**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**

**Summary records of the seventh session of the General Assembly  
4 to 6 June 2018  
UNESCO Headquarters**

The seventh session of the General Assembly of States Parties to the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage was held at UNESCO Headquarters, Paris, from 4 to 6 June 2018. Representatives of 129 States Parties to the Convention participated in the meeting, six Category 2 centres under the auspices of UNESCO, and fifty-nine accredited non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The full list of participants is available [online](https://ich.unesco.org/en/preliminary-list-of-participants-00975).

The session was held in the six working languages of the General Assembly: Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish. The Section of Intangible Cultural Heritage provided the Secretariat for the meeting.

*[Monday 4 June 2018, morning session]*

**ITEM 1 OF THE PROVISIONAL AGENDA:**

**OPENING OF THE SEVENTH SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

**Document:** [*ITH/18/7.GA/INF.1*](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/ITH-18-7.GA-INF.1-EN.docx)

1. The **Assistant Director-General for Culture, Mr Ernesto Ottone Ramírez**, was honoured to open the seventh session of the General Assembly of States Parties to the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. He thanked everyone for their participation, which reflected their commitment to the work of the 2003 Convention. He also thanked Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean for having chosen to highlight their intangible cultural heritage over the past two weeks. Intangible cultural heritage resonates with the world today. This strong support for the Convention was also demonstrated by its rapid development and widespread ratification by more than 90 per cent of UNESCO’s Member States. The Convention had thus made significant progress in further highlighting the importance of intangible cultural heritage. The Convention places communities at the centre of activities in light of the established fact that no society can flourish without culture. Intangible cultural heritage is in essence living and evolving and continues to be a source of creativity and inspiration in modern societies. This fundamental approach in respecting and valuing our cultural practices is also vital for shaping a future for all. In addition, traditional knowledge and practices rooted in national cultures are powerful tools for addressing the major challenges facing humanity, such as social marginalization, economic inequality, environmental challenges and threats to peace and security. In this vein, intangible cultural heritage is of paramount importance for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Intangible cultural heritage can thus serve as a force for diversity and inclusion. Every delegate and State Party represented shares a responsibility to safeguard the living heritage present in their territory and to transmit it from generation to generation. International cooperation for the safeguarding of intangible heritage has grown in recent years, demonstrating the shared commitment by States Parties. In the coming days, important issues regarding the implementation of the Convention would be discussed, which would have a direct impact on the way in which intangible cultural heritage is safeguarded at the national level, as well as for the communities on the ground. The Assembly’s decision on the overall results framework, which has been in operation for more than ten years, as well as reforms to the periodic reporting system, would better monitor the Convention. Other important issues on the international cooperation mechanism of the Convention would be discussed, such as International Assistance, the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund, and the accreditation of NGOs. These tools are crucial for equipping States Parties with the means and resources to support the implementation of the Convention, while ensuring that more people and communities benefit from safeguarding measures. Intangible cultural heritage is above all a celebration of the value of cultural diversity. In this spirit, this General Assembly would be hosting a series of events to highlight the world’s rich living heritage, as well as the advances made in safeguarding intangible cultural heritage with the wide involvement of States, NGOs, youth and community members. In this spirit of togetherness and greater unity and solidarity, the Assistant Director-General wished the Assembly fruitful deliberations and celebration.
2. Welcoming the delegates, the **Secretary of the Convention,** **Mr Tim Curtis**, informed the Assembly that interpretation was available in all six official languages of UNESCO and that the meeting would be transmitted live via audiocast. All the documents had been available [online](https://ich.unesco.org/en/7ga) since the deadline of 4 May 2018 in the six official languages of UNESCO. For environmental reasons and in order to reduce costs, printed copies of the documents were not provided but Wi-Fi was available for downloads. Printed copies of the 2016 edition of the [Basic Texts](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/2003_Convention_Basic_Texts-_2016_version-EN.pdf) were also made available. The preliminary list of participants was also available [online](https://ich.unesco.org/en/preliminary-list-of-participants-00975). It was noted that 500 people had registered to attend this session, representing more than 110 States Parties, four intergovernmental organizations and almost 60 NGOs. The Secretariat had also planned a series of [side events](https://ich.unesco.org/en/calendar-of-events-00990) during the session under the overall theme ‘Tell Your Living Heritage Story’. The Secretary highlighted the dialogue session to showcase the impact of four community-based projects funded by the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund, a roundtable to share in-country experiences of safeguarding intangible cultural heritage, and another roundtable to share in-country experiences for safeguarding intangible cultural heritage for quality and relevance in education. There was also an audiovisual exhibition featuring young people talking about their intangible cultural heritage. States Parties and the NGO Forum also organized events.

**ITEM 2 OF THE PROVISIONAL AGENDA:**

**ELECTION OF THE BUREAU**

**Document:** [*ITH/18/7.GA/2*](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/ITH-18-7.GA-2-EN.docx)

**Resolution:** [*7.GA 2*](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Resolutions/7.GA/2)

1. The **Secretary** recalled Rule 3 of the Rules of Procedure of the General Assembly that states that the Assembly shall elect a Chairperson, Vice-Chairpersons and a Rapporteur. The Chairperson and the Rapporteur are elected in their individual capacities, while States are elected as Vice-Chairpersons. Although the Rules do not require it, it was customary to ensure that each of the six Electoral Groups was represented in the Bureau in the spirit of equitable geographical representation. The Secretary reassured the States Parties that the duty of the Rapporteur is important but not too burdensome; he or she would be asked to verify that the Resolutions adopted by the General Assembly were faithfully recorded by the Secretariat after each daily session and no oral report was required.
2. The **Assistant Director-General** **ADG** understood that informal consultations had taken place among the States Parties concerning the candidates for election, but that they had not yet reached a conclusion.
3. The delegation of **Tunisia** proposed Italy as Chairperson of the seventh session.
4. The delegations of **Turkey** and **Germany** seconded the proposal.

*[Applause]*

1. The **Assistant Director-General** noted that Italy was represented by H.E. Ms Vincenza Lomonaco, who would serve as Chairperson. He then sought proposals for the Vice-Chairpersons.
2. The delegation of **Paraguay** nominated Ms Alicia Castillo from Guatemala as Vice-Chairperson from Electoral Group III.
3. The delegation of **Ecuador** seconded the nomination of Guatemala as Vice-Chair for Group III.
4. The delegation of **Chile** supported the proposal made by Paraguay.
5. The delegation of **Kazakhstan** was ready to work as Vice-Chairperson representing Electoral Group IV.
6. The delegation of the **Islamic Republic of Iran** supported the nomination of Kazakhstan.
7. The delegations of the **Philippines** and **Viet Nam** also supported Kazakhstan’s nomination.
8. The delegation of **Palestine** congratulated the newly elected Chairperson and on behalf of Electoral Group V(b) nominated **Jordan** to the position of Vice-Chair.
9. The delegation of **Morocco** congratulated the Chairperson on her election and supported the nomination of Jordan as Vice-Chair.
10. Thedelegation of **Kuwait** congratulated the new Chairperson and supported Jordan.
11. Thedelegations of **Mauritania** and **Djibouti** also supported the nomination of Jordan.
12. The delegation of **Hungary** congratulated the Chairperson on her election and nominated **Serbia** as Vice-Chair on behalf of Electoral Group II.
13. The delegations of **Egypt** and the **Syrian Arab Republic** congratulated the Chairperson and supported the nomination of Serbia as Vice-Chair.
14. The **Assistant Director-General** sought a Vice-Chairperson from Electoral Group V(a).
15. Thedelegation of **Nigeria** proposed **Gambia** as Vice-Chair.
16. The delegations of **Ethiopia**, **Ghana**, **Benin**, **Senegal** and the **Democratic Republic of the Congo** supported the nomination of Gambia as Vice-Chair.
17. The **Assistant Director-General** sought a nomination for Rapporteur.
18. The delegation of **Italy** proposed Mr Waleed Alsaif of **Kuwait** as Rapporteur.
19. The delegations of **Palestine**, **Syrian Arab Republic**, **Lebanon** and **Jordan** supported the nomination of Mr Waleed Alsaif as Rapporteur.
20. The **Assistant Director-General** congratulated the Vice-Chairs and the Chairperson, inviting her to take the floor.

*[Applause]*

1. The **Chairperson**, Ms Vincenza Lomonaco, thanked the States Parties for entrusting her as Chairperson of the seventh session of the General Assembly. Since the adoption of the Convention in 2003, interest in intangible cultural heritage had grown steadily. The transmission of this heritage, its continual and dynamic transformation, and its ability to revitalize groups and communities was now a major focus all over the world. Like historical buildings, works of art and archaeological collections, intangible cultural heritage is the direct expression of who we are and how we identify as people, as well as a means of establishing peace and strengthened resilience. It is for these reasons that UNESCO’s Strategy for the Reinforcement of UNESCO’s Action for the Protection of Culture and the Promotion of Cultural Pluralism in the Event of Armed Conflict,[[1]](#footnote-1) and the Plan of Action adopted by the General Conference placed an emphasis on the prevention and safeguarding of tangible heritage as a decisive instrument to facilitate the recovery of communities confronted with conflict or natural disaster. Turning to the adoption of the draft resolution on a paragraph-by-paragraph basis, with no comments of objections, the **Chairperson declared Resolution 7.GA 2 adopted**.

**ITEM 3 OF THE PROVISIONAL AGENDA:**

**ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA**

**Document:** [*ITH/18/7.GA/3*](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/ITH-18-7.GA-3-EN.docx)

**Document:** [*ITH/18/7.GA/INF.3.1 Rev*](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/ITH-18-7.GA-INF.3.1_Rev.-EN.docx)

**Document:** [*ITH/18/7.GA/INF.3.2 Rev.8*](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/ITH-18-7.GA-INF.3.2_Rev.8-EN.docx)

**Resolution:** [*7.GA 3*](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Resolutions/7.GA/3)

1. The **Secretary** began by presenting the documents for the session. The working documents were denoted by the common code ITH/18/7.GA, followed by the number of the corresponding agenda item, prepared in the six working languages. Each of these documents included a draft resolution. Information documents were denoted by the common code ITH/18/7.GA/INF, followed by the number of the agenda item, prepared in English and French only. They did not include a draft resolution. An important information document was the [summary records](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/ITH-18-7.GA-INF.1-EN.docx) of the sixth session of the General Assembly of the States Parties, which would help refresh memories of the debates two years beforehand. All the working documents had been made available online on the Convention [website](https://ich.unesco.org/en/7ga) before 4 May 2018 in six languages. The Convention website was available in English, French and Spanish, and now thanks to the generous contribution of the Sultan Bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud Foundation, from May 2018 it was also available in Arabic. States Parties were invited to download the documents from the website. The 2016 edition of the Basic Texts of the 2003 Convention had already been distributed. Under agenda item 3 on the adoption of the agenda, there were three documents: the working document (the [agenda](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/ITH-18-7.GA-3-EN.docx)) and two information documents (the provisional [timetable](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/ITH-18-7.GA-INF.3.1_Rev.-EN.docx) and the provisional [list of documents](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/ITH-18-7.GA-INF.3.2_Rev.8-EN.docx)). For this session, there were sixteen agenda items on the provisional agenda based on the Rules of Procedure, as a result of specific decisions made in previous sessions of the General Assembly and of the Committee, or in conformity with specific Articles of the Convention and its Operational Directives. The Bureau would be able to adjust this timetable on a daily basis depending on the progress of work. It was noted that the Secretariat had revised the timetable on the election of the members of the Intergovernmental Committee, which would begin at 10 a.m. instead of in the afternoon of Wednesday 6 June owing to the high number of candidates in certain electoral groups that might therefore require more than one round of secret ballots, and also to set a fixed time for the elections to commence so that all interested States Parties would be present in the room. Once the agenda was adopted, the General Assembly would be asked to examine the distribution of seats on the Committee per electoral group. This sequence was suggested in order to reflect the debate that took place during the fifth session of the General Assembly four years ago. Some States Parties felt that it would be better to have the information about the distribution of seats on the Committee as early as possible in order to allow enough time to consult among themselves and their capitals about possible candidates for the Committee. The election under agenda item 14 was foreseen for 6 June at 10 a.m.
2. The **Secretary** then introduced the four reports on the timetable: i) agenda item 5, the [Report of the Committee](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/ITH-18-7.GA-5-EN.docx) to the General Assembly; ii) agenda item 6, the [Report of the informal ad hoc working group](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/ITH-18-7.GA-6-EN.docx) of the Committee to the General Assembly; iii) agenda item 7, the Report of the Secretariat on its activities; iv) and the Report of the ICH NGO Forum. The Report of the Committee to the General Assembly would be presented by the Chairperson of the twelfth session of the Intergovernmental Committee, H.E. Mr Byong-hyun Lee, from the Republic of Korea. The Report of the informal ad hoc working group of the Committee to the General Assembly would present the results of the discussions of the working group in a number of meetings that took place in 2017 and during the Committee at its twelfth session in 2017. The Chairperson of the twelfth session of the Committee, Mr Byong-hyun Lee, who also chaired the informal ad hoc working group, would present the group’s report. The Report of the ICH NGO Forum was included in the provisional timetable as part of agenda item 7 and not as a separate item as no draft resolution had been foreseen, as per Resolution 6.GA 8. On 5 June, the Assembly would begin with agenda item 8 on the use of the resources of the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund. The Committee had examined the plan at its twelfth session and decided to submit it to the General Assembly. The Secretariat proposed allocating a significant part of the day to examining agenda item 9 on the draft overall results framework, and agenda item 10 on the revision of the Operational Directives for the implementation of the Convention, as these were important interrelated themes. There were four documents under these two items: i) [Working Document 9](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/ITH-18-7.GA-9-EN.docx) on the draft overall results framework, which presented the genesis of the framework, an overview of its content, its implications for States Parties, and possible ways of rolling out its implementation; ii) [Working Document 10](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/ITH-18-7.GA-10_Rev.-EN.docx) on the revision of the Operational Directives for the implementation of the Convention, which covered the amendments recommended to the Assembly by the Committee, in particular with regard to the reform of the periodic reporting process to move towards a regional cycle of national reporting; iii) the summary records of the [eleventh session](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/ITH-17-12.COM-4-EN.docx) of the Committee; and iv) the summary records of the [twelfth session](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/ITH-18-13.COM-4-EN.docx) of the Committee. The afternoon session on 5 June would see the examination of agenda item 11 on the accreditation of NGOs to act in an advisory capacity to the Committee. Wednesday 6 June would begin with the election of the new members of the Committee. Wednesday afternoon would be dedicated to examining agenda items 12 and 13. Agenda item 12 was the result of the House-wide exercise on governance, as per Resolution 39 C/87 of the General Conference in 2017, which covered a number of recommendations of the Working Group on Governance that were of direct relevance to the 2003 Convention. Agenda item 13 on the revision of the Rules of Procedure of the General Assembly presented proposals received by the Secretariat for the revision of the Rules of Procedure of the General Assembly in accordance with Resolution 6.GA 11.
3. With no comments or objections, the **Chairperson** **declared Resolution 7.GA 3 adopted**. The Chairperson reminded the Assembly that the Bureau would adopt the provisional timetable every morning as required. She opened the floor for general comments.
4. The delegation of **Singapore** congratulated the Chairperson and her Vice-Chairs on their appointments. Singapore was honoured to attend its first General Assembly following its ratification of the Convention in February 2018. It reaffirmed Singapore’s longstanding commitment to safeguarding and promoting its heritage. The Convention had rapidly gained relevance and popularity among States, reflected in the growing awareness of the impact of globalization, technology and demographic changes on traditions and the need to safeguard them. There was also a clear recognition that both tangible and intangible were important components in cultural and national heritage. As a young country, Singapore’s intangible cultural heritage is an important reflection of its history with roots dating back at least 700 years when Singapore was a maritime emporium in the 14th century. Over the years, Singapore’s location along one of the world’s busiest maritime trade routes had seen it transform into a melting pot of different communities. Its traditions had evolved and were interwoven to form a diverse, multicultural tapestry, the foundation of what it means to be Singaporean. In April 2018, the Minister for Culture, Community and Youth announced Singapore’s first heritage master plan: ‘Our SG Heritage Plan’. Shaped by contributions from over 7,000 people from all walks of life, this plan charts the future of Singapore’s heritage across four themes: places, cultures, treasures and communities. In particular, the concept of cultures focused on the safeguarding and promotion of knowledge, practices and traditions passed on from one generation to the next. It was also developing an inventory of intangible cultural heritage elements in partnership with its communities, and it hoped to inscribe its first element on the Representative List in the near future. As a new State Party to the Convention, Singapore looked forward to working to promote and strengthen the implementation of the Convention so that it would continue to be a strong and effective international framework to guide efforts to safeguard heritage for future generations.
5. The delegation of **Jordan** expressed thanks for its nomination as Vice-Chair and congratulated the Chairperson on her election, as well as the new States that had ratified the Convention. There were now 177 States Parties, which was a victory for the communities, groups and individuals who were looking for help in safeguarding their intangible cultural heritage. Jordan expressed its deepest gratitude to the Committee for the multifaceted progress achieved, for improving the governance of the Convention and its capacity-building progress, for considering the role of formal and non-formal education for safeguarding intangible cultural heritage, and for endeavouring to raise the visibility of the Convention through outreach and communication tools. Jordan expressed sincere gratitude for the enduring efforts of the Secretariat in supporting the orientation of intangible cultural heritage and sustainable development, as reflected in a number of thematic areas. Jordan also appreciated the Secretariat’s constant efforts in facilitating International Assistance and knowledge management, managing the capacity-building programme, and developing partnerships with educational institutions to support the transmission of and respect for intangible cultural heritage. A great advancement achieved by the Secretariat was its appeal to UNESCO’s global response to emergency situations by its Strategy for the Reinforcement of UNESCO’s Actions for the Protection of Culture and the Promotion of Cultural Pluralism in the Event of Armed Conflict. The General Assembly thus demonstrated constructive cooperation among States Parties in the pursuit of the Convention’s objectives, with its provisions implemented by States Parties in the interest of all communities. The delegation believed that the actions taken in the past as well as those currently taken demonstrated the commitment of States to the codes of safeguarding intangible cultural heritage for humanity.
6. The delegation of **Viet Nam** congratulated the Chairperson on her election, wishing her success in her work, and commended all the States that had recently ratified the Convention and were thus joining the family and contributing to the success of the Convention.
7. Congratulating the Chairperson on her election, the delegation of **Italy** remarked that interest in intangible cultural heritage had grown in recent years among countries and civil society. If intangible cultural heritage was the expression of identity, or even the soul of its people, then safeguarding and promoting intangible cultural heritage represented a vector of sustainable development for many communities and individuals who were both the creators and guardians of this heritage. This context of current affairs and social change was confirmed by the adoption of a new chapter in the Operational Directives that highlighted the role of intangible cultural heritage as a driving force and guarantor of sustainable development with a specific paragraph entitled ‘food security’, which Italy strongly supported. In this regard, traditional patterns of food consumption are an important vehicle for cultural identity in communities around the world, as evidenced by the multiple listings of agri-food practices on the Representative List. For these reasons, Italy had organized an international meeting on 24 May 2018 at UNESCO to promote an in-depth reflection on the cultural dimension of food traditions as a fundamental element of the identity of peoples. In the course of the four roundtables, high-level panellists from a wide range of backgrounds described the social and cultural importance of food as a mirror of the ancient and contemporary history of people. As was now known, major current themes, such as quality of life, environmental protection, the safeguarding of biodiversity, and the valorization of identities and communities come first and foremost through food choices and expressions.
8. The delegation of **Paraguay** commended the Chairperson on her election to the General Assembly, which was now in excellent hands. It welcomed the States Parties that had recently ratified the Convention, which was important in showing the increasing relevance of the Convention to which all were deeply attached as it directly dealt with living heritage. The delegation also commended the Secretariat for its hard work and for the support it provided to all States Parties. Every country was sustaining progress in the implementation of the Convention based on its own means. In January 2018, Paraguay had established its National Committee for the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage. This nationwide body had made significant progress in conducting an inventory and the preparatory work for inscribing an element on the List. The delegation stressed the importance of cooperation between Member States and, in this regard, it thanked Mexico for the bilateral work conducted through the framework of this Convention with a view to strengthening national capacities.
9. The delegation of **Colombia** congratulated the Chairperson on her election, and the Assistant Director-General for Culture for his first General Assembly. It thanked the Secretariat for its work in improving the Convention’s policies internationally, regionally and nationally in dealing with matters of intangible cultural heritage. The delegation stressed the need for the Convention to be more proactive in working in a coordinated fashion with other culture Conventions, as well as other sectors, especially education with a view to integrating this work with the sustainable development goals. Much had been done in Colombia to cross-fertilize the work of the Convention with other sectors, not only to increase the visibility of intangible cultural heritage of the different communities in the country, but also to improve cultural, social, human rights and environmental protection policies. This is also a way to ensure that people have access to a livelihood based on their intangible heritage, which ties in with their activities as related to sustainable development and the work being done in the field of education and other Conventions. The delegation also thanked the Secretariat for the opportunity to present at this General Assembly a project representing the traditional knowledge of the indigenous peoples of Pirá Paraná in Colombia to be presented alongside the projects from Uganda and Mali, and which focused on safeguarding intangible cultural heritage as a means to improve the quality of life of its citizens.
10. The delegation of **Gambia** congratulated the Chairperson on her election, and thanked Nigeria and the Africa Group for their confidence in electing Gambia as Vice-Chair. The delegation spoke of the new Government in 2016 after almost two decades of autocratic rule, and wished to renew its commitment to all the Conventions that it had ratified, particularly the 2003 Convention that was ratified in 2011. Since that time, Gambia had made commendable efforts in implementing the provisions of the Convention and was committed to achieving its objectives.
11. The delegation of **Mongolia** expressed its warmest congratulations to the Chairperson and thanked the Secretariat for the concise and excellent report. It appreciated the emphasis on capacity building and the effective management of the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund. The delegation was particularly pleased with the implementation of transversal cooperation among the culture Conventions in working together to project and promote both tangible and intangible heritage. As a committed State Party of the Convention, Mongolia had fulfilled its duties with regard to comprehensive international cooperation in safeguarding intangible cultural heritage since its ratification in 2005. Mongolia was an elected member of the Committee in 2014–2018 and worked on implementing the values, principles and requirements of the Convention as much as possible. Mongolia was actively working to develop existing relationships at regional, national and international levels, and to take responsibility in pursuing sustainable development goals. It strived to intensify its efforts within regional networks, such as the North Asia and Asia Pacific regions.
12. The **Chairperson** thanked the delegations for their remarks. She noted that there were more than 120 States participating in this session with the possibility of a significant number of States wishing to speak on a particular issue. The floor would thus be given to delegations in the order in which they raised their name plates. During the debates, priority would be given to States that had not yet spoken. The Chairperson would also introduce a time limit if deemed necessary. Each State Party would be granted two minutes to speak. Invited observers, such as States non-Party to the Convention and NGOs, may ask for the floor during the general discussions but not during the adoption of a specific resolution. The working documents were available in six languages, as was interpretation. However, screens for the adoption of resolutions were in English and French only. The Chairperson recalled that under Rule 11 of its Rules of Procedure, any significant change proposed must be transmitted to the Secretariat in writing or by email, as early as possible. The Secretariat would thus have the time to integrate the proposals and prepare a translation for examination during the adoption of the resolutions. Forms for amendments were available from the Secretariat on request.

