior to the session of the Committee | The Secretariat transmits the evaluation reports to the members of the Committee and makes them available online for consultation. |
| 56. | Phase 3: | Examination | 56. | [No change.] |  |