**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 5 of the Provisional Agenda:**

**Report of the Committee to the General Assembly**

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| **Summary**  Article 30.1 of the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage states that ‘on the basis of its activities and the reports by States Parties [...] the Committee shall submit a report to the General Assembly at each of its sessions’. This document contains a report on the Committee’s activities from January 2018 to December 2019, including the reports by States Parties it adopted during the same period, that is at its thirteenth and fourteenth sessions.  **Decision required:** paragraph 3 |

1. Article 30.1 of the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage states that ‘on the basis of its activities and the reports by States Parties [...] the Committee shall submit a report to the General Assembly at each of its sessions’. Article 30.2 continues that ‘[t]he report shall be brought to the attention of the General Conference of UNESCO’. The period covered by this report is January 2018 to December 2019. This reporting period follows [Resolution 6.GA 5](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/6.GA/5), whereby the General Assembly requested that the Committee use a biennium calendar year for future reports. In this regard, a report by the Committee is presented below in the annex to this document.[[1]](#footnote-1) This report also contains a set of national reports submitted by States Parties, in the sense of Article 29 of the Convention, which were adopted by the Committee during its thirteenth and fourteenth sessions.
2. This report should be read in conjunction with the report by the Secretariat on its activities ([document LHE/20/8.GA/6](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-20-8.GA-6-EN.docx)) and the financial statement of the Fund for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage ([document LHE/20/8.GA/INF.7](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-20-8.GA-INF.7-EN.docx)).
3. The General Assembly may wish to adopt the following resolution:

DRAFT RESOLUTION 8.GA 5

The General Assembly,

1. Having examined document LHE/20/8.GA/5,
2. Recalling Article 30 of the Convention,
3. Welcomes Kiribati, Singapore and Solomon Islands, which ratified the Convention during the reporting period and expresses satisfaction with the high rate of ratification across the regions;
4. Takes note of the report by the Committee to the General Assembly on its activities between January 2018 and December 2019, as annexed to this document, and thanks the Committee for its productive work;
5. Commends the Committee for the progress made in improving the governance of the Convention, notably through the reform of the periodic reporting mechanism that a) aims to improve the low submission rate of reports, b) has been aligned to the overall results framework and c) will follow a regional cycle of reporting, and as such expresses its hope that the reformed mechanism will serve as a useful tool for monitoring the achievements and impacts of the Convention at various levels in all regions;
6. Further commends the Committee for the continued importance it places on capacity building for the implementation of the Convention through the global capacity-building programme, and notes with satisfaction the initiatives related to safeguarding intangible cultural heritage in formal and non-formal education;
7. Emphasizes the significant role that intangible cultural heritage safeguarding can play in supporting peace building and cooperation, notably concerning the decision of the Committee on the joint inscription of an element ([Decision 13.COM 10.b.41](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/13.COM/10.b.41));
8. Stresses the importance of the reflection launched by the Committee on the nature and purposes of the listing mechanisms under the Convention, including the follow-up on inscribed elements as part of this broader reflection and welcomes initial steps taken to improve the inscription process through the upstream dialogue process;
9. Expresses full satisfaction with the decision of the Committee to remove an element from one of the Lists of the Convention in keeping with the founding principles of UNESCO and the principles of the Convention of dignity, equality and mutual respect among peoples ([Decision 14.COM 12](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/14.COM/12));
10. Also appreciates the reflection that the Committee has undertaken on intangible cultural heritage in emergencies as well as another on the participation of non-governmental organizations in the implementation of the Convention;
11. Requests that the Director-General bring this report to the attention of the General Conference of UNESCO, in conformity with Article 30, paragraph 2 of the Convention.