**ITEM 4 OF THE AGENDA:**

**DISTRIBUTION OF SEATS IN THE COMMITTEE PER ELECTORAL GROUP**

**Document:** [*ITH/18/7.GA/4*](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/ITH-18-7.GA-4-EN.docx)

**Resolution:** [*7.GA 4*](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Resolutions/7.GA/4)

1. The **Chairperson** then turned to agenda item 4, the distribution of seats in the Committee per electoral group, which needed to be determined before consideration of item 14 on the agenda relating to the election of the members of the Intergovernmental Committee.
2. The **Secretary** remarked that Document 4 was the result of the application of three rules. First of all, Article 6.1 of the Convention, which provides that, ‘[t]he election of States Members of the Committee shall obey the principles of equitable geographical representation and rotation.’ Secondly, Rule 13.2 of the Rules of Procedure of the General Assembly, which provides that seats shall be distributed at each session, ‘in proportion to the number of States Parties from each Group provided that after such distribution at least three seats have been attributed to each Group.’ Finally, Resolution 3.GA 12 of the General Assembly, which states that, ‘the principle of proportionality in Rule 13.2 of its Rules of Procedure […] shall be rigorously applied to future elections strictly on the basis of mathematical calculations.’ Thus, paragraph 4 established the distribution of seats on the basis of these mathematical calculations and on the 177 States Parties to the Convention at the time of the election. The Secretary explained that a minimum number of three seats was first attributed to Electoral Groups I and V(b). The eighteen remaining seats were then apportioned to the four remaining groups, beginning with the group with the highest decimal fraction, i.e. Group V(a), to which six seats were distributed. Group IV therefore had five seats, Group III had four seats, and Group II had three seats. The Secretary reminded the Assembly that the principle of mathematical calculation was based on a resolution of the General Assembly, whereas the principle of equitable geographic representation and rotation pertained to an Article of the Convention.
3. The **Chairperson** thanked the Secretary for the comprehensive explanation on the proposed distribution, noting that the distribution of seats per electoral group had not changed since the two previous sessions of the General Assembly despite the increase in the number of States Parties to the Convention. With no comments or objections, the **Chairperson declared Resolution 7.GA 4 adopted**.

**ITEM 5 OF THE AGENDA:**

**REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

**Document:** [*ITH/18/7.GA/5*](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/ITH-18-7.GA-5-EN.docx)

**Resolution:** [*7.GA 5*](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Resolutions/7.GA/5)

1. The **Chairperson** then turned to the first of the four reports on the agenda under agenda item 5 and the Report of the Committee to the General Assembly. The Chairperson of the twelfth session of the Committee, Mr Byong-hyun Lee, would present the report. The Chairperson of the eleventh session of the Committee, Mr Yonas Desta Tsegaye, unfortunately could not attend due to prior commitments. Thus, Mr Byong-hyun Lee would present the achievements of both the eleventh and twelfth sessions. The Chairperson took the opportunity to thank the Chairpersons for their wise leadership. She particularly thanked Mr Byong-hyun Lee for his participation despite his very busy agenda as Chairman of the Executive Board.
2. **Mr Byong-hyun Lee** conveyed his congratulations to Ms Vincenza Lomonaco on her chairing of the General Assembly, whose able leadership would guide the session to a successful completion. He regretted that Mr Yonas Desta Tsegaye could not join the Assembly, but he was happy to present the reports in his capacity as Chairperson of the twelfth session of the Committee. He would thus present the report on the activities and decisions taken by the Committee and its Bureau during both its eleventh and twelfth sessions. Mr Lee began by expressing his gratitude to the Committee for its confidence in electing him as Chairperson of the twelfth session and for having given the Republic of Korea responsibility to serve as host. Indeed, the Republic of Korea was very proud to have been given the opportunity and Mr Lee remarked on the many delegates that had travelled the globe to gather on the island of Jeju. During the past two years, the Committee and its Bureau had made many achievements, but Mr Lee would not provide a complete list of all the activities and decisions taken, and would instead focus on the major accomplishments during that period. Mr Lee remarked that the Convention continued to enjoy broad support from all regions of the world, reflected by the addition of eleven new States to the Convention during the reporting period. In addition, there had been three additional ratifications since January 2018: Kiribati, Singapore and the Solomon Islands. According to Article 34 of the Convention, the Convention enters into force three months after the deposit of the instrument of ratification. Since Kiribati and Singapore ratified in January and February 2018, respectively, they had already become States Parties. In the case of the Solomon Islands, the ratification took place on 11 May 2018, so they would become a State Party on 11 August 2018.
3. **Mr Byong-hyun Lee** turned to the issue of governance. In line with House-wide discussions on improving the governance of UNESCO, the Committee examined the actions already taken, as well as those foreseen to improve the governance of the Convention. One important tool for the sound governance of the Convention was the knowledge management system. Recognizing its importance, the Bureau of the Committee approved an amount of US$386,900 for the period January 2016 to December 2017 for activities aimed at improving the system’s accessibility, usability and functionalities. Mr Lee also mentioned the creation of the informal ad hoc working group, which had been established by the Committee at its eleventh session in 2016 in Addis Ababa. At its twelfth session, the Committee then decided to continue the informal ad hoc working group, now open-ended in 2018, and extend its mandate. Mr Lee would later present the report of the informal ad hoc working group in 2017. The Committee also undertook a number of actions that had a direct impact on the implementation of the Convention at the national level. Considering that implementation depends on a thorough knowledge and understanding of its concepts, measures and mechanisms by local actors, the Committee continued to grant priority attention to the global capacity-building programme. In particular, the Bureau of the Committee had allocated 51 per cent or US$817,346 to the programme under the line ‘other functions of the Committee’ for the period January 2016 to December 2017. Furthermore, the Committee had approved the programme as one of two main funding priorities for the Convention for the period 2018–2021. The Committee also supported the integration of intangible cultural heritage into university courses, as well as training programmes for teachers and educators through funds allocated under the line ‘other functions of the Committee’. The second priority approved by the Committee was aimed at initiating efforts to incorporate intangible cultural heritage into formal and non-formal education. As informal, intergenerational transmission of safeguarding intangible cultural heritage is disrupted in our contemporary world, education can play a valuable role in transmitting and thus safeguarding intangible cultural heritage. At the same time, intangible cultural heritage can contribute to improving the quality and relevance of education. Another notable mechanism for safeguarding intangible cultural heritage at the national level is International Assistance, which can be granted from the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund to supplement national safeguarding efforts. These projects may be implemented according to States’ priorities in the spirit of the 2003 Convention. During the 2016–2017 period, the Committee and its Bureau approved eighteen requests for International Assistance, for a total amount of US$1,783,506. Furthermore, seeking solutions to the continuous under-utilization of the funds dedicated to International Assistance, the Committee would submit to the current session of the General Assembly a plan for a new approach to increase the utilization of the Fund, while maintaining the biggest percentage for International Assistance, which would be deliberated under agenda item 8.
4. **Mr Byong-hyun Lee** reported that the Committee recognized the commitment of the States Parties concerned to take appropriate safeguarding measures and it had thus inscribed ten elements on the Urgent Safeguarding List. For the first time, at its eleventh session, the Committee approved one International Assistance request that was examined together with a nomination to the Urgent Safeguarding List in order to support the implementation of the proposed safeguarding plan. During the reporting period, the Committee also selected seven Good Safeguarding Practices. The Committee also advanced the reflection on the nature and purposes of Lists under the Convention. A particular case in point was the experience gleaned from the request by Viet Nam to transfer an element from the Urgent Safeguarding List to the Representative List. While the element was indeed removed from the Urgent Safeguarding List and inscribed on the Representative List, the Committee concurred that the procedure that currently exists under the Operational Directives was inadequate to take decisions on this complex issue. The Committee thus considered it necessary to convene an open-ended working group to further discuss this matter to be held before the fourteenth session of the Committee in 2019, subject to extrabudgetary funds. Mr Lee then drew the Assembly’s attention to awareness-raising activities at the local, national and international levels. In a new initiative, the Bureau allocated US$336,500 under the line ‘other functions of the Committee’ for the period 2016–2017 for the design of a communication and outreach plan. The Committee discussed the first actions taken by the Secretariat towards that end at its twelfth session. More details on this subject could be found in [Information Document 7](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/ITH-18-7.GA-INF.7-EN.docx). Furthermore, the Committee inscribed sixty-seven new elements on the Representative List. Concerning the monitoring of implementation of the Convention and its impact, Mr Lee reported that during the reporting period, the Committee examined seventeen reports by States Parties on the implementation of the Convention at the national level and eighteen reports on the status of elements inscribed on the Urgent Safeguarding List. At the same time, the Committee continued the process of developing an overall results framework for the Convention. In this regard, it examined a draft proposal at its twelfth session, and as a result was asking the General Assembly to adopt it at its current session. This proposal was developed through a consultative process that included an expert meeting in 2016 and an open-ended intergovernmental working group meeting held in 2017; both meetings were held in China. Mr Lee took the opportunity to thank the Government of the People’s Republic of China for its generous support in this process. The draft overall results framework would be discussed under agenda item 9. Closely related to the overall results framework was the reform of the periodic reporting mechanism discussed by the Committee at its twelfth session. In particular, the Committee recommended that the General Assembly align the mechanism to the overall results framework by amending the periodicity of the submission of national reports. States Parties would submit their report every six years based on a system of regional rotation instead of every six years after their year of ratification. This issue would be further discussed under agenda item 10. Concluding, Mr Lee conveyed thanks to the twelve outgoing members of the Committee and the remaining twelve members who would continue in office during the next two years. He also thanked the members of the Evaluation Body and the Bureau members of both sessions for their commitment, as well as all States Parties and Observers present.
5. On behalf of the States Parties, the **Chairperson** expressed gratitude to Mr Byong-hyun Lee for his leadership and commitment during his tenure as Chairperson of the Committee, as well as to the authorities of the Republic of Korea for hosting the successful twelfth session in Jeju in 2017. The Chairperson opened the floor for comments.
6. The delegation of the **Philippines** congratulated the Chairperson and the other Bureau members on their election. It thanked Mr Byong-hyun Lee for his report and for successfully chairing the twelfth session of the Committee in Jeju, and warmly welcomed the new States Parties to the Convention. Regarding the report, the delegation believed that it was necessary to address the large number of overdue periodic reports as it was difficult to measure progress and results without data. Periodic reports are vehicles for continued engagement with communities and should be seen as tools for capacity building and safeguarding rather than mere obligations. In addition, the governance-related issues of dialogue and decision-making were crucial for enhancing the credibility of the Committee. The delegation hoped for continued progress on these matters, while noting the ongoing work of the informal ad hoc working group. As States Parties to the Convention increased, the demands on and expectations of the Convention would also evolve. Thus, it would be good to adopt a long-term approach and reflect on the nature of the Lists under the Convention, particularly the Representative List, as it should not become a victim of its own success and remain open and inclusive while being primarily a tool to ensure safeguarding and sustainable development, working hand-in-hand with local communities, and not necessarily associated with commercial or tourism interests.
7. The delegation of **Viet** **Nam** thanked Mr Byong-hyun Lee for his succinct and clear report on the Committee’s work. It welcomed the progress made in recent years in the promotion and visibility of the Convention, the capacity-building programme, and above all, the issues of governance in the work of the Committee and in the working group on the overall results framework. The delegation particularly encouraged the Committee to continue its efforts to further strengthen the process of dialogue between States Parties and their evaluations.
8. The delegation of **Palestine** concurred with the remarks by the Philippines and thanked Mr Byong-hyun Lee for his efficiency as Chairperson in his new approach to decision-making at the twelfth session, which should be followed in the future. It was noted that in the Committee’s twelfth session a new procedure had been introduced on the dual option for some files. It therefore wished to hear from the Secretariat as to whether this procedure would be adopted in the future.
9. Thedelegation of **Sweden** congratulated the Chairperson on her election and thanked the Committee for its report on its important work. The Convention has the purpose of building bridges and understanding between people, yet it could also lead to polarization and ownership issues. The delegation highlighted aspects that it valued and prioritized, such as capacity building, awareness-raising, safeguarding, and the important role of civil society. Too much attention was still directed at the Representative List and – like many other countries – it was worried about the process. There was a need to reduce and manage the politicization of nominations and decisions, as pointed out by the ad hoc working group, and the listing process must be a question for experts with knowledge within the field of intangible cultural heritage. The delegation also encouraged dedicating more time and attention to other aspects of the Convention, as well as the Register of Good Practices. As mentioned in the report, the priorities of the open-ended ad hoc working group and its revision work [to improve the work of the Committee] were of great importance and were steps in the right direction.
10. Thedelegation of **Turkey** congratulated the Chairperson on her election and thanked Mr Byong-hyunLee for the successful conduct of the twelfth session of the Committee and for the report. As a Committee member for the past four years, Turkey had exerted every effort to contribute to the constructive and smooth functioning of the Committee, and to a number of important decisions taken at the last session, for example, the examination of the proposal for the overall results framework. The delegation believed that after its possible adoption by this General Assembly, the implementation and monitoring of the Convention would be improved. Another important issue was the possible adoption by this General Assembly of the draft plan for the use of the ICH Fund, which would enable the Secretariat to efficiently implement the International Assistance mechanism and thus fulfil the demands of States Parties in this regard. It also believed that the regional periodic reporting process was in line with the overall results framework of the Convention and would result in a major transformation of the Convention with respect to effectively monitoring ICH activities. Finally, the delegation agreed that there was a need to lessen the politicization of the Committee.
11. The delegation of **Malaysia** congratulated the Chairperson and the Vice-Chairs on their appointments and thanked Mr Byong-hyunLee for the report. It commended the Committee, adding that it remained committed to the sound governance of the Convention and to its possible improvements, and it agreed that the knowledge management system of the Convention should be enhanced and improved. The delegation also agreed with the Philippines and Turkey that periodic reporting enhanced the system, and it applauded the Committee for selecting the seven Good Safeguarding Practices, adding that they would be useful for raising awareness and outreach so as to include a wider spectrum of stakeholders and communities.
12. The delegation of **Burkina Faso** congratulated the Chairperson on her election and reiterated its support for the actions of the Committee at its eleventh and twelfth sessions, as reported by Mr Byong-hyunLee. It also congratulated the Secretary, Mr Tim Curtis, and his team for the genuine friendship conveyed between the Secretariat and the officials in charge of culture in Burkina Faso. The delegation spoke of the financial and technical assistance that Burkina Faso had received to undertake an intangible cultural heritage inventory; a project that had recently closed with a kind letter from the Secretariat. It was noted that Burkina Faso was currently preparing its second national report for 2019.
13. Thedelegation of **China** congratulated the Chairperson on her election and the Assistant Director-General for Culture on his new position. It was noted that there were fifteen new States Parties to the Convention with an increasing number of countries committing to the protection of the world’s cultural heritage. It also thanked Ethiopia and the Republic of Korea for hosting the two Committee meetings, and Mauritius for having accepted to host the next Committee session. The Committee had achieved a lot over the last two years, in particular, in strengthening capacities and the International Assistance programme, in ensuring high-quality periodic reports, and in developing the overall results framework. The Committee is a very important body for the implementation of the Convention and it was hoped that the Committee would continue to strengthen capacities among States Parties so that they could protect their intangible cultural heritage.
14. The delegation of **Sri Lanka** extended its congratulations to the newly elected Chairperson, Vice-Chairs and the Rapporteur. Sri Lanka has a recorded history of over 2,500 years with its intangible cultural heritage going beyond this period. Rich in tangible and intangible cultural heritage, it accorded great significance to its protection and promotion. While updating the registries of sites and monuments, as well as the national inventories, Sri Lanka also explored information technology in updating databases, and in creating public awareness campaigns and education. Special emphasis was given to protecting and supporting the practitioners of intangible cultural heritage, while motivating younger generations to continue their traditions. In this respect, Sri Lanka was thankful for UNESCO for its capacity-building assistance in developing national policy for intangible cultural heritage and the training of practitioners. Sri Lanka looked forward to the deliberations and outcomes of this Assembly. The delegation then spoke of the decreasing budgets at UNESCO, yet worldwide economic growth continued unabated. In Asia, 100 million people had come out of poverty every year for the last eight to nine years. Given this discrepancy, the delegation urged the leadership to look beyond the organization in trying to raise funds rather than managing with reduced budgets. It was happy to support these efforts and it commended the new Director-General’s vision to raise funding in a different manner, rather than solely relying on contributions from Member States. For example, Harvard University has an endowment of US$179B. Thus, modern ways to raise funds for UNESCO should be sought.
15. The **Secretary** recalled the question on the dual option used last year and whether it would continue in future sessions, explaining that he was unable to answer for a couple of reasons. Firstly, the dual option was proposed by the Evaluation Body, and thus the Evaluation Body would determine whether it wished to continue when it met in June and September 2018. Secondly, the Secretary recalled that the Evaluation Body had suggested in 2017 that this procedure had been established on an exceptional basis owing to the fact that the new form under criterion R.5 had not yet been used. In this way, submitting States that had yet to benefit from the new form and had missed out some factual information could easily clarify at the time.
16. The **Chairperson** then turned to the resolution on a paragraph-by-paragraph basis. With no comments or objections, the **Chairperson declared Resolution 7.GA 5 adopted**.

**ITEM 6 OF THE AGENDA:**

**REPORT OF THE INFORMAL AD HOC WORKING GROUP OF THE COMMITTEE TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

**Document:** [*ITH/18/7.GA/6*](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/ITH-18-7.GA-6-EN.docx)

**Resolution:** [*7.GA 6*](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Resolutions/7.GA/6)

1. The **Chairperson** then turned to agenda item 6, inviting Mr Byong-hyun Lee to present the report of the informal ad hoc working group of the Committee.
2. **Mr Byong-hyun Lee** would present the report as Chairperson of the twelfth session of the Committee and as Chairperson of the informal ad hoc working group. Mr Lee began by thanking the Committee members and other participating States for their cooperation and commitment in 2017. The informal ad hoc working group was established at the eleventh Committee session in Addis Ababa in 2016. After having witnessed a very high number of decisions on nominations, proposals and requests that reversed the recommendations of the Evaluation Body for the 2016 cycle, the Committee decided to inscribe seventeen of the twenty-four files that had received unfavourable recommendations from the Evaluation Body, representing 71 per cent of the files. In a number of cases, the Committee found that the negative recommendations were due to minor or technical information that was missing. Many delegates expressed concerns that no mechanism currently existed in the procedure that allowed submitting States to respond to the concerns raised by the Evaluation Body before the Committee examined the files. This unusual situation prompted the Committee to take two interrelated actions. The Committee asked the Secretariat to propose a procedure that would allow submitting States to respond to preliminary recommendations in the evaluation cycle prior to their presentation to the Committee, subsequently called a ‘dialogue mechanism’ among the Committee members. At the same time, the Committee also decided to establish an informal ad hoc working group to discuss issues related to the content of the dialogue mechanism. The Committee thus established this informal ad hoc working group to examine three main points: i) issues related to consultation and dialogue between the Evaluation Body and the submitting States; ii) the decision-making process of the Committee on nominations, proposals and requests; and iii) any other issues to strengthen the implementation of the Convention. The informal ad hoc working group met on several occasions during the course of 2017, and this report was annexed to [Document 6](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/ITH-18-7.GA-6-EN.docx). The group’s first meeting was held on 16 February 2017 to discuss the agenda and the composition of the working group. The group decided to hold two initial meetings open only to Committee members before holding an open-ended meeting. In this way, the restricted group could present concrete proposals to the wider group of States Parties. Accordingly, Committee members met on 27 February and 10 May 2017, while an open-ended meeting was held on 2 June 2017. As the discussion evolved, members of the working group felt the need to consult with the Evaluation Body. Therefore, in a first instance, two members of the Evaluation Body participated in the group’s meeting via Skype on 10 May in their individual capacities. Subsequently, with the Evaluation Body’s agreement and thanks to the help of the Secretariat, the Committee members in the group met on 27 September 2017. All twelve members of the Evaluation Body were physically present for the September meeting. The working group was convened for the last time on 23 October 2017 in an open-ended meeting with the aim of validating the group’s report.
3. **Mr Byong-hyun Lee** recalled that a drafting group had been created and the six meetings were chaired by Mr Mounir Anastas, Ambassador of Palestine. Mr Lee thanked Mr Anastas and the drafting group for their efforts. The drafting group complemented the work of the working group by mediating different opinions and by drafting the report of the working group. The working group raised many questions such as: Should the dialogue be limited only for certain criteria? How many questions could the Evaluation Body ask submitting States? What type of questions could be asked – minor additional information and a clarification or just a clarification? Under which conditions could dialogue be initiated? When a submitting State answers questions posed by the Evaluation Body, should the answer be limited in terms of word count? If so, how many words would be allowed? While the group reached consensus on many issues, the Committee members of the ad hoc working group met all members of the Evaluation Body on 27 September 2017 in a final meeting in Paris. The Evaluation Body found it too premature to consider a new dialogue mechanism and that a procedure established in a hurried way could be more disruptive than helpful. The Evaluation Body remarked, in particular, that a number of improvements had been put in place to improve the nomination process, such as the new nomination form under criterion R.5 and the extension of the referral option to all listing mechanisms. According to the Evaluation Body, the Committee should wait until the end of the 2019 cycle to determine the effectiveness of recent measures before considering a formal dialogue process. The ad hoc working group also reflected on other issues, such as the decision-making process of the Committee, the introduction of a so-called deferral option, the nature of the Representative List, and other matters to improve the work of the Committee. One of the main conclusions of the working group was that it should continue its reflections. Thus, at its twelfth session the Committee decided to continue the informal ad hoc working group in 2018, extending its mandate to include five topics: i) to study the funding mechanism of the Convention, including resource mobilization; ii) to enable the implementation of the relevant recommendations of the Open-Ended Working Group on Governance, as adopted at the 39th session of the General Conference; iii) to further reflect on an appropriate ‘dialogue mechanism’ in consultation with the Evaluation Body, taking into account the resolutions adopted by the current session of the General Assembly; iv) to reflect on the possible ways in which NGOs under the 2003 Convention could further participate, in consultation with accredited NGOs, and how this would be reflected in the accreditation and renewal mechanisms of NGOs; and v) to reflect on any other issues to facilitate the work of the Committee. The group had already started working under the coordination of its co-Chairs, the Philippines and Algeria, and in close cooperation with the host country of the thirteenth session of the Committee, Mauritius. Mr Lee concluded by thanking the informal ad hoc working group for having undertaken fruitful discussions, which would contribute to the implementation and governance of the Convention. It was crucial to find time to reflect and exchange opinions on the various issues related to the implementation of the normative instruments outside the Committee and other decision-making organs. Mr Lee believed that the two co-Chairs of the working group in 2018 would guide the proceedings well and he promised to support them throughout the year.
4. The **Chairperson** reiterated that the work of the ad hoc informal working group was essential for the development of the Convention, as it was a useful form of exchange of information and the different viewpoints of States Parties.
5. The delegation of **Ecuador** congratulated the Chairperson on her election. Noting that this topic was the most important item on the agenda, it proposed having this discussion later in the afternoon and that States be given five minutes to speak instead of two.
6. The **Chairperson** sought to continue and granted a speaking time of a maximum of five minutes.
7. The delegation of the **Syrian Arab Republic** joined the previous speakers in congratulating Mr Byong-hyun Lee for the excellent report and for the breakthrough that had taken place during the work of the twelfth session. It was pleased to note that the current chairing of the Philippines-led group was fully committed to implementing the recommendations of the Working Group on Governance, as contained in the Resolutions of the last General Conference. The delegation drew attention to the need for transparency, adding that the recommendations would distinguish between the changes in the implementation of the Convention and the cases presented for inscription on the Representative List and the Urgent Safeguarding List. This was a complementary procedure, but it was important to avoid any confusion in the interpretations of States Parties and Member States in this dual process for the sake of greater transparency and the successful implementation of the Convention.
8. The delegation of **Algeria** congratulated the Chairperson on her election and thanked Mr Byong-hyun Lee for the wisdom with which he had guided the first draft of the ad hoc working group, as well as for his brilliant chairing of the twelfth session of the Committee in Jeju. On the working group report, the delegation wished to share two points. Firstly, on the results of this group and its recommendation concerning the dialogue between the Evaluation Body and Member States, the delegation was of the opinion that this dialogue was necessary. However, it took note of the recommendation of the Evaluation Body to postpone the implementation of this recommendation until the new forms took effect. That said, the delegation would wait to see this effect on the ground. Nevertheless, it remained firmly convinced that this dialogue was crucial. Secondly, regarding the point raised by Palestine on the dual option, which was adopted on an exceptional basis at the last Committee, the delegation was glad that this dual option had solved some of the issues during the Committee session. However, it was absolutely urgent to find a more durable solution so that this situation was not repeated and so that the Committee could work calmly. The delegation did not think that a second Committee with two draft decisions from the Evaluation Body was the best way to conduct the Committee’s work.
9. The delegation of **Ireland** thanked the ad hoc working group for all their efforts so far. Ireland considered this dialogue option to be a very useful measure in principle, and it understood the need for the Committee to consider the issue. However, for its first inscription on the Representative List in 2017, the delegation found the referral option to be very useful as it enabled it to reply to queries on one of the criteria in the nomination form. Thus, the delegation would be in favour of this option or a similar option being made available in the future.
10. The delegation of **Tunisia** congratulated the Chairperson on her election, commending her on her chairing of the deliberations. For Tunisia, all forms of intangible cultural heritage were of great importance, which constituted a large part of the Ministry of Culture’s efforts. The Ministry had been working on developing a comprehensive inventory, but a lot of the work was carried out at the ground level. Hence, the need to strengthen civil society organizations and to provide support for NGO initiatives. In this regard, Tunisia had set up a national centre for intangible cultural heritage, as well as regional centres that enabled authorities to provide support to local initiatives in this field. Work was carried out with this entire network in order to strengthen the implementation of the Convention. The delegation welcomed dialogue, though governed by very clear rules. The adoption of a dialogue mechanism would hopefully be accelerated and the informal ad hoc working group would be able to press on with its efforts. The delegation thanked Algeria and the Philippines for their work, and the ad hoc working group for its report. Tunisia also thanked UNESCO for all its achievements, especially in the capacity-building programme, not least because Tunisia had benefitted from this programme and the series of workshops organized in the country had been very productive.
11. The delegation of the **Philippines** thanked Mr Byong-hyun Lee for the report of the 2017 ad hoc working group, adding that it attached importance to the concept of dialogue between nominating States Parties and the Evaluation Body, enshrined as one of the purposes of the Representative List in Article 16 of the Convention. While noting the views of the Evaluation Body and the Secretariat on this issue and the subsequent discussions and decision of the Committee in Jeju, the delegation believed that the initial proposal of the ad hoc working group in 2017 – put on hold until 2019 – was a good basis for consideration. It reiterated the need for procedures to take into account the opinions of States Parties as the main custodians and duty bearers of the Convention. From a practical perspective, dialogue can enhance mutual understanding between nominating States Parties and the Evaluation Body. As this Convention has no *in situ* visits or missions for evaluation purposes, there was all the more reason to form a useful dialogue so as to create mutual respect and confidence in the process among all stakeholders. Hence, the delegation remained supportive of initiating a limited dialogue process on an experimental basis, beginning in 2020. The call for dialogue also echoed reforms in other UNESCO Conventions and programmes. As mentioned by Mr Byong-hyun Lee, the Philippines and Algeria co-chaired the informal ad hoc working group, and it wished to thank the Chair of the Committee, Minister of Arts and Culture from Mauritius, for his trust. The delegation also thanked the other delegations for their kind words and support. The working group in 2018 was open to all interested States Parties to encourage the broad participation of States Parties. One more meeting was scheduled in September 2018 to take up the remaining items of the agenda in the ad hoc working group and it looked forward to receiving support for the draft recommendations, which would be presented to the Committee in Port Louis, Mauritius.
12. The delegation of **Japan** appreciated the great efforts of the Committee members and especially Mr Byong-hyun Lee during the informal ad hoc working group, and it expressed gratitude to the Secretariat for preparing the documents. It appreciated that the ad hoc working group had actively discussed the issues related to dialogue between the submitting States and the Evaluation Body, as well as the decision-making process for the Committee on nominations. Through the discussions of the ad hoc working group, it became clear that the submitting States and Evaluation Body had formed a sort of vicious circle in which both of them bore the burden of excessive work that sometimes led nowhere. In order to stop this vicious circle, the delegation stressed the importance of recalling the original purpose of the Convention. Article 2 of the Convention provided the definition of intangible cultural heritage and certain forms of cultural elements that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage. This provision highlights the unique character of the definition of intangible cultural heritage, which did not refer to Outstanding Universal Value (OUV), regarded as essential for inscription on the World Heritage List. Based on such definitions, the Operational Directives specify the criteria for intangible cultural heritage nominations, including consistency with the definition of Article 2 of the Convention, visibility, awareness and dialogue, safeguarding measures, the widest possible participation of communities, and their free, prior and informed consent. For this reason, the delegation believed that the evaluation process should confirm that the nominated element met those criteria rather than try and evaluate the cultural values of the nominated element, let alone the OUV. The delegation therefore suggested reviewing the intangible cultural heritage evaluation process that recalled the original purpose and objective of the Convention in conformity with the provisions of the Convention and the Operational Directives. The delegation also believed that such a review would help accelerate the pace of inscription and reduce the burden for all States. It was also pertinent to further strengthen capacity building, given that some countries only had a few inscriptions on the Representative List despite their wealth of intangible cultural heritage. Thus, the capacity-building programmes should be enhanced through workshops and training in a win-win approach, benefitting both the submitting States and the Evaluation Body.
13. The delegation of **Turkey** thanked Mr Byong-hyun Lee for the report, adding that it had actively contributed to the deliberations of the ad hoc working group throughout 2017 and had held extensive discussions on the possible establishment of a dialogue mechanism. While the delegation valued dialogue as an important tool to enhance the Convention’s work, what was understood by ‘dialogue’ in this Convention was different from the 1972 Convention. In this Convention, the Evaluation Body evaluated the file itself, not the OUV of the element. To increase the quality of the files, the delegation believed that technical assistance was required. Thus, the focus of the work should be on how to assist States in preparing better nomination files. Thus, before introducing a dialogue mechanism, it was important to take note of the impact of measures already undertaken. It was noted that the working group had also taken up funding mechanisms of the Convention, the implementation of recommendations of the Open-Ended Working Group on Governance, and interaction with the accredited NGOs under the Convention. The delegation would continue to contribute in this regard.
14. Thedelegation of **Austria** congratulated the Chairperson on her election and thanked the Secretariat for its dedicated work and excellent preparation of the meeting. It also thanked Mr Byong-hyun Lee and the Republic of Korea for the organization and chairing of the meetings, in particular, the two open-ended meetings that contributed to making this complex process more transparent and inclusive. The delegation also thanked the Evaluation Body for its valuable feedback, input and suggestions during the process, adding that it was 100 per cent in favour of dialogue and any measures that may help States Parties submit good files. It fully agreed that the politicization of the Committee’s work should be avoided in the future. As pointed out by members of the Evaluation Body, it seemed reasonable to first evaluate the new files with the modified nomination forms, which was now clearer in R.5. Regarding criterion R.2, it had some concerns as to whether splitting the question on different levels brought clarity. However, if the dual option should be continued, then it would make sense to also apply it to criterion R.2. Overall, the working group might also wish to consider other options, as proposed in the annex of the document, together with the Evaluation Body and the accredited NGOs, as NGOs could also support States Parties in the submission of good nominations, as mentioned by Turkey. Finally, it noted that the Philippines and Japan had also raised very important questions regarding the different nature and purposes of the Lists, which could be further addressed by the working group as well.
15. The delegation of **Senegal** congratulated Mr Byong-hyun Lee for his remarkable work with the working group, and also the members of the ad hoc group for their exceptional work on the recommendations submitted that were relevant in terms of dialogue and the financial mechanism. It was noted that States Parties had expressed a strong desire for greater dialogue between the submitting States and the Evaluation Body, which would avoid difficult sessions while bringing back transparency and serenity into the work of these sessions. Moreover, in the framework of synergy with other Conventions, this dialogue would provide lessons learned in other Conventions where dialogue is applied. It was noted that the Evaluation Body proposed a postponement, most likely to first assess the progress made with the new nomination forms. However, the delegation felt that the Committee should still engage in this phase of dialogue because it was both important and essential in terms of governance and the implementation of the Convention. The Committee should of course serenely continue its reflections, but it should also allow for this experimental phase that would help the evaluation process at the same time.
16. The delegation of **Ecuador** thanked the Chairperson for the extra time granted for the interventions. It commended Mr Byong-hyun Lee as the Chairperson of the working group, and thanked the co-Chairs, Algeria and the Philippines, for lending support to the Member States and for having strengthened the Convention. The delegation also believed that the issue of dialogue must be translated into action now. Some States Parties had mentioned that perhaps this mechanism would be better implemented in 2020. However, why not engage in a prior exercise to test the waters and see how this might work out? The delegation referred to the remarks made by Algeria on ensuring that work was carried out in an atmosphere of transparency and calm where all States Parties would be operating on the basis of certainty that this dialogue, together with the evaluation mechanism, would yield positive results. It would also be important to avoid the politicization of the Committee, which was seen elsewhere in other Conventions in UNESCO. The delegation spoke of the deep attachment of States Parties to this Convention and it congratulated the Secretariat for its work in an atmosphere of full openness and transparency that provided great assurance that the Committee was on the right track. It also supported Tunisia’s point on the need to expand the membership of the ad hoc working group. Of course, it was open-ended, but it was hoped that this group could press on with its work, not only with regard to the dialogue mechanism, but also to continue its work to strengthen the Convention. Turkey also mentioned the synergies and ties between the ad hoc working group and the recommendations that emerged from the 39th General Conference of UNESCO on governance. This discussion was indeed very important so that at the next session of the General Conference, the Committee could prove that it had implemented the recommendations, or at least demonstrated some progress. The Committee had done an excellent job and had in fact already taken on board some of the recommendations of the General Conference. The working group was also a great forum for providing concrete sense and impact to these recommendations.
17. Thedelegation of **Morocco** thanked the Secretariat and Mr Byong-hyun Lee for his excellent report. It had listened carefully to the delegations that wished to pursue the direction of dialogue, while noting that others sought a revision of the evaluation procedure. The delegation did not object either way. However, it was concerned about the independence of the Evaluation Body, adamant that it should remain an independent mechanism, free from any pressure from members of the Committee or from elsewhere. The independence of the Evaluation Body would also prevent politicization in the inscription of elements. All States Parties wished to have as many elements as possible, but the Committee must take into account the criteria of the Convention. States Parties should also consider the important issue of sustainable development when preparing files.
18. The **Secretary** remarked that the question of dialogue appeared to be discussed either as a concept or as a very specific procedure proposed to the Evaluation Body. However, it was important not to confuse the two as they were distinctly different. The Secretary also noted a suggestion that the Secretariat did not support dialogue and he respectfully disagreed, explaining that the particular procedure proposed had not been accepted because it was seen as particularly burdensome by both the Secretariat and the Evaluation Body. The Secretary took note that some countries were asking to review the entire evaluation process and not just the specific procedure to address these issues, or as reminded by Morocco, to ensure the independence of the Evaluation Body from the members of the Committee. The Secretary, however, wished to clarify that the informal working groups, which had initially been closed and were now open-ended, were fully participative. For the Secretariat, these informal contexts had been extremely useful in understanding and exchanging points of view, which was in itself a dialogue that moved the process towards a more transparent way of engaging outside the formal consultations. The Secretary reiterated once again that caution should be exercised when using the word ‘dialogue’ so as to avoid any confusion with the very specific procedure being proposed.
19. Thedelegation of **Singapore** had hoped that the States Parties would have convinced the working group of the value of dialogue. The delegation sought to understand the reluctance or hesitation on the part of the Secretariat and the Evaluation Body about conducting dialogue, noting that this issue of dialogue had been discussed at great length at the World Heritage Committee over many years, which was finally implemented in 2015. Singapore had been one of the first to benefit from this dialogue with its first submission to the World Heritage Committee in 2015, and it had not heard of any serious problems resulting from speaking with the evaluators. The delegation appreciated the fact that, unlike the World Heritage Committee, there was a more diversified group of evaluators [in the Evaluation Body], but in terms of the process, it did not see how it would hinder, complicate or add additional work simply because the initial evaluation had been conducted by twelve evaluators. Moreover, there was no question of expanding the evaluation beyond the capacity of both parties. The delegation thus urged the Evaluation Body and the Secretariat to consult with ICOMOS, IUCN and the Secretariat of the World Heritage Committee to learn from their experience in this regard.
20. The **Secretary** understood the concerns. However, the Assembly should be cautious in trying to replicate the 1972 model because of the different nature of the Evaluation Body and the Advisory Bodies [of the World Heritage Committee] in the way they work, as already discussed in the informal ad hoc working group. The experiences of ICOMOS, the IUCN and ICCROM were completely different as they exist and work as institutions. The members of the Evaluation Body, on the other hand, speak either as individual experts, whose names were put forward by States Parties, or as accredited NGOs elected by Committee members on a rotating basis. The Advisory Bodies have a long experience in engaging with both States Parties and the Committee, and the evaluation processes involve country and site visits. In the case of the 2003 Convention, the members of the Evaluation Body did not feel comfortable or institutionally supported in engaging in the same way as these institutions, as they must make collegial, collective decisions on each criterion for every evaluation. In addition, the calendar of meetings (September being the last meeting of the Evaluation Body) was not sufficient to allow for this exchange of letters or process that would have to happen by October. Thus, the question was not about the idea of dialogue *per se* but rather about the process in which dialogue takes place, which would be considered as particularly problematic by the Evaluation Body should the 1972 method be followed.
21. The delegation of **Viet Nam** supported strengthening the dialogue mechanism between the submitting States and the Evaluation Body, and of course speeding up the development of such a mechanism. However, taking into account the adjustments that may be required in this evaluation process, it could accept the deadline of 2020. Moreover, it considered that, in parallel with the development of such a dialogue mechanism, more attention should be granted to capacity building and assisting States earlier in the preparation of their files.
22. The delegation of **Peru** congratulated the Chairperson on her election and thanked Mr Byong-hyun Lee and the two co-Chairs for the work carried out to bolster this very productive dialogue that had taken place in the ad hoc working group. The delegation noted from the statements by previous speakers that all agreed on the need for dialogue. However, as the Secretary and some delegations had pointed out, there needs to be a clear idea of the mechanism to which it alludes. As the Philippines had said from the outset, we should not be seeking to come up with some sort of remedy that is worse than the disease. Looking back at the achievements over the past few years, one could see that a lot of progress in fine-tuning the mechanism for inscription on the Representative List had been made. For example, the Committee had adopted a more conciliatory approach [to inscription] rather than outright rejection. There had also been amendments made to the various criteria, especially R.2, which had been particularly problematic. Another point worth recalling was the fact that there used to be two evaluation bodies, which had now merged into one single Evaluation Body. This now lends greater consistency and coherence to the work of the Evaluation Body. The delegation recalled the useful mechanism employed by the Secretariat in the period 2009–2012 when it carried out a substantive, preliminary analysis of the file before its submission to one of the two evaluation bodies that existed at that time. This mechanism had been eliminated owing to staff cutbacks and the financial difficulties in UNESCO. However, this mechanism could be reintroduced to improve the quality of the files. The delegation also agreed with those who advocated for dialogue, but the mechanism also had to be fine-tuned, otherwise the Committee might begin wandering off on some sort of experimental exercise that might actually complicate things even further. The Committee had been working cautiously and moving forward gradually and steadily, and it should continue in this way.
23. The **Secretary** remarked that theAssembly was now touching upon substantive issues related to inscriptions, which were beyond the report of the ad hoc working group. He recalled that in 2017 the Committee requested an open-ended working group subject to extrabudgetary funding to discuss the issue of the transfer of an element from one List to another and therefore the criteria for inscription. This would therefore be the forum to discuss the criteria themselves and the inscription process. Moreover, the open-ended working group was still on the agenda, awaiting extrabudgetary support.
24. The **Chairperson** thanked the Secretary for clarifying the points, which she supported as this was clearly an issue about evaluations, dialogue, and the transparency and independence of the Evaluation Body. She then proceeded to the draft resolution on a paragraph-by-paragraph basis. With no comments of objections, paragraphs 1–4 were duly adopted.
25. Thedelegation of the **Philippines** proposed a new paragraph 5, which would read, ‘Recognizes the importance of dialogue to enhance the evaluation process and the need to develop an appropriate mechanism to strengthen transparency and credibility in consultation with the Evaluation Body.’ The first part of the amendment had been adopted by the Committee in Jeju, and the second part, on the need to develop an appropriate mechanism, was a reaction to the debate, i.e., the issue was not about the concept of dialogue per se, but rather about finding the most appropriate and practical procedure in which dialogue should take place.
26. Thedelegation of **Palestine** supported the amendment by the Philippines, and proposed a small amendment in paragraph 6.
27. Noting the time, the **Chairperson** adjourned the session with the agenda item resuming in the afternoon.