**ANNEX**

**Report by the Committee to the General Assembly on its activities**

1. The functions of the Committee are set out in the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, in particular in Article 7. This report follows the order of functions set out in that article.
2. In 2018, the General Assembly renewed half of the 24 members of the Committee by electing 12 States Parties to serve a term of four years. The 24 members of the Committee, during the period June 2018 to June 2020, were: Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan\*, Cameroon\*, China\*, Colombia, Cuba, Cyprus, Djibouti\*, Guatemala, Jamaica\*, Japan\*, Kazakhstan\*, Kuwait\*, Lebanon, Mauritius, the Netherlands\*, Palestine, the Philippines, Poland\*, Senegal, Sri Lanka\*, Togo\* and Zambia (those committee members indicated with an asterisk have a mandate between 2018 and 2022; the mandate for those without an asterisk is between 2016 and 2020).
3. During the reporting period, the Committee met twice: in Port Louis, Republic of Mauritius, from 26 November to 1 December 2018 for its thirteenth session (13.COM), and in Bogotá, Republic of Colombia, from 9 to 14 December 2019 for its fourteenth session (14.COM).
4. The Bureau of the thirteenth session of the Committee was elected at the end of the twelfth session in December 2017 in Jeju Island, Republic of Korea, and was composed of: H.E. MrPrithvirajsing Roopun (Republic of Mauritius) as Chairperson; Cyprus, Armenia, Guatemala, the Philippines and Lebanon as Vice-Chairpersons; and Ms Gabriele Detschmann (Austria) as Rapporteur.
5. The Bureau of the fourteenth session of the Committee was elected at the end of the thirteenth session in December 2018 in Port Louis, Republic of Mauritius, and was composed of: Ms María Claudia Lopez Sorzano (Republic of Colombia) as Chairperson; Austria, Poland, the Philippines, Zambia and Palestine as Vice-Chairpersons; and Mr Bernard Jankee (Jamaica) as Rapporteur.
6. The Bureau met from Tuesday to Saturday during the sessions of the Committee. During the reporting period, it also met six times at UNESCO Headquarters, on: 22 March 2018 (13.COM 1.BUR); 7 June 2018 (13.COM 2.BUR); 2 October 2018 (13.COM 3.BUR); 21 March 2019 (14.COM 1.BUR); 18 June 2019 (14.COM 2.BUR) and 3 October 2019 (14.COM 4.BUR). In addition, an electronic consultation was held in September 2019 (14.COM 3.BUR).
7. During the reporting period, the Committee and its Bureau examined a total of 86 items inscribed on their agendas, which were accompanied by 89 working documents or information documents and 12 nominations for the Urgent Safeguarding List, 78 nominations for the Representative List, 3 proposals for good safeguarding practices, 37 requests for International Assistance, reports submitted by States Parties and 63 requests for accreditation or renewal from non-governmental organizations (hereafter, NGOs). The Committee took note of the reflection on the participation of non-governmental organizations in the implementation of the Convention.
8. At its fourteenth session, the Committee elected the members of the Bureau of the fifteenth session, and was composed of: H.E. Ms Olivia Grange (Jamaica) as Chairperson; the Netherlands, Azerbaijan, China, Djibouti and Kuwait as Vice-Chairpersons; and Mr Askar Abdrakhmanov (Kazakhstan) as Rapporteur.
9. **Promoting the objectives of the Convention, encouraging and monitoring its implementation, and providing guidance on safeguarding measures and good practices** (Article 7[a] and 7[b])
10. **Ratification**
11. Three States (Kiribati, Singapore, Solomon Islands) ratified the Convention between January 2018 and December 2019. At the end of 2019, 178 States were parties to the Convention.
12. **Sound governance facilitated by enhanced knowledge management services**
13. The sound governance of the Convention continues to be a priority for the Committee, which is committed to seeking possible improvements to that end. To support these functions, the Bureau of the Committee allocated a total of US$338,512 – i.e., 20 per cent of the line ‘other functions of the Committee’ – for the period January 2018 to December 2019. At its thirteenth and fourteenth sessions, the Committee examined the follow-up on the implementation of the relevant recommendations of the Open-Ended Working Group on the Governance, procedures and working methods of the Governing Bodies of UNESCO (documents [ITH/18/13.COM/17](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/ITH-18-13.COM-17-EN.docx) and [LHE/19/14.COM/19](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-19-14.COM-19-EN.docx)), which were endorsed by the thirty-eighth session of the General Conference in 2015 (38C/Resolution 101). In general, actions had been taken to move a number of recommendations towards the status ‘closed’ or ‘ongoing’. In between these two sessions of the Committee, the status of the recommendations was further discussed during the seventh session of the General Assembly in June 2018 (Resolution [ITH/18/7.GA/12](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/ITH-18-7.GA-12-EN.docx)). At its fourteenth session, the Committee also took note that the General Assembly at its eighth session would discuss the preparation of the C/4 and C/5 with reference to Recommendation 74.