*[Monday 4 June 2018, afternoon session]*

**ITEM 6 OF THE AGENDA (CONT.):**

**REPORT OF THE INFORMAL AD HOC WORKING GROUP OF THE COMMITTEE TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

1. The **Chairperson** reminded the Assemblythat paragraph 4 of the resolution had been adopted, and an amendment had been received from the Philippines.
2. The **Secretary** read out the proposed amendment by the Philippines, ‘Recognizes the importance of dialogue to enhance the evaluation process and the need to develop an appropriate mechanism to strengthen transparency and credibility in consultation with the Evaluation Body’.
3. The delegation of **Algeria** supported the paragraph as there was clearly a need for a coordination mechanism for dialogue between the Evaluation Body and States Parties.
4. The delegation of **Bangladesh** congratulated the Chairperson on her election and supported the proposed amendment by the Philippines, as there was clearly a need for dialogue. At the same time, it took note of the suggestions put forward by the Secretary in terms of the mechanism. The paragraph therefore captured those two elements well.
5. The delegation of **Viet** **Nam** also wished to co-sponsor the amendment.
6. The delegation of **Senegal** supported the proposal by the Philippines.
7. Thedelegation of **Morocco** had no objection to the amendment, but wished to see the paragraph clarify the form that the dialogue would take, i.e., would it be an exchange of letters or would it take the form of another mechanism.
8. The delegation of the **Philippines** explained that the amendment was a reflection of the morning’s debate where in principle there were no objections to the concept of a dialogue. The main challenge was to find an appropriate way or procedure for this dialogue to take place and the ad hoc working group in 2017 developed a proposal that considered an exchange of letters based on limited questions. However, the Assembly also heard from the Evaluation Body and the Secretariat that this may be too heavy a procedure. Therefore, the question moving forward would be to determine the most feasible mechanism or procedure [to facilitate dialogue]. Hence, the amendment for ‘an appropriate mechanism’, as it was understood that the proposal made by the ad hoc working group in 2017 would be difficult for the Evaluation Body and the Secretariat to implement.
9. Thedelegation of **Morocco** sought further clarity from the Secretariat.
10. The delegation of **Algeria** remarked that the question today was not to impose any form of dialogue. There had been previous attempts made through the working group under the Chairmanship of Mr Byong-hyun Lee, as presented in his report earlier. Thus, the Committee would present a solution for dialogue between the Evaluation Body and States Parties to the General Assembly in the future. This paragraph therefore pertained to a preparatory phase, which meant that as co-Chair of the working group, Algeria requested that all States Parties discuss with their colleagues how best to proceed. However, ultimately, it would be up to the Committee to adopt a proposal to present to the General Assembly.
11. The delegation of **Egypt** expressed support for the amendment by the Philippines, noting that this was a work in progress that had yet to be finalized.
12. The delegation of **Sri** **Lanka** also voiced support for the amendment by the Philippines.
13. Thedelegation of **Belgium** had somedoubts about this proposal as it was perhaps too premature. As discussed earlier, it would perhaps be wise to wait and see based on the experience of the new form, in which case it might not be necessary to develop an ‘appropriate mechanism’. The delegation therefore proposed either to delete or rephrase the paragraph, which would read, ‘Recognizes the importance of dialogue, transparency and credibility in the evaluation process’. In this way, the need for an appropriate mechanism would not be emphasized, as there may not be a need for such a mechanism.
14. Thedelegation of **Venezuela** congratulated the Chairperson on her election. It wished to co-sponsor the proposal by the Philippines, adding that the grounds for this proposal were appropriate and not premature, as this compromise solution stressed the importance of dialogue, as expressed by many of the speakers. This would also improve the working methodologies generally, which was part of the effort to improve governance. All statutory bodies have the mandate to modify, amend and approve their working methodologies, which was the thinking behind this paragraph, especially with regard to strengthening transparency and credibility.
15. The delegation of **Ecuador** expressed support for the proposal by the Philippines. With regard to the rationale behind this proposal, it reminded the Assembly that this issue had been largely discussed over the past two years, so it was difficult to understand why some delegations would wish to delete this proposal, especially in light of the debate in which States were unanimous in supporting the need for this dialogue as part of the evaluation process. The delegation echoed Algeria’s remarks that this was a work in progress, which would continue to be discussed in the ad hoc working group with a view to its possible adoption by the Committee. Moreover, previous discussions had dealt with the unfounded fear of the process being premature, as the main point to retain was that this work would continue in the open-ended ad hoc working group. Once the work was complete, the Committee would decide whether to adopt the proposals before then forwarding them to the General Assembly.
16. The delegation of **Hungary** supported the remarks by Ecuador, Algeria and the Philippines, and wished to retain the original paragraph as proposed.
17. The delegation of **Portugal** congratulated the Chairperson on her election. Having listened carefully to the arguments on strengthening dialogue, with which it agreed in principle, and understanding the wish to develop this further, the delegation proposed an amendment to the paragraph, which would read, ‘the need to develop when and where appropriate a suitable mechanism’. This would provide some latitude to decide when and where this mechanism would be discussed to include the inputs provided by the working group.
18. The delegation of **Lebanon** congratulated the Chairperson on her election, and supported the proposal put forward by the Philippines.
19. The delegation of **Cyprus** also strongly supported the proposal by the Philippines, while rejecting Belgium’s proposal to delete the paragraph, recalling that a working group had been especially created to discuss this issue of dialogue.
20. The delegation of **Latvia** congratulated the Chairperson on her election. It also believed that the General Assembly had substantial issues to discuss and it was looking forward to the upcoming debate. As for this concrete question, the delegation believed that more time was needed to examine the outcomes of the ad hoc working group. Thus, a decision had to be taken by the Committee before the General Assembly could really express whether or not there was a need for this dialogue and the respective mechanisms. In this regard, the delegation would go along with the initial draft resolution as proposed by the Secretariat.
21. The **Chairperson** remarked that a compromise solution should be sought. Summarizing, she noted that most delegations supported the original proposal that reflected the morning’s debate. Belgium proposed deleting the paragraph, while Latvia proposed returning to the original paragraph proposed by the Secretariat. Portugal proposed adding ‘when and where appropriate’. The Chairperson suggested that in order to clarify the paragraph after ‘when and where appropriate a suitable’, the following text could be added, ‘in the framework of the Committee and the working group’.
22. The **Secretary** felt that it would be better to start with the informal working group, followed by the discussions by the Committee. Thus, the text would read, ‘in the framework of the informal ad hoc working group and the Intergovernmental Committee’.
23. The delegation of **Ecuador** supported the proposal on the understanding that Portugal’s amendment would be deleted, as the addition of ‘in the framework of the informal ad hoc working group’ would render ‘when and where appropriate’ redundant since the context of the working group and the Committee would be clarified. The delegation thus suggested accepting the Chairperson’s proposal and deleting Portugal’s proposal.
24. The delegation of **Portugal** fully agreed as its proposal specifically related to the discussion within the informal working group and the Committee. It was thus pleased with this very specific proposal.
25. The **Secretary** read out the revised paragraph, ‘to enhance the evaluation process and the need to develop, in the framework of the informal ad hoc working group and the Intergovernmental Committee, an appropriate mechanism’.
26. The **Chairperson** noted that Belgium agreed to the proposal, thanking the delegation for its spirit of understanding and compromise.
27. The **Secretary** repeated the paragraph, ‘Recognizes the importance of dialogue to enhance the evaluation process and the need to develop, in the framework of the informal ad hoc working group and the Intergovernmental Committee, an appropriate mechanism to strengthen transparency and credibility in consultation with the Evaluation Body.’
28. The delegation of the **Philippines** thanked the delegations for their constructive amendments. It accepted the paragraph and hoped it clarified any doubts held by Morocco.
29. The delegation of **India** co-sponsored the proposal to enhance support dialogue.
30. The delegation of **Armenia** congratulated the Chairperson on her election and also wished to co-sponsor the paragraph.
31. Thedelegation of **Sri Lanka** was also happy with the current wording.
32. The **Chairperson** therefore pronounced paragraph 5 adopted. She then proceeded to paragraph 6 [previously paragraph 5], requesting that the working group present its recommendations to the thirteenth session of the Committee.
33. The delegation of **Palestine** recalled that it had a small amendment that took into account the debate in the morning session, which would read, ‘as well as the discussions that took place during the seventh session of the General Assembly.’
34. The delegation of **Cyprus** fully agreed to the addition by Palestine, but sought clarification on the sentence, ‘taking into consideration its redefined mandate for the year 2018’.
35. The **Secretary** explained that a mandate had been conferred upon the working group in Addis Ababa at the Committee’s eleventh session, but a new mandate was conferred to the working group at its twelfth session, which had already been adopted by the Committee.
36. The **Chairperson** noted no further comments, and paragraph 6 was duly adopted. Turning to the draft resolution as a whole, and with no further comments or objections, the **Chairperson declared Resolution 7.GA 6 adopted**.