14. In its [Resolution 7.GA 9](https://ich.unesco.org/en/d%C3%A9cisions/7.GA/9?dec=decisions&ref_decision=7.GA), the General Assembly approved a plan for the use of the resources of the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund (hereafter the Fund) for the period 1 January 2018 to 31 December 2019, which devoted 20 per cent of the budget (US$1,718,184) to ‘other functions of the Committee’. By its [Decision 12.COM 7](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/12.COM/7), the Committee delegated to its Bureau the authority to decide upon the utilization of the funds allocated under this line of the Plan, based on specific proposals to be prepared by the Secretariat. Accordingly, in June 2018 the Bureau approved it for the period 1 January 2018 to 31 December 2019. Detailed information on the results of these activities up to June 2019 is included in the report of the Secretariat to the Committee ([document LHE/19/14.COM/5.b](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-19-14.COM-5.b-EN.docx)). In addition, the fourteenth session of the Committee approved a draft plan for the use of the resources of the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund for the period 1 January 2020 to 31 December 2021 and the first semester of 2022, to be submitted to the General Assembly for its approval.
15. Under the reporting period, many improvements were made to the knowledge management services of the Convention, with new functionalities made available to facilitate the sound and improved governance of the Convention. The main achievements included the online reporting interface to support the reformed periodic reporting mechanism, as well as the renewal of accredited NGOs. The Arabic version of the website of the Convention was also launched. Furthermore, inscribed elements, safeguarding projects and accredited NGOs were indexed and datasets can now be searched by content-related criteria and downloaded to allow for external analysis. Another tool launched – the [Intangible Cultural Heritage Convention Research Bibliography](https://ich.unesco.org/en/research-references-on-2003-convention-implementation-00945) – provides an interactive bibliography of research references related to the Convention and its implementation.
16. As for the reform of the Periodic Reporting mechanism that was initiated by the adoption of the overall results framework for the Convention ([Resolution 7.GA 9](https://ich.unesco.org/en/d%C3%A9cisions/7.GA/9?dec=decisions&ref_decision=7.GA)), the Committee at its thirteenth session then took a further step by adopting the calendar for the first regional cycle of reporting under the Convention ([Decision 13.COM 8](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/13.COM/8)). At its fourteenth session, the Committee took note of the following actions undertaken by the Secretariat: a) the revision of reporting Form ICH-10 and its online version; b) the production of a set of 26 guidance notes; and c) the development of a capacity-building approach and related materials to assist reporting States. These actions benefitted from the support of the Republic of Korea (US$300,000).
17. **Strengthening the capacity-building programme and guidelines on safeguarding measures and good practices**
18. The Committee continues to consider capacity building to be crucial and maintains it as the objective of one of the two global funding priorities of the Convention, ‘Strengthening capacities to safeguard intangible cultural heritage and contribute to sustainable development’. This is because the effective implementation of the Convention depends on a thorough knowledge and understanding of the Convention and its concepts, measures and mechanisms. Consequently, the Bureau of the Committee allocated a total of US$619,150 – i.e., 36 per cent of the line ‘other functions of the Committee’ – for the period January 2018 to December 2019. Activities undertaken under this line were aimed at meeting a number of cross-cutting needs, in particular: (i) strengthening the network of facilitators; (ii) developing adequate content, formats and materials; (iii) monitoring, evaluating and adapting the strategy; and (iv) strengthening networks and partnerships with higher education institutions.
19. **Integration of intangible cultural heritage into development plans, policies and programmes**
20. Integrating intangible cultural heritage into development plans, policies and programmes is key to promoting the objectives of the Convention in the context of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda. The Bureau of the Committee allocated a total of US$286,600 in this regard – i.e., 17 per cent of the line ‘other functions of the Committee’ for the period   
    2018–2019, as compared to 3 per cent for the period 2016–2017. Ongoing actions under this allocation have already demonstrated that the implementation of the Convention takes place within a larger international context and that the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage can meaningfully contribute to a number of sustainable development goals.