**ITEM 7 OF THE AGENDA:**

**REPORT OF THE SECRETARIAT ON ITS ACTIVITIES**

**Document:** [*ITH/18/7.GA/7*](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/ITH-18-7.GA-7-EN.docx)

**Document:** [*ITH/18/7.GA/INF.7*](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/ITH-18-7.GA-INF.7-EN.docx)

**Resolution:** [*7.GA 7*](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Resolutions/7.GA/7)

1. The **Secretary** began by saying that the report on the Secretariat’s activities from January 2016 to December 2017 should be read in parallel with the financial statement regarding the Convention’s ICH Fund, document [ITH/17/12.COM/7](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/ITH-17-12.COM-7-EN.docx). The report reflected the extent of the Secretariat’s work based on the 38 C/5 results framework and, more specifically, the performance indicators of Expected Result 5 in the 38 C/5. The report also covered the Secretariat’s utilization of the funds made available from the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund for the budget line ‘other functions of the Committee’, as approved by the Bureau. Many of the key areas referred to in the report also figured in the Committee’s report just examined under item 5. This was normal as the Committee and the Secretariat work in tandem, i.e., the Committee’s decisions are often operationalized by the Secretariat’s activities. In this context, the document was organized in three parts. The first part was dedicated to key achievements, the second part presented some of the key challenges and ways forward, and the annex contained a detailed table presenting an assessment of progress against targets for the five performance indicators of the 38 C/5. While the report was indeed comprehensive, the Secretary wished to focus his presentation on the key issues that had implications for the future. He began with the **statutory support** provided by the Secretariat. From the document, it was noted that the Secretariat’s volume of work remained large with no less than eighteen statutory meetings organized during the reporting period. The near universal ratification was a sign that the Convention was attracting States and was thus considered as a key instrument in addressing today’s issues. Concerning the International Assistance mechanism, it was recalled that in 2016 the General Assembly had decided to increase the ceiling of International Assistance examined by the Bureau from US$25,000 to US$100,000, which had notably attracted Member States. Since that decision, 78 per cent of International Assistance requests received had gone to the Bureau of the Committee. This meant that States did not need to choose between International Assistance and nominating files to the Lists or to the Register. However, much remained to be done in analysing and monitoring the results of the implementation of these projects, which had the potential to become a major learning tool for intangible cultural heritage safeguarding, which would be further discussed under item 8. Another key area of work concerned **knowledge management**, which plays a central role in terms of visibility and as a key working tool for both the Secretariat and the States Parties. In this sense, the website of the 2003 Convention was considered as an important clearinghouse for intangible cultural heritage. New, major improvements were made, for example, the online submission of periodic reports, which were detailed in the document. The Secretary was proud to announce that there had been an increase of more than 60 per cent of page viewers compared to the previous biennium, reaching 7.5M hits on the Convention’s website. In addition, 28 May 2018 had seen the launch of the Convention’s website in Arabic thanks to the generous contribution of the Sultan Bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud Foundation from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The Secretary took the opportunity to renew a call for future contributions to be able to maintain the clearinghouse function of the website both in Arabic and in Spanish.
2. With regard to the **overall results framework**, the **Secretary** explained that this involved considerable work, and would be further discussed under agenda item 9. The Secretary then turned to **capacity building**, which also benefitted from major efforts and support on the part of the Secretariat. This formed the basis of the Secretariat’s operational action in support of States Parties for the implementation of the Convention. It therefore remained a high priority for the Secretariat and Member States. Seventy countries had directly benefitted from this programme during the reporting period. It operated thanks to the global network of [expert facilitators](https://ich.unesco.org/en/facilitator) who were trained regularly. The capacity-building programme started in 2011 and it was therefore time to take a review. Following a number of activities to draw lessons, make strategic assessments and look towards the future, it seemed that this was now moving to a new phase. This included a stronger focus on strengthening institutional capacities and developing national networks of trainers. Tertiary education also had a key role to play to support the capacity-building strategy in the implementation of the Convention, as universities train the future administrators and decision-makers for intangible cultural heritage. The main challenge of capacity-building is that it needs to be continually adapted to the evolving needs of States Parties, and that demand still exceeded the Secretariat’s delivery capacity. This was why capacity-building remained and continued to remain a funding priority, as approved by the Committee. The other new funding priority, which was approved by the Committee at its twelfth session in December 2017, was education. Indeed, during the reporting period, the Secretariat had started focusing more intensely on this key yet thus far relatively neglected safeguarding measure of the Convention, namely, the transmission of intangible cultural heritage through formal and non-formal education (referred to in Articles 2.3 and 14 of the Convention). In order to kick-start this process, the Secretariat had held a strategic intersectoral consultation meeting with the Regional Offices for Education and Education Institutes and Programmes in May 2017. The Secretary was glad to report that it had been extremely positive. Education colleagues acknowledged and understood that intangible cultural heritage can provide context-specific content and pedagogy for all levels of education on a wide range of topics, for example, education for sustainable development, education for the prevention of violent extremism, global citizenship education, and technical and vocational training. These were prominent in SDG 4 on quality education and lifelong learning for all. It was thus clear during that meeting that there was a sense of shared interest between colleagues from the two sectors, as integrating intangible cultural heritage into formal and non-formal education would benefit the ambitions of both, enhancing the transmission and safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage, as well as addressing key issues in improving the quality and relevance of education. The intention was that this would be implemented primarily by UNESCO Field Offices. It was clear that close collaboration with the Education Sector would be indispensable. Moreover, nine work plans of Field Offices for this current biennium (the 39 C/5 covering 2018–2019) would focus on this area.
3. The **Secretary** then addressed another important emerging area: **intangible cultural heritage in emergencies**. The Secretariat had been increasingly called upon to contribute to UNESCO’s global response, largely framed by the strategy adopted at the 38th session of the General Conference in 2015 to reinforce UNESCO’s action for the protection of culture and for the promotion of cultural pluralism in the event of armed conflict, as well as its addendum on natural disasters. 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 through pilot projects and desk studies, some of which were financed by the Heritage Emergency Fund. The Secretariat was also actively engaged in the UNESCO initiative reviving the spirit of Mosul, in particular, as regards the intangible cultural heritage of Iraqi returnees to Mosul under a project funded by the European Union. The Secretariat also continued to support the preparation and implementation of Emergency International Assistance requests in Côte d’Ivoire, Mali, Niger and Vanuatu. Reports on the activities carried at the sector level in this area were most relevant for intangible cultural heritage, and the Secretary explained that discussions had been initiated with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in view of establishing a partnership on a human-rights based approach to the safeguarding of cultural heritage, including intangible heritage, targeting, in particular, humanitarian, peace-keeping and peace-building practitioners. UNESCO had developed a training module on coordinating post-disaster needs assessments for culture (PDNA), which integrated the ‘People, Place and Story’ model to support the assessment of needs for intangible cultural heritage in the aftermath of disasters. Consideration for intangible cultural heritage was also progressively integrated within the framework of other Conventions, in principle, dealing with tangible heritage in the context of emergency preparedness, response and recovery. In the context of the World Heritage Convention, for example, the Secretary quoted the Warsaw Recommendation on Recovery and Reconstruction of Cultural Heritage,[[2]](#footnote-2) which had recently been agreed in Warsaw in May 2018 at a conference organized to provide guidance for the reconstruction of destroyed or severely damaged World Heritage properties; this recognized that ‘reconstruction of physical assets must give due consideration to their associated intangible practices, beliefs and traditional knowledge which are essential for sustaining cultural values among local communities.’ The recommendation also states that it is essential to understand and integrate in the reconstruction process the values identified in the heritage property by the local communities, including new values resulting from the traumatic events associated with the destruction together with the corresponding physical attributes and related intangible cultural practices and traditional knowledge.
4. Another new initiative concerned the **outreach and communications plan**. The **Secretary** referred to [Information Document 7](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/ITH-18-7.GA-INF.7-EN.docx). The document outlined important steps taken by the Secretariat to develop a comprehensive communication plan in order to promote the objectives of the Convention. Based on a multi-stakeholder consultation process and an in-depth review, proposals for priority communication and outreach actions were developed in 2017 in partnership with an external communications company. In light of these proposals, the Secretariat had initiated its reflections on the development of key messages and graphic orientations for future communication tools. These tools were aimed at supporting States Parties, partner organizations, such as accredited NGOs and category 2 centres, as well as communities in their awareness-raising and outreach initiatives. In this way, the outreach was in itself a safeguarding activity. It was not solely about promoting the visibility of the Convention, but also an opportunity to develop key messages that would be helpful for States Parties and partners. The Secretary added that a series of side events during this Assembly was possible thanks to this outreach and communication initiative, and the Secretariat had tried hard to showcase aspects of the Convention that were currently at stake. The overall theme of the side events, ‘Tell Your Living Heritage Story’, was intended to highlight the human relevance of living cultural heritage and to convey the dynamics of intangible cultural heritage through the lived experiences of the different actors involved.
5. Concluding, the **Secretary** wished to share some final thoughts on the future development of the Convention. It seemed, after ten years dedicated to obtaining ratifications, setting up the procedures and mechanisms of the Convention, and supporting its implementation through capacity building, that one might consider that the Convention was entering its next stage of life. A number of new and emerging issues were appearing and the need to assess and broaden its impact at various levels was becoming more and more evident. In its recent sessions, the Committee had called for a systemic and holistic stocktaking of the impact of the Convention, as well as a broad implementation of its activities. A number of items for discussion during this General Assembly pointed to this, such as the discussion on the overall results framework, the reflections on the periodic reporting mechanism, and the role of accredited NGOs, among others. Of course, capacity building remained fundamental, but new areas of work needed to be opened up on the ground, in which the Secretariat had started to invest time and resources. These include intangible cultural heritage in education and intangible cultural heritage and emergency situations. One important issue for which the Secretariat provided support to the Committee concerned the transfer of inscribed elements from one List to another. As mentioned under agenda item 6, apart from the need to clarify the procedural matters, this topic was related to larger issues on the nature and purposes of the Lists of the Convention. Needless to say, the Secretariat stood ready to support the organization of the open-ended working group and Committee to reflect on such issues that would require extrabudgetary funding. The possibilities and potential for this Convention were vast, and it continued to grow. In this respect, the situation regarding the human and financial resources to support this expansion remained extremely worrying. Indeed, as the number of States Parties expanded, the demands would naturally increase. Yet the resources to meet those demands continued to decrease. Solutions were being sought for consideration by the General Assembly under agenda item 8 to address one of the most acute gaps in the Secretariat’s operations.
6. The delegation of **Uganda** congratulated the Chairperson on her election and thanked the Secretariat for coordinating the meeting. Uganda thanked the Secretariat for implementing the decisions of the General Assembly, especially in allowing States to apply for funds for less than US$100,000 [through the Bureau of the Committee], which had increased the number of States Parties applying for funds. This increase in International Assistance had also absorbed the funds available, which had been a persistent problem and challenge. Concerning capacity building, Uganda appreciated the innovations. However, it strongly suggested continued research on the challenges faced by States Parties at the country level in order to make it relevant to the needs of the States Parties. It thanked the Secretariat overall for the creative and innovative methods of initiating and addressing the challenges faced in implementing the Convention.
7. The delegation of **Norway** congratulated the Chairperson on her election. It commended and thanked the Secretariat for its excellent work, noting that the Secretariat had faced growing demands from States Parties and had to deal with issues of increasing complexity. This was happening at a time of budgetary limitations, and at the same time, the number of nominations and requests for capacity building were rising. The delegation was concerned about the budgetary and resource situation of the Secretariat. Its capacity to deliver, serve and advise States Parties and the Committee was a critical issue in the implementation of the Convention. It was thus important that the Secretariat strive to work more smartly and efficiently, using up-to-date digital tools. The receipt and handling of nominations should be done in a more transparent, efficient and contemporary way. The delegation echoed the remarks made earlier by Sweden and hoped to see a more even balance between the instruments of the Convention. It wished to see more nominations to the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices, which would be in the spirit of the Convention as it addressed one of its core priorities, namely capacity-building, and thus deserved to have a larger role in the collective consciousness when reflecting on the Convention. The delegation also believed that a continued, strong focus on the Representative List might prove detrimental to its sustainability. More restraint should be exercised in nominating elements to this List and a more even balance between the different instruments should be sought. The delegation also highlighted the role of intangible cultural heritage in emergencies. The Heritage Emergency Fund finances activities in the domains of all six culture Conventions, which also supports their implementation. With resources from the Fund, UNESCO was able to mitigate emergencies and help achieve quick and flexible responses in the field. Norway commended the Secretariat for keeping a strong focus on supporting States Parties through capacity building with a continued focus on Africa. It was thus important to keep building new partnerships and strengthening the global network of facilitators who deliver training and advisory services to States Parties. Norway was mentioned as one of the donor countries that support capacity building in developing countries. It was also important to underscore the necessity of sustaining capacities in these countries by developing national mechanisms to continue this training. It was very important to continue exploring the role of the education system in the implementation of the Convention and the mobilization of tertiary education institutions in training. The delegation was also very happy to note that UNESCO was working with indigenous peoples to build capacities. It thanked the Secretariat for attending the Sámi Intangible Cultural Heritage Conference in May 2018, organized by the Sámi Parliaments in Finland, Sweden and Norway. The delegation also commended the initiative to reflect on local communities in safeguarding intangible cultural heritage.
8. The delegation of **Latvia** congratulated the Secretariat for the informative report on its activities. It appreciated the substantial and effective work that the Secretariat carried out, including the statutory support, as well as the capacity-building programme. The delegation wished to highlight some aspects in the report, in particular. It welcomed the growing number of International Assistance requests, while also being aware of the concerns regarding the additional workload for the Secretariat. The delegation also believed that it was important to make sure that the substantial monitoring and analytical review of the results and impacts of International Assistance would be carried out and it welcomed the fact that this point was reflected in paragraph 3 of the proposed draft resolution. The delegation also welcomed the developing knowledge management system for the Convention, including the interface for the periodic reports. It was convinced that the periodic reports provided a valuable source of information and assessment regarding the implementation of the Convention, and it welcomed the further development of these online tools of navigation and search. It also wished to underline the significance of education and looked forward to the growing activity of the UNESCO Chairs in the field of intangible cultural heritage, which could bring added value to advancing a reflective implementation of the Convention. The delegation also believed that an upcoming side event organized by Latvia and France[[3]](#footnote-3) during this session, with the participation of the UNESCO Chair and the Secretariat, would further contribute to developing such cooperation. Latvia would later propose a minor amendment to the draft resolution.
9. The delegation of **Japan** thanked the Secretariat for its efforts. Concerning the two main funding priorities of the Secretariat, it particularly welcomed the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage in formal and non-formal education. This was considered to be very timely with the issues of the sustainable development goals clearly in sight, while building sustainable societies had become a common goal for the world. Within this context, Japan had contributed to promoting education for sustainable development (ESD), which had a role not only as an integral part of SDG 4, but also as a key enabler of all the other SDGs. At the previous session of the Executive Board, together with forty-six co-sponsor countries, Japan had proposed an agenda to develop a new framework for ESD beyond 2019. In addition, concerning the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage in emergencies, Japan had experienced the Great East Japan Earthquake in 2011 and had knowledge and studies in this regard. The Tokyo National Research Institute for Cultural Properties had examined the role played by intangible cultural heritage as a tool for resilience and the recovery of communities post disaster. The delegation believed that this study in Japan could contribute to establishing disaster risk management strategies for safeguarding intangible cultural heritage in other countries. Japan would also continue working with UNESCO and the States Parties to further contribute to the implementation of the Convention.
10. The delegation of **Viet** **Nam** thanked the Secretariat for its comprehensive and clear report, and for its dedication and the quality of its work. Despite the difficult working conditions as a result of UNESCO’s financial crisis, the Secretariat had shown that it was able to adapt as the Convention evolved over the years and had also responded to the growing expectations and demands of States Parties. The delegation greatly appreciated the availability of the Secretariat to the States Parties and it supported the use of the necessary financial measures to strengthen the Secretariat in favour of further developments of the Convention.
11. The delegation of the **Syrian** **Arab Republic**, a founding member of UNESCO since 1946 and a State Party to the 2003 Convention since 11 March 2005, noted with satisfaction the momentum within the Secretariat and the very high quality of its report. It congratulated the Secretary and the Secretariat, as well as the Culture Sector for all these efforts. Syria had been engaged in a war against terrorism since 2011 and currently found itself in a situation in which the Syrian territory was being liberated. The population had started to return home, whether as displaced persons or refugees, to very damaged homes and buildings, some under the aegis of the 1972 Convention, but at the same time their traditions, history and intangible cultural heritage had also been damaged. The delegation therefore understood the context of the new objectives and direction of the Convention, where innovative links between intangible cultural heritage and emergency situations, as well as sectors of higher education, had become bearers of this stability and a revival of intangible cultural heritage. Moreover, Syria had not ceased its membership as a State Party and Member State and continued to pay into the Convention Fund and its contributions to UNESCO despite the war. It therefore appealed to all Member States to deliver voluntary financial assistance to support the activities of the Secretariat.
12. The delegation of **Finland** thanked the Secretariat for its organization of this session, the good work carried out in the last two years, and for its extensive report, which highlighted the important role played by the Secretariat in supporting the implementation of the Convention. Despite the budgetary challenges, the Secretariat had undertaken a number of activities to support Member States in capacity building, in addition to its statutory work. The delegation hoped that the human resources needed by the Secretariat would be met. It especially acknowledged its work on the capacity-building programme. In 2018, Finland had had the chance to offer its first capacity-building workshop on safeguarding intangible cultural heritage, with forty participants. In only four days, it was felt that the implementation of the Convention had leapt forward in the national context. For example, four Sámi people from all three countries that took part in this capacity-building workshop then contributed to the Sámi Conference, as previously mentioned by Norway. The delegation thus highly recommended the use of the programme for other States Parties. It also wished to highlight the work carried out on intangible cultural heritage in formal and non-formal education, and it warmly welcomed the Committee’s decision regarding the funding priority dedicated to this area. However, in line with future possibilities related to changes in periodic reporting and the overall results framework, the delegation hoped that there would be more possibilities for Member States to interact in this area and share good practices and experiences. Finland had embarked on this issue by publishing a dedicated website on intangible cultural heritage and education, targeting teachers and students that not only highlighted intangible cultural heritage in Finland but also the Lists of UNESCO and even national inventories in several other countries, offering a great resource for youth to learn different languages. One common goal this year was to highlight the European theme of cultural heritage that also underscored the importance of intangible cultural heritage. The delegation believed that efforts in this area of work would bear fruit of safeguarding intangible cultural heritage in the future.
13. The delegation of **Germany** congratulated the Chairperson on her election. It welcomed the comprehensiveness of the Secretariat’s report on its activities and commended the efforts undertaken during the reporting period. Regarding the development of an outreach and communications plan, the delegation wished to know whether the Secretariat had ideas about a procedure that would allow for easier use and authorization of the Convention emblem, a point raised by Member States at the last General Assembly. In addition, it wished to know if there had been any exchanges or contacts with other relevant United Nations organizations on intangible cultural heritage issues in the last biennium.
14. The delegation of **Botswana** congratulated the Chairperson on her election and thanked the Secretariat for the excellent report. Botswana had presented its first two reports on the status of the implementation of the Convention and on the elements listed on the Urgent Safeguarding List. It thanked the Committee for approving the two reports and looked forward to continued timely submissions of its periodic reports. The Committee also approved its application for International Assistance for its first inscribed element, which was itself a motivation to work harder. Botswana had inscribed its second element on the Urgent Safeguarding List [in 2017], which further enhanced its efforts in the implementation of the Convention. The delegation believed that this work contributed to the increasing visibility of UNESCO in Botswana, and it reaffirmed its commitment to UNESCO since ratifying the Convention in 2010 and, in particular, the safeguarding of its intangible cultural heritage.
15. The delegation of the **Netherlands** congratulated the Chairperson on her election and thanked the Secretariat for its excellent report, the documents prepared and the future-oriented way of working under such budgetary challenges. It greatly valued the work being done to improve the governance of the Convention and the development of an overall results framework to make the impact and results of the Convention visible. With regard to the dialogue mechanism, it was important to take time to reflect and consult with the Evaluation Body. Also, in light of the discussions on the nature and purposes of the Representative List, the delegation believed that the purpose of this List required discussion. The global capacity-building programme was still a very important issue. A new phase would start to implement the Convention worldwide at all levels. Communities, policy officers, NGOs, global networks of experts and facilitators were all very important and indispensable. The delegation believed that capacity building in the framework of intangible cultural heritage in emergency situations was another important issue. It also valued the new cooperation in the field of education and the safeguarding of intangible heritage in formal and non-formal education. The Education Sector needed to be made aware of the importance of intangible cultural heritage so that it formed part of education in heritage, and young people also needed to get on board. The delegation acknowledged the challenge and need for better management of the International Assistance mechanism for strengthening knowledge and capacities for the effective safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage. It was hoped that the budgetary conditions would allow the Secretariat to solve these issues.
16. The delegation of the **Philippines** congratulated the Secretariat for an excellent report and for its hard work, which was truly appreciated. One emerging issue mentioned that deserved to be addressed was intangible cultural heritage in emergencies, not only in conflict and post-conflict situations but also as a response to extreme weather events caused by climate change. The delegation sought to know how the Secretariat saw the operationalization of this concept as it believed that it would be an added value in contributing to promoting peace and sustainable development throughout the world. The delegation was of the view that the communications plan and tools could be targeted towards different audiences, for instance, to communities themselves so that they could better understand the mechanisms available to them under the Convention, as well as potential donors that would help raise the additional funds needed for capacity building for actors on the ground and for the Secretariat.
17. The delegation of **Greece** congratulated the Chairperson on her election and the Secretariat for its thorough and well-documented work throughout the year. It also commended the Secretariat’s efforts in responding to the needs of the Convention despite the stress in terms of personnel and funding. The delegation expressed its great satisfaction that the issue of intangible cultural heritage in emergencies, first proposed two years ago in the previous General Assembly by Greece, had now become a centre-stage issue in this Convention. It believed that the pilot scheme that the Secretariat had implemented and presented during the last Committee meeting was very useful, but a lot more needed to be done on this issue and on the ability of intangible cultural heritage to not only restore the situation following the destruction of armed conflict but also in preventing environmental hazards. The delegation believed that greater efforts made in improving knowledge on the prevention of natural hazards would be a big step forward in bringing intangible cultural heritage closer to sustainable development.
18. Thedelegation of **Colombia** congratulated the Secretariat on this very comprehensive report. With regard to the stated challenges in the report, for example, in the field of education, it believed that the capacity-building strategy was very important, adding that Colombia had incorporated intangible cultural heritage into its own school curricula. The delegation encouraged others to consider the different types of practices and knowledge that were being incorporated into non-formal educational practices, especially as many community-based sources of intangible heritage lend themselves to such practices. For example, Colombia was working on a programme to evaluate the different levels of qualification so that teachers-in-training within the formal education system could be given credit for any work they did within these traditional practices. This aim was to acknowledge and formally recognize this form of knowledge so that students did not necessarily have to go through universities to obtain a teaching position in the formal education system, especially as there were people who had acquired the same level of expertise within the informal education system. The delegation welcomed the fact that the work on intangible cultural heritage was being tied to the sustainable development goals, of which culture forms a broad part. It expressed its appreciation of the different case studies, which would be useful to further this work. For example, Colombia was developing a public policy to manage its intangible cultural heritage in an urban context, so over the past eighteen months it had carried out a series of different surveys in various communities, working with people who were employed in the public sector both at the national and local levels. The idea was to find ways of tying intangible cultural heritage with the process of sustainable development with regard to economic, political and social development. What often happens in cities is that heritage gives people new economic opportunities, but it also offers new social opportunities for the different communities. The delegation wished to share this experience because it had identified how the knowledge accumulated in the field of intangible heritage could help people who migrate to cities to create a livelihood and to find a place for themselves in the urban environment. It was also tied to resilience, the informal economy, and so on. The delegation thus sought to strengthen this kind of experience by tying intangible cultural heritage more closely with the SDGs so that these practices could offer people opportunities to achieve sustainable development.
19. Congratulating the Chairperson on her election, the delegation of **China** appreciated the Secretariat’s tireless efforts in promoting the implementation of the Convention in the past two years, especially the active exploration into many new areas, including the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage and sustainable development, intangible cultural heritage and education, as well as the transversal connection and synergies between the different culture Conventions, which attempted to meet ever-increasing new demands. In 2017, China had jointly convened with the Secretariat the meeting of open-ended intergovernmental working group on developing an overall results framework for the Convention. The International Training Centre for Intangible Cultural Heritage in the Asia-Pacific Region (CRIHAP), supported by China as a category 2 centre, had provided more than thirty capacity-building workshops in an effort to increase the capacity of Member States to safeguard intangible cultural heritage since its establishment in 2012. China would continue to provide assistance to the Secretariat and to make an active contribution to its work in this area.
20. The delegation of **Sweden** thanked the Secretariat for the elaborated and excellent report and for its hard work. In 2017, the Swedish Parliament passed a cultural heritage bill that took a holistic approach to cultural heritage, making it a separate policy area. The new policy would contribute to making common cultural heritage a concern for all, and it encouraged co-creation and involvement. When it comes to intangible cultural heritage, this co-creation is the very starting point, as it is always the practitioners who preserve, transmit and further develop intangible cultural heritage, and they are primarily non-profit actors and individuals. Civil society and NGOs therefore have a vital role to play in ensuring that intangible cultural heritage remains living and dynamic. The work in the implementation of this Convention should therefore promote and strengthen civil societies’ potential to preserve, transmit and develop intangible cultural heritage. The national inventory provided a unique opportunity for co-creation and non-profit involvement that also engaged national minorities. They consist of groups that do not necessarily relate to places, buildings or objects, but have a rich tradition, for example, in crafts, songs, music and stories. The Institute for Language and Folklore in Sweden employs methods to find ways of getting national minorities more involved in the work of the inventory. In 2017, for example, several items of intangible heritage of the Roma people were inscribed on the inventory. Sweden emphasized the role of civil society in its work with the Convention and it therefore wished to highlight the importance of UNESCO in promoting the commitment and participation of civil societies. The delegation appreciated agenda item 7 that included the ICH NGO Forum report. However, it wished to see a separate agenda item attributed to the NGO Forum at the next meeting so that NGOs would be given the opportunity to have an interactive discussion and play a constant role in the overall work of the Convention on equal terms.
21. The delegation of **Senegal** congratulated the Secretariat for the quality of its report, especially for its hard work despite the reduced human and financial resources. It remarked that the involvement of intangible cultural heritage in education was extremely important. For almost two and a half years, Senegal had been carrying out field work on its inventory, which had just received significant support from UNESCO. The delegation congratulated the Secretariat for providing this assistance that would allow it to finalize this work with universities, research institutes, and communities. Senegal was working with some universities as part of the implementation of action plans and safeguarding plans related to the inventory. The most important point, however, was that communities, the custodians of cultural heritage, were involved in the process and that universities went directly to the level of the communities to share knowledge and know-how so that the content of the curricula could be defined. For this reason, Senegal facilitated this link between communities and researchers, students and teachers, and even primary and elementary schools. The work on the inventory thus included teachers and young students from these communities so as to better appropriate this heritage and its safeguarding. Colombia had spoken earlier of recognizing the knowledge of these communities and of teachers-in-training. In 2005–2006, Senegal started to celebrate so-called ‘living human treasures’ and for two–three years it had appointed holders of this knowledge and know-how in the register of living human treasures so as to ensure continuity in the chain of transmission. Today, it might appear important to inscribe elements on the Representative List, but it was much more important and urgent to work in the field to find and collect these elements of intangible cultural heritage, especially as they form the basis of informal education in Senegal. For example, initiation rites were still very much respected in the societies of the south and south-east of Senegal where they transmit values of culture, knowledge, and even the protection of nature. It was therefore important to insist on non-formal education and to transfer that knowledge to formal education.
22. The delegation of **Jamaica** extended its congratulations to the Chairperson on her election, as well as to the Vice-Chairs, and it commended the Secretariat for the work achieved under difficult circumstances. The delegation noted the ongoing work within the areas of capacity building and knowledge management; areas of support that had benefitted Jamaica, for which it was very grateful. The emerging area of intangible cultural heritage in emergency situations was of particular interest, not only in Jamaica but in the Caribbean, especially within the context of unpredictable weather as the region approached the beginning of the annual hurricane season that causes damage and disruption to lives and livelihoods in the region. Last year was particularly bad and this year was looking equally challenging. Jamaica aimed to look at the synergies between the Conventions as they relate to tangible and intangible cultural heritage and building resilience among traditional communities. It expressed thanks once again to the Secretariat and reiterated its commitment to the work of the Convention.
23. The delegation of **Portugal** commended the Secretariat for its useful report, which not only provided States Parties with an important picture of the achievements so far but also underlined the key challenges. It agreed that capacity building was vitally important and that it was indeed a critical element of these Conventions. On the achievements side, the delegation gave the example of the work and results of the multi-country projects in Portuguese-speaking countries in Africa that had taken place. On the challenges side, it specifically referred to outreach and communications, which were crucial for the efficient implementation of the Convention. In this regard, it wished to congratulate the three new Portuguese-speaking countries that had joined the Convention: Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau and Timor-Leste. The delegation took the opportunity to mention that the Portuguese National Commission had recently translated the Operational Directives of the Convention into Portuguese, and it was pleased to hear that the Secretariat would make it available to States.
24. The delegation of **Tunisia** thanked the Secretariat for its efforts and for the very complete report. It welcomed the role played by the Secretariat and the partnerships that were created with educational establishments, as this was very important in creating awareness among young people about the importance of intangible cultural heritage, a source of pride for all. The delegation found the issue of transferring an element from one List to another important. Owing to the lack of human and financial resources, and especially because inscription on the List was not particularly easy, the delegation suggested that resources should instead be spent on concentrating more on the safeguarding of cultural heritage so as to raise awareness of the importance of intangible cultural heritage in the spirit of the Convention. Tunisia had benefitted greatly from the capacity-building programme and it was hoped that the programme would be developed, adapted and strengthened to take into account the most recent developments.
25. The delegation of **Zimbabwe** joined the delegations in congratulating the Chairperson on her election and thanked the Secretariat for the elaborate report on its activities that outlined, among other things, the focus and way forward in relation to the challenges faced by the Secretariat. Zimbabwe also commended the nature of the activities implemented by the Secretariat. At the national level, it was particularly interested in the support given to capacity-building activities and it appreciated the link forged between education and intangible cultural heritage. The delegation spoke of the new education curriculum in Zimbabwe that now incorporated the teaching of intangible cultural heritage at both the primary and secondary levels, which also had an impact on teacher training as teachers were now taught about intangible cultural heritage. The curriculum was still new and a lot of support was still needed to ensure implementation throughout the country. Nevertheless, it had already begun to notice the enhanced transmission of intangible cultural heritage through education, as well as greater appreciation and comprehension of the Convention itself.
26. The delegation of **Saint** **Lucia** congratulated the Chairperson on her election and thanked the Secretariat for its constructive report. It appreciated the efforts made, as the Convention was of particular importance to the country. The delegation believed that it was fundamental to strengthen the Convention in terms of the sustainable development goals (SDGs) and capacity building in education, considering the new world challenges and the increasing number of States Parties to the Convention, which were warmly welcomed. In many small islands, living intangible cultural heritage had provided a foundation for their identity. For this reason, the delegation insisted on formal and non-formal education as a foundation to build strong resilience.
27. The **Secretary** thanked the delegations for their encouraging remarks on the work of the Secretariat and on some of the new directions opening up that had been discussed in the Committee. He particularly noted the encouragement for the work on intangible cultural heritage in education, and intangible cultural heritage in emergencies, which was indeed good to hear. Some delegations had mentioned the need to highlight good safeguarding practices and the Secretary informed the Assembly that the Secretariat had recently undertaken a survey to respond to a Committee decision taken a number of years ago to find a lighter way to share good safeguarding practices, noting that the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices needed the Committee’s approval. However, owing to its huge workload, the Secretariat had previously been unable to carry out this work, but it had now instigated a survey among hundreds of organizations to understand how they might share these good safeguarding practices, after which the Secretariat would soon report. It was noted that Germany had a question concerning the communications plan and the use of the logo. Indeed, there were established procedures for the logo and in discussions with communication experts it was thought that these might need to be reviewed. Nevertheless, during the biennium the Secretariat had granted the use of the logo to fifty events or partners, but its use was still under the instruction of the Committee and the General Assembly. With regard to the question of whether the Secretariat had worked with other United Nations agencies, the Secretary replied that the Secretariat had participated in work with the regional office of the World Health Organization (WHO) on culture and health in the Europe region. The Secretariat also had some exchanges with the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) on a programme on important agricultural landscapes. The Secretariat continued to share information and ongoing discussions with the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), and of course, UNESCO Field Offices were generally more in touch with other agencies working in the field, such as the United Nations Country Teams. In addition, the Secretariat worked with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in Kivu in its survey work on emergencies in the Democratic Republic of Congo with internally displaced persons. It was noted that when UNESCO was asked to work with another agency, it was also important to ask the other agency to work alongside UNESCO as receiving instructions from both sides made the work easier to enact.
28. The **Secretary** then turned to the question from the Philippines on how to operationalize on natural disasters, adding that the Secretariat had been working on the issue of emergencies in the Committees and it hoped to come to the next General Assembly with more detailed proposals and modalities. An agenda item on the issue [of intangible cultural heritage in emergencies] had been included in the past two Committee sessions, and the Secretariat had conducted some case studies in countries dealing with refugees in the Middle East. It had also dealt with conflict situations, internally displaced refugees in the Congo, as well as desk studies on natural disasters, which were indeed very important. What had emerged was the role of intangible cultural heritage not only in the recovery phase but particularly in the preparedness phase, as mentioned by Greece, and there were many ways in which traditional disaster preparedness could be built upon given climate change and the intensity of disasters. The plan was therefore to work with the next Committee to present more case studies over the next two years so as to establish an improved methodology, though it was clear that there was a need to closely consult with the intangible cultural heritage community. One of the things that emerged was the lack of emergency preparedness in terms of inventorying, so the Secretariat also developed capacity-building materials on intangible cultural heritage and emergencies, particularly for those countries prone to natural disasters so that it could be better integrated into their inventorying systems, emergency preparedness, as well as response. Colombia’s question concerned the work on culture and cities, and cultures and sustainable development in general, and the Secretary invited the Director of the Division of Creativity to respond.
29. The **Director of the Division of Creativity, Ms Jyoti Hosagrahar**, thanked the delegations for their supportive and encouraging comments. She spoke about the range of other activities undertaken in the Culture Sector to integrate culture, the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda where intangible cultural heritage was very much part of these efforts. These activities cut across the Sector and the culture Conventions and programmes, and were aimed at enhancing the role of culture in the SDGs, including in emergencies and education, but they also looked at the contribution of culture to making cities more inclusive and resilient, while enhancing livelihoods. Also ongoing was the effort to develop indicators across the Conventions and programmes to measure the contribution of culture to the SDGs and that included intangible cultural heritage, which would be discussed further [under agenda item 9] on the overall results framework.
30. The **Chairperson** then proceeded with the adoption of the draft resolution on a paragraph-by-paragraph basis. With no comments or objections, paragraphs 1–3 were adopted. It was noted that Latvia had a proposal in paragraph 4.
31. Thedelegation of **Latvia** noted that the General Assembly would consider the draft of the overall results framework later in its agenda, and its amendment respected the need to take the General Assembly’s decision on that item before expressing its position on the future importance of the framework. Its amendment[[4]](#footnote-4) would equally reflect the appreciation of the Secretariat’s work.
32. The **Chairperson** noted that there were no objections and paragraph 4 was duly adopted. She then turned to paragraph 5 on the capacity-building programme of the Secretariat, which was duly adopted. Paragraph 6 on the new orientation taken by the Secretariat in the field of intangible cultural heritage and education was also adopted. Paragraph 7 concerned the new initiative on outreach and communication.
33. Thedelegation of **Saint Kitts and Nevis** wished to add a comma after ‘Convention’ and ‘to secure appropriate extrabudgetary funding’, which would read, ‘welcomes the initiative to develop an outreach and communications plan aiming to enhance awareness about, and the visibility of, the Convention, including the visibility of funding needs from extrabudgetary sources’. The delegation explained that everyone agreed with the commendable initiative but that visibly more funds were needed to raise the profile of the programme.
34. The **Secretariat** proposed ‘as well as the pursuit of extrabudgetary resources’ instead of ‘the visibility of funding needs’.
35. The delegation of **Tunisia** noted that the expression ‘enhance awareness’ was incomplete, and thus proposed, ‘to enhance awareness on the importance of the Convention’ or ‘on the impact of the Convention’.
36. The **Chairperson** appealed to delegations to submit written proposals, which would help in formulating the amendments.
37. The **Chairperson** took note of the amendment in paragraph 7, which would read, ‘Welcomes the initiative carried out to develop an outreach and communications plan aiming to enhance awareness about, and the visibility of, the Convention, as well as the pursuit of extra-budgetary resources’; this was duly adopted. She then turned to paragraph 8 on the growing importance of intangible cultural heritage in the context of emergencies.
38. The delegation of **Italy** remarked on the importance of this issue, as expressed by many delegations. In fact, many of the delegations pointed out the importance of work carried out by the Secretariat, highlighting the connection not only with armed conflict – the theme of the strategy approved two years ago – but also with natural disasters. Thus, the delegation suggested an additional wording to the second part of paragraph 8, which would read, ‘and requests that the Secretariat pursue its efforts in the framework of the Strategy for reinforcing UNESCO’s action for the protection of culture and the promotion of cultural pluralism in the event of armed conflict and its Action Plan, as well as the Addendum to the Strategy concerning emergencies associated with disasters caused by natural and human-induced hazards’, which was the official wording used in UNESCO documents.
39. The delegation of **Venezuela** supported and was grateful for the proposal, which reflected the wording in paragraph 22 of the report.
40. Thedelegation of the **Syrian Arab Republic** supported Italy’s proposal.
41. Thedelegation of **Jamaica** also supported the amendment by Italy.
42. The **Chairperson** noted no objections and paragraph 8 was duly adopted. Paragraph 9, calling on States Parties to support operational projects and strengthen the human resources of the Secretariat, was also adopted. Paragraph 10 was a standard paragraph for the Secretariat’s next report, which was duly adopted. Paragraph 11, proposed by Sweden, sought to include a separate item on the agenda for the report of the NGO Forum.
43. The delegation of **Algeria** asked that Sweden explain its amendment before its adoption.
44. Thedelegation of **Sweden** believed that it was vitally important that NGOs and civil societies take an active role in the work of the Convention, as previously mentioned. For this reason, it proposed a separate agenda item for the NGO Forum.
45. The **Chairperson** wished to point out that the NGO Forum report would follow after the adoption of the resolution and it was thus already part of agenda item 7.
46. The delegation of **India** supported the Chairperson’s remark, adding that because the NGO Forum would be considered in this agenda item, there was no need to discuss the amendment as a separate agenda item.
47. The delegation of **Iceland** congratulated the Chairperson on her election and supported Sweden’s statement on the importance of NGO cooperation in implementing the Convention.
48. The **Secretary** explained that there were two different ways of reporting on the NGO Forum. At the moment, the NGOs would report under item 7bis following the adoption of draft resolution 7.GA 7. This way, the General Assembly did not need to take a decision on the NGO Forum report. However, should it be a separate item, the Assembly would be asked to take a decision on the work of NGOs.
49. The delegation of **Bangladesh** reiterated that the NGO Forum would report in the upcoming item and thus it was unnecessary to have a separate agenda item.
50. The delegation of **Estonia** felt that the issue raised by Sweden to have the NGO Forum report as a separate agenda item was a very crucial addition as NGOs play an important role in implementing the Convention. It believed that the proposal deserved serious attention and it fully supported it.
51. The delegation of **Serbia** congratulated the Chairperson and the Bureau members on their election. It fully concurred with previous speakers on recognizing the crucial role of NGOs. However, it was also important to be coherent and it recalled that an informal ad hoc working group would continue to discuss the perspectives of NGO participation and partners in the implementation of the Convention. The results of these discussions would therefore be discussed within the framework of the working group at the next General Assembly. Also, with the NGO Forum report under item 7bis, no further steps were needed at this time.
52. The delegation of **Pakistan** supported the comments made by Serbia, Bangladesh and India that it was perhaps not the right time to consider this issue as a separate agenda item.
53. The delegation of **Algeria** asked the delegations to reflect on the Secretary’s explanation that a decision would have to be taken should the report appear as a separate item. The NGOs would therefore be asked to act on that decision, which would be the first time this had happened, thereby changing the Assembly’s working methods. Indeed, the work with NGOs was very important as they were at the heart of the Convention. It was thanks to NGOs that intangible heritage was managed, safeguarded and inscribed on a universal list. The Assembly, however, could not be asked to change the way it worked through the discrete introduction of a paragraph at the end of a decision. There had to be a consultation and discussion, possibly through the Committee or the working group, and the delegation thus asked that the paragraph be deleted and that Sweden present its proposal at another time in a more apt discussion forum.
54. The delegation of **Turkey** followed the same line as Algeria and Serbia in not wanting to make any hasty decisions. This issue on how to engage more NGOs was already being discussed within the framework of the ad hoc working group. It was thus better not to make any uninformed decisions and the delegation thus preferred to delete the paragraph, adding that any amendment should be considered under the relevant agenda item.
55. The delegation of **Finland** supported the addition of a separate item on the agenda, adding that although it was good that the NGO Forum would present its report later, it was important for future sessions that the role of NGOs be made more visible. It therefore supported the proposal by Sweden, co-sponsored by Iceland and Estonia.
56. The delegation of **Botswana** explained that unless the Secretariat indicated that this agenda item did not fit in the next topic as indicated in the agenda, it was difficult to support its inclusion here because the inclusion of item 7bis already took care of this issue, as mentioned by India and others.
57. The delegation of **Norway** supported the amendment by Sweden.
58. The delegation of **Palestine** noted the important points raised by the delegations, but it was clear that there were very different points of view on this issue. It thus proposed a change in the wording in the hope of achieving a consensus, which would read, ‘requests that the ad hoc working group considers the inclusion of a separate agenda item’. In this way, the working group could reflect on this issue and consider whether it was appropriate, after which they could submit a recommendation.
59. The delegation of **Senegal** spoke of the Secretary’s clarification as timely as this paragraph proposed changing the Assembly’s working methods. The Assembly needed to formulate informed opinions and thus the working group should continue its work in considering this issue as a separate item. It therefore strongly supported the proposal by Serbia and Algeria, despite Palestine’s additional remarks, so as to avoid any confusion. The paragraph should therefore be deleted so that the working group could continue its reflection on this issue.
60. The delegation of **Viet Nam** supported Senegal’s well-spoken remarks and subscribed to the position expressed by Algeria, Serbia, India and Senegal.
61. The delegation of **India** supported the Chairperson’s proposal, as well as the request by Serbia and Algeria to delete the paragraph. In addition, it was extremely premature to add an agenda item without first discussing it in the ad hoc working group. More time was thus needed to discuss this issue before it could become an agenda item, as clarified by the Secretary who had explained that the General Assembly would be required to take a decision.
62. The **Secretary** reminded the Assembly that following the last Committee session, the Committee requested that both the Secretariat and the informal ad hoc working group consult with NGOs to review and consider the various functions and roles of the NGOs to act in an advisory capacity to the Committee. This ongoing process had been officially requested by the Committee and it was likely that this would be reported at the next two Committee sessions, the process of which would result in some proposals presented to the next General Assembly. The discussion had thus already been initiated, and although the Secretary appreciated the amendment proposed by Palestine, the informal ad hoc working group worked under the guidance of the Committee. In this sense, the process should really go through the Committee and then the General Assembly. The Secretary also informed the Assembly that a number of meetings were taking place with the Secretariat, the NGO Forum and the informal working group to discuss the inter alia functions of the NGOs in relation to the Committee.
63. Having listened to the clarifications, the delegation of **Peru** was mindful of the fact that there was currently a process underway that had the full participation of NGOs and the ad hoc working group working alongside the Secretariat. The Assembly should therefore wait for the outcomes and not get ahead of itself by adding a paragraph to the draft resolution as this was neither the right place nor time. For this reason, it agreed with Serbia, Algeria and others to delete the paragraph.
64. The delegation of **Switzerland** congratulated the Chairperson on her election. Although it supported the idea behind Sweden’s amendment, it was difficult under the circumstances to accept this amendment. It therefore seemed appropriate to follow Palestine’s proposal and work with the ad hoc working group, whose terms of reference should be clear so that a specific recommendation could be made at the next Committee.
65. The delegation of the **Philippines** added its voice to those stating that this was already an ongoing process, as reflected in the mandate of the informal ad hoc working group, ‘to reflect 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’. It was not exhaustive and included, for instance, possible new measures, such as the one currently proposed. Thus, a way forward could be the deletion of the paragraph or the introduction of a general statement that took note of the ongoing reflection process on possible ways in which the participation of NGOs under the 2003 Convention could be further enhanced. In this way, the paragraph would be more general and open.
66. The delegation of **Estonia** fully understood the hesitation in adopting a decision on a new task without first knowing what exactly it entailed. However, the paragraph could be formulated to indicate that the General Assembly took note of the report and acknowledged the participation of NGOs and their importance in this process; a role that the Committee had reiterated several times. In this sense, the Assembly could go along with furthering discussions related to the role of the NGOs with the possibility of adding a separate agenda item to listen to the report so as to more seriously reflect on this issue.
67. The delegation of **Sweden** remarked that this was not a new issue and that it had raised this question in connection with the agenda at the previous Assembly in 2016. Nevertheless, Sweden could go along with Palestine’s suggestion to return to the discussion, adding that without practitioners and NGOs there would be no intangible heritage.
68. The delegation of **Austria** agreed with Sweden, Iceland, Estonia, Finland and Norway that the role of the NGO Forum was crucial and that NGOs should play an active role in the Assembly’s work. However, given the consequences of this paragraph, it suggested that a representative of the NGO Forum confirm that it was aware of and supported this paragraph.
69. The delegation of **Venezuela** recognized the important role that NGOs play in the process of implementing the Convention. Indeed, it was stated in the Convention in Article 11(b), in Chapter 3 of the Operational Directives in paragraphs 90–99, where there is a detailed account of the involvement of NGOs and their work in the Convention, as well as a direct reference to the advisory capacity in which NGOs operate. For this reason, the delegation would go along with Algeria and others that suggested the paragraph be deleted, as this would indeed be too premature. It might also disrupt the work of the informal ad hoc working group.
70. The delegation of **Honduras** concurred that nobody was calling into question the importance of NGOs and the role they played in the work of the Convention and within the framework of other culture Conventions. However, the delegation believed that this paragraph should either be deleted or amended along the lines suggested by Palestine or the Philippines. The working group had been entrusted with examining the participation of NGOs and it should be left to discuss this issue without getting ahead of itself with a proposal of this nature.
71. The delegation of **Ireland** supported the work with NGOs in general, as well as the principles behind this amendment. It agreed with the Philippines that, from the Secretariat’s intervention, a more general statement would be more appropriate along the lines that the General Assembly supported the ongoing consultations with the NGO Forum.
72. The delegation of **Denmark** supported the proposal by Sweden along with Iceland, Estonia, Finland and Norway.
73. The delegation of **Saint Vincent and the Grenadines** congratulated the Chairperson on her election, as well as the Bureau members. It supported the remarks by Algeria, Serbia, Senegal and Turkey, and the explanation given by the Secretary. It was noted that the process was under consultation, while the importance of the work done by the NGOs could be mentioned in the oral report.
74. The delegation of **Portugal** agreed that it was time to move to the next agenda item. While it fully supported NGOs as instrumental and effective practitioners of this Convention, it felt that the proposal by the Philippines summed up well the Secretariat’s clarification and the point that these discussions were ongoing within the informal working group that would no doubt make steady progress in this regard. The delegation therefore supported the compromise proposal put forward by the Philippines, as mentioned by Ireland.
75. From a procedural point of view, the delegation of **Algeria** noted that only the delegations supporting Sweden’s proposal were projected on the screen, whereas the majority of delegations supported the deletion of the paragraph. It was comfortable with the proposal by the Philippines, should Sweden agree. The delegation proposed suspending the adoption of the decision so as to listen to the NGO report and then to later return to the decision with the addition of a paragraph, which would read, ‘Takes note of the report presented by the NGOs’.
76. The **Chairperson** wondered whether the proposed solution would be acceptable to Sweden as a reflection process was already underway, and thus paragraph 11 could read, ‘takes note of the reflection carried out by the Secretariat and the ad hoc informal working group, in consultation with accredited NGOs, on the participation of NGOs in the 2003 Convention’.
77. The delegation of **Palestine** remarked that its original amendment sought to reach a consensus. However, acknowledging the proposal by the Philippines, it suggested ‘takes note of the ongoing process’, followed by the wording suggested by the Philippines.
78. The **Secretary** noted that the idea was to include the possibility of having an item within the ongoing NGO consultation. Moreover, the discussion would not only take place within the informal ad hoc working group but also among the NGOs as they consult among themselves and with the Secretariat. The results of these discussions would be brought together to the Committee and then on to the General Assembly in 2020. Thus, the proposal put forward by the Philippines and expressed by Ireland was to include wording in terms of the ongoing NGO consultation with the Secretariat, the Committee and the informal ad hoc working group. The Secretary reminded the Assembly that this consultation would be taken note of, and the Committee would be asked to report on it under agenda item 11 of the present General Assembly on the accreditation of NGOs. Thus, there was already a reference under agenda item 11, which read, ‘Takes note of the ongoing reflection undertaken by the Secretariat and the informal ad hoc working group in consultation with the accredited NGOs’.
79. The delegation of the **Philippines** suggested adding to the Secretary’s remarks by proposing the following, ‘takes note of the ongoing reflection process on possible ways in which the participation of NGOs under the 2003 Convention could be further enhanced’, followed by the proposal by Palestine, which should embrace all the viewpoints.
80. The delegation of **Palestine** read out the paragraph, ‘takes note of the ongoing reflection process on possible ways in which the participation of NGOs under the 2003 Convention could be further enhanced, as well as the discussion during the seventh General Assembly’, which would replace the original proposal in paragraph 11.
81. The delegation of **Sweden** agreed to the new paragraph 11.
82. The **Chairperson** thus pronounced the new paragraph 11 adopted. With no further comments or objections, the **Chairperson declared Resolution 7.GA 7 adopted**.