21. Within the framework of the second global funding priority of the Convention, ‘Safeguarding intangible cultural heritage in formal and non-formal education (2018–2021)’, a series of initiatives were taken to promote transmission through formal and non-formal education as a safeguarding measure in line with Article 2 of the Convention.
22. The Committee has been undertaking a reflection on intangible cultural heritage in emergencies over the past several cycles. In 2018, the Committee felt that the time had come to define operational modalities for the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage in emergencies ([Decision 13.COM 11](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/13.COM/11)). Consequently, an individual expert meeting was convened in May 2019, with the support of the Government of China, to conceptualize and transform the knowledge and experience acquired into methodological guidance for States Parties, or for any other relevant national or international stakeholders. Upon examining the findings of the meeting ([document LHE/19/14.COM/13](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-19-14.COM-13-EN.docx)), the Committee at its fourteenth session endorsed the operational principles and modalities for safeguarding intangible cultural heritage in emergencies and asked the Secretariat to present them for examination by the General Assembly at its eighth session in June 2020.
23. **Raising awareness and outreach**
24. Promoting the objectives of the Convention could be understood as a safeguarding action in itself, as defined in Article 2.3 of the Convention. Developing strategic and effective institutional partnerships is also key to achieving the objectives of the Conventions. With these points in mind, the Bureau allocated a total of US$473,922 for the period January 2018 to December 2019 to support the Secretariat’s initiative in these two areas.
25. Documents [ITH/18/13.COM/INF.5.1](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/ITH-18-13.COM-INF.5.1-EN.docx) and [LHE/19/14.COM/5.b](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-19-14.COM-5.b-EN.docx) provided the Committee with an update on the progress with the communication activities implemented by the Secretariat from January to June 2018 and from January 2018 to June 2019, respectively. At its thirteenth and fourteenth sessions, the Committee witnessed the effectiveness of these communication actions in supporting the development of new thematic areas under the Convention – intangible cultural heritage and indigenous peoples, and intangible cultural heritage and education; a renewed brochure was also issued for the capacity-building programme. These actions also contributed to broadening the outreach of the Convention to a wider, untapped audience (i.e. youth, indigenous peoples).
26. Following the indications provided by the Committee at its twelfth session, the Secretariat and the informal ad hoc working group reflected, in consultation with accredited NGOs, on the possible ways in which the participation of NGOs under the 2003 Convention could be further enhanced and how this would be reflected in the accreditation and renewal mechanisms of NGOs. Based on the results of the electronic consultation undertaken by the Secretariat in 2018 and the debates of the Committee at its thirteenth session, a consultation meeting was organized in April 2019 at UNESCO Headquarters. At its fourteenth session, the Committee examined the results of the reflection.
27. **Preparation of a draft plan for the use of the resources of the Fund and increasing the resources of the Fund** (Articles 7[c] and 7[d])
28. The Committee shall submit to the eighth session of the General Assembly a plan for the use of the resources of the Fund for the period 1 January 2020 to 31 December 2021 and for the first six months of 2022. This plan has been conceived in continuation of the approach adopted for the period 2018–2019. The largest percentage continues to be dedicated to International Assistance. See [document LHE/19/14.COM/7](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-19-14.COM-7-EN.docx) for the plan.
29. During the reporting period, supplementary voluntary contributions of US$528,349 from China, Japan, the Netherlands and Switzerland were made to the Fund to finance four different projects. The Sub-Fund of the Fund, devoted exclusively to enhancing the human capacities of the Secretariat, also received contributions of US$76,908 during the same period from Kazakhstan, Monaco, Montenegro and Sweden.
30. Document [LHE/19/14.COM/7](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-19-14.COM-7-EN.docx) includes, in Annex II (a), a list of such contributions for the period 1 January 2018 to 30 June 2019 as well as a statement of income and expenditures in Annex II. Document [LHE/19/14.COM/6](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-19-14.COM-6-EN.docx) includes, in Annex I, a list of voluntary contributions received to the Fund and the Sub-Fund since the thirteenth session of the Committee, for the period October 2018 to October 2019.
31. **Preparation of the Operational Directives for the implementation of the Convention** (Article 7[e])
32. During the reporting period, the Committee recommended that the General Assembly approve new directives or amendments to the Operational Directives for the implementation of the Convention on the following questions:

* Dialogue process and possible amendments to the Operational Directives to be presented to the eighth session of the General Assembly of the States Parties in 2020.

1. **Examination of periodic reports** (Article 7[f])
2. The [Convention](https://ich.unesco.org/en/convention) provides, in Article 29, that States Parties shall submit to the Committee reports on legislative, regulatory and other measures taken for the implementation of the Convention, and in Article 30 that ‘On the basis of its activities and the reports by States Parties […] the Committee shall submit a report to the General Assembly.’ During the reporting period, the Committee examined 32 reports by States Parties on the implementation of the Convention at the national level in 2018 and 20 reports on the status of elements inscribed on the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding (hereinafter, the Urgent Safeguarding List) (16 in 2018 and 4 in 2019).Due to the change in the periodic reporting mechanism, the submission of periodic reports on the implementation of the Convention and on elements inscribed on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity (hereinafter, the Representative List) has been suspended for the deadlines of 15 December 2018 and 2019, including for overdue reports ([document ITH/18/13.COM/8](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/ITH-18-13.COM-8-EN.docx)). For the time being, the change in the periodic reporting mechanism will not affect the procedure for reporting on the status of elements inscribed on the Urgent Safeguarding List. A detailed overview and abstracts for each report can be found in the related working documents of the Committee: documents [ITH/18/13.COM/7.a](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/ITH-18-13.COM-7.a_Rev.-EN.docx), [ITH/18/13.COM/7.b](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/ITH-18-13.COM-7.b-EN.docx) and [LHE/19/14.COM/9.a](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-19-14.COM-9.a-EN.docx).
3. **Inscriptions on the Lists of the Convention, selection of good safeguarding practices and granting of International Assistance** (Article 7[g])
4. During the reporting period, the Committee examined 102 files and inscribed a total of 78 elements on the Lists of the Convention: 12 on the Urgent Safeguarding List and 66 on the Representative List. The Committee also selected 3 good safeguarding practices. At its thirteenth and fourteenth sessions, the Committee approved one International Assistance request for an amount of US$213,260 and one International Assistance request for a total amount of US$387,770, respectively. Furthermore, the unprecedented inscription by the thirteenth session of the Committee of ‘Traditional Korean wrestling (Ssirum/Ssireum)’ on the Representative List as a joined nomination by the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea and the Republic of Korea demonstrated the role that UNESCO can play in contributing to the regional and global peace building through culture.
5. Since at least 2016, States Parties have expressed their interest in establishing a system that clarifies minor technical issues before nominations are presented to the Committee. Building on discussions at earlier sessions, the Committee at its thirteenth session introduced a new experimental procedure for the 2019 cycle called the ‘provisional upstream dialogue’ and decided to further reflect on an appropriate ‘dialogue’ mechanism to enhance the transparency and credibility of the evaluation process ([Decision 13.COM 10](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/13.COM/10) and [Decision 13.COM 16](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/13.COM/16)). This allowed the Evaluation Body to initiate a written exchange when it considers that a short question and answer process with the submitting State might clarify whether the nomination met the criterion concerned. The fourteenth session of the Committee took stock of the experience with this provisional upstream dialogue process, with a view to presenting possible amendments to the Operational Directives to the eighth session of the General Assembly of the States Parties in 2020.
6. There is no mechanism currently in place allowing the Secretariat to bring to the attention of the Committee the increasing number of correspondence received concerning the changing conditions of the status of elements inscribed on the Lists of the Convention. At its thirteenth session, the Committee recognized the need to reflect on the follow-up of inscribed elements as part of the broader reflection on the listing mechanisms of the Convention. The fourteenth session of the Committee examined the case of the Aalst Carnival (Belgium), an element inscribed in 2010 on the Representative List, at the request of the Bureau. Having considered that the element no longer meets the inscription criteria R.1 and R.2 and taking note of the *note verbale* from the Kingdom of Belgium (dated 5 December, 2019), the Committee decided to remove the element from that List in line with paragraph 40 of the Operational Directives.
7. At the same time, at its thirteenth session the Committee launched a long-term reflection until 2022 on the listing mechanisms of the Convention, with the support of the Government of Japan. The overall aim of the initiative is to reflect, *inter alia*, on the nature and purposes of the Lists and the Register of the Convention as well as on the relevance of the various criteria for each of these mechanisms. The review of the methodology for the evaluation and examination of nominations is an important part of the reflection. The fourteenth session of the Committee made progress in this regard, by indicating a series of topics to be dealt with during the first expert meeting to be held in early 2020.
8. The Committee (for requests greater than US$100,000) or the Bureau (for requests up to US$100,000 and emergency requests) approved a total of 26 of 37 requests for International Assistance, for a total amount of US$2,451,208, during the reporting period (see also documents [ITH/18/13.COM/7.c](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/ITH-18-13.COM-7.c-EN.docx) and [LHE/19/14.COM/9.b](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-19-14.COM-9.b-EN.docx) for the report on the use of International Assistance by States Parties). A total of 21 countries received financial assistance from the Fund during the reporting period. As reported to the fourteenth session of the Committee (documents [LHE/19/14.COM/7](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-19-14.COM-7-EN_Rev.2.docx) and [LHE/19/14.COM/INF.7](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-19-14.COM-INF.7-EN.docx)), States Parties have come to make significantly greater use of the International Assistance mechanisms.

1. . Note: Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, some of the dates mentioned in the annex have since changed, notably the eight session of the General Assembly was rescheduled to 8 to 10 September 2020 and the expert meeting on the nature and purposes of the listing mechanisms was postponed until early 2021. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)