**AGENDA ITEM 7bis**

**NGO FORUM REPORT**

1. The **Chairperson** recalled the General Assembly’s Resolution 6.GA 8 in 2016 to include a point on the agenda of its current session inviting the NGO Forum to present its report.
2. The **NGO Forum representative**, Mr Gustavo Caicedo Trevilla, thanked the Chairperson for the opportunity to speak at the opening of this General Assembly. In 2018, the Convention celebrated fifteen years of international cooperation for the safeguarding of living heritage practised throughout the globe. Living heritage in all its rich and fascinating diversity that is cherished by all. We live in vastly changing times of globalization, migratory movements, economic crisis and climate change. Given the fragility of numerous intangible cultural heritage practices that were facing enormous challenges, everyone must come together to collaborate, keeping in mind the value of intangible cultural heritage as a source of cultural diversity and a vector of sustainable development. The Convention was a pioneer in the United Nations in exploring the participation of civil society in heritage governance. It invited NGOs from all the world’s regions to relate to the work of the Convention and to offer advisory services. There was transnational networking and cooperation among intangible cultural heritage communities, NGOs and heritage organizations. NGOs were contributing to achieving the goals of the Convention through concrete safeguarding activities, such as the report on the contribution of intangible cultural heritage to sustainable development in South Asia and the transnational cooperation project on intangible cultural heritage and museums in European contexts. The NGO Forum’s online journal *#HeritageAlive*[[5]](#footnote-5) for the exchange of experience from the field had reached a new milestone with the publication of a book on traditional medicine[[6]](#footnote-6) in 2017 with support from the International Information and Networking Centre for Intangible Cultural Heritage in the Asia-Pacific Region (ICHCAP).
3. The **NGO Forum representative**, Ms Jorijn Neyrinck, spoke of the collaborative and collective efforts by the accredited NGOs that had gathered momentum through the ICH NGO Forum established some years ago. The Forum had developed this platform to communicate and coordinate with the accredited NGOs and it had delivered numerous outcomes already, dedicating considerable efforts for outreach and civil society involvement in the life of the Convention. These included capacity building for NGOs (thanks to the support of Indonesia and the Korea Cultural Heritage Foundation in 2017), working groups addressing actual challenges faced in safeguarding work, and regional networks to develop network cooperation relationships and capacities in the regions. In addition, the Forum was continuously working towards a transparent and sustainable form of governance. Since the General Assembly in 2016, it had set up an association and a bank account for the sake of transparency, and to enhance cooperation and support possibilities with States Parties and other partners of the Convention. The Forum had held the first elections of its Steering Committee during the twelfth Committee session in the Republic of Korea. States Parties always welcomed the efforts of the Forum. At the end of 2017, the Committee had decided to invite the Secretariat and the ad hoc informal working group to reflect on possible ways to strengthen the participation of NGOs in the framework of the Convention in consultation with accredited NGOs, which would be reflected in the accreditation and renewal mechanisms of NGOs. The NGOs looked forward to the process and would continue to work constructively towards the objectives of the Convention and the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage around the world. The Forum thanked UNESCO for encouraging and giving NGOs the opportunity to share part of their safeguarding actions during this General Assembly, and it was pleased to invite the delegations to morning performances on 5–6 June. This exhibition was hosted by more than twenty NGOs from Asia, Europe, South America and Africa. In addition to the exhibition, on 5 June there would be dance and martial arts performances and story-telling. The NGOs would also hold its Forum meeting the following day. The NGO Forum wished the assembly fruitful discussions in outlining the overall results framework to guide the Convention and to refine the Operational Directives, as well as in the governance of the Convention’s procedures and working methods.
4. The **Chairperson** thanked the NGO representatives for their presentations, adding that she was impressed by the progress made in organizing the Forum and the work carried out since its creation. She took the opportunity to thank the NGOs for their continuing efforts, welcoming their crucial role in implementing the Convention at the national and international levels, and for the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage.
5. The **Secretary** reminded the Assembly that the Bureau would be held in the morning prior to the session, which would be open to Observers. A side event was organized for later in the evening hosted by the delegation of Cuba under the theme ‘intangible heritage in the heart of national cultural identities: Cuban cultural elements’.
6. The **Chairperson** duly adjourned the day’s session.

*[Tuesday 5 June, morning session]*

**ITEM 8 OF THE AGENDA:**

**USE OF THE RESOURCES OF THE INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE FUND**

**Document:**[*ITH/18/7.GA/8*](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/ITH-18-7.GA-8-EN.docx)

**Document:** [*ITH/18/7.GA/INF.8*](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/ITH-18-7.GA-INF.8-EN.docx)

**Resolution:** [*7.GA 8*](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Resolutions/7.GA/8)

1. The **Chairperson** greeted the Assembly and noted the good progress made so far. The Bureau had met earlier and no changes had been made to the timetable. As previously announced, the election of Members of the Committee under agenda item 14 would be held the following morning as scheduled, after which items 11, 12 and 13 would be considered. The Chairperson asked that proposed amendments to the draft resolutions be sent in advance using the form available from the Secretariat. She then turned to agenda item 8 on the use of the resources of the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund and [Document 8](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/ITH-18-7.GA-8-EN.docx). The Assembly would review and adopt the draft plan for the use of the resources of the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund for the next two years. This proposal was transmitted by the Committee following its last session, as per Article 7 of the Convention.
2. The **Secretary** referred to the two documents related to this item. The first document, [ITH/18/7.GA/INF.8](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/ITH-18-7.GA-INF.8-EN.docx) [the financial statement], concerned the previous biennium and the report on the implementation of the Fund from 1 January 2016 to 31 December 2017. The [Document 8](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/ITH-18-7.GA-8-EN.docx) had two main parts. The first part presented an analysis on past expenditure trends, explaining the current situation of the Fund. The second part concerned the future and included the proposed plan for the use of resources of the Fund, as approved by the Committee for the current biennium and the first six months of 2020. Annex I included the actual draft plan for the use of the resources of the Fund. The Secretary recalled the low use of the Fund in the recent past. The insufficient use of International Assistance and Technical Assistance by States Parties had been the main reason behind the increase of the total budget approved from one biennium to the next over the past several cycles. Although efforts had been made by the Secretariat to improve the use of these mechanisms, which resulted in a recent increase in expenditure compared to previous biennia, it had not yet proved sufficient to compensate for the general increase of the Fund. If States continued to underutilize the resources of the Fund, this trend would persist and the total approved budget would continue to increase in future cycles. The problem would clearly not go away without a specific strategy to address it at a time when UNESCO was facing such financial constraints. With regard to the future plan for the implementation of the Fund (in Annex I), the proposal was structured by budget lines divided into four categories, as per previous biennia. The first category concerned the International Assistance mechanism under budget lines 1 and 2. Together, they formed about 65 per cent of the Fund. Budget line 3, ‘other functions of the Committee’, accounted for 20 per cent of the Fund. Participation in meetings of the governing bodies and assistance to the Committee under budget lines 4, 5, 6 and 7 represented 15 per cent of the Fund. The Reserve Fund—now with 0 per cent under its budget line as the Reserve Fund had been set at a maximum—was full and there was no need to allocate money to this budget line, as decided by the General Assembly. This session of the General Assembly was therefore asked to approve the draft budget, validated by the Committee in Jeju, which covered a period of twenty-four months in 2018 and 2019, as well as the first six months of 2020. The budget for the first six months of 2020 was proposed according to a percentage, meaning one quarter of the total budget approved for the 2018–2019 period. For the period from 1 January 2018 to 31 December 2019, the total amount of the spending plan to use the resources of the Fund would be US$8,590,922, which represented an increase of 7.6 per cent compared to the previous biennium. This time, the budget proposal included the creation of a sub-line under budget line 1.1 in the spending plan to enhance human resources in order to improve the implementation of the International Assistance mechanisms. This was specifically proposed to address the systematic underutilization of International Assistance.
3. As this was a new proposal, the **Secretary** was pleased to report that there had been several positive points in the way in which International Assistance had been administered. Since the establishment of the procedure for International Assistance, forty States Parties had been granted financial assistance from the Fund for a total amount of US$4.9M in support of seventy-eight projects. It was thus encouraging to see that 66 per cent of the requests approved were submitted by States from Electoral Group V(a) from Africa, representing US$3.5M, which was fully in line with UNESCO’s Global Priority for Africa. The significance of International Assistance as the operational window of the Convention had been stressed in many instances. This mechanism allowed for a comprehensive and realistic picture of the safeguarding priorities and actions of States. The projects implemented through International Assistance also had the potential to provide a major learning tool in the implementation of the Convention, for example, as a repository of Good Safeguarding Practices from which others could learn. The Secretariat had been reviewing its working methods and exerting efforts to optimize the way it handled International Assistance. The Secretary was also pleased to report that during the 38 C/5 biennium, the Secretariat was able to increase by 40 per cent the number of International Assistance files presented to the Bureau compared with the previous biennium. However, while this increase was the result of an intensification of work concerning the processing of requests for approval to the Bureau, what remained was the important workload related to approvals, including the establishment of contracts, the monitoring of progress, the processing of payments and so on. Thus, it was not sure that the increase in the number of projects approved this year would be sustainable, as it required an increased use of the Secretariat’s resources for their implementation. The Secretary explained that monitoring at this stage involved mainly budgetary and administrative aspects, and the Secretariat was missing out on the opportunities this operational mechanism of the Convention could offer in terms of learning. Substantive monitoring of the projects should be an important dimension in the implementation of International Assistance as it could help States Parties create favourable conditions for safeguarding intangible cultural heritage both in the short and longer term. An in-depth analysis and comprehensive evaluation of the results and impact of the projects could be highly useful to understand the effective implementation of the International Assistance mechanism, and thus become a promising means of informing the overall implementation of the Convention. However, this would require a substantial investment from the Secretariat in terms of time and resources, which was currently unavailable.
4. The **Secretary** further explained that the involvement of the Bureau and the Secretariat in the implementation of the International Assistance mechanism was expected to continue growing, as evidenced by the raised ceiling of assistance examined by the Bureau from US$25,000 to US$100,000 in 2016. Concretely, the total amount approved by the Bureau and the Committee was US$2,467,754 from 2016 to March 2018, almost equal to the cumulated amount approved from 2008 to 2015 at US$2,487,043. Thus, in the last two years, the Committee had been able to approve as much as the previous eight years. Given this context, the Secretariat was requesting that the Assembly take a strategic decision because it was clear that the Secretariat’s current capacity did not allow it to go beyond this basic administrative task, thereby impeding this mechanism from becoming a true operational arm of the Convention. The Secretariat was currently composed of eight professional and four general fixed-term staff. This meant a 20 per cent decrease since 2010, which reflected the house-wide situation of UNESCO in the context of the financial crisis since 2011. However, during the same period, the number of States Parties to the Convention had increased by more than 30 per cent, from 133 to 177 States Parties. Consequently, the obligations in terms of core statutory processes, preparing statutory meetings and drafting documents, supporting the Evaluation Body, treating nominations, NGO requests for accreditation, the review and follow-up of periodic reporting, let alone other functions such as the capacity-building programme, were becoming increasingly demanding. Of course, the numbers increased as the States Parties increased. Nowadays, the Secretariat had no other solution than to turn to temporary assistance to cover many of these functions. With regard to International Assistance, the roles and responsibilities were divided among several staff, including both fixed and temporary positions over and above their primary responsibilities. Again, apart from administrative tasks, such as registering requests and preparing correspondence, the Secretariat also performed a number of tasks to assist submitting States, for example, advising States about the design of projects, and accompanying them in preparing requests and responding to criteria. Preparing the working documents and background information for the Bureau and the Committee also took up a considerable amount of time, particularly as there were more requests submitted to the Bureau than in the past. While the tasks were voluminous, it was currently not possible to dedicate a specific team to the purpose of implementing this International Assistance mechanism. Hence the new budget line 1.1 in the draft plan to cover the biennial costs of three new extrabudgetary fixed-term posts: one P-3, one P-2 and one G-5 to form a team dedicated to fully activating the International Assistance mechanism and to effectively monitoring and evaluating its implementation, which would also ensure the stability and continuity of the results. Of course, the funding of these posts would continue to be subject to approval at each General Assembly. Thus, this new budget line would mean 8.2 per cent of the total estimated budget for the current biennium. To absorb this new percentage, slight decreases were proposed under certain budget lines without risking any of their objectives.
5. Thus, considering this new scenario, the **Secretary** explained that with the team in place, the objective of the Secretariat would be to retrieve an optimal level with the total approved budget for a biennium equal to the assessed contributions received. At the same time, the expenditure levels would match that same amount. In other words, the ideal situation would be to clear the accumulated amount in the Fund so as to spend what comes into the Fund as it is received. The Secretary displayed a graph on the screen that depicted a very conservative scenario based on a 40 per cent increase, and an increase of 40 per cent over the next two biennia. With that level maintained, it would still take until the 44 C/5, i.e. twelve years from now, to get to a maximum level of expenditure, that is, spending the full amount that enters the Fund. Once the budget would be stabilized at this level, if that was the case, covering the cost of the fixed-term posts would represent around 14 per cent of the overall budget of the Fund. The Secretary then turned to the other parts of the proposed spending plan. Budget line 1 on International Assistance would again be assigned with the majority of the allocation of the Fund, as had been the case since the beginning. At this stage, it would equal 52.55 per cent of the Fund, with a slight decrease of 6.45 per cent in relation to the current plan dedicated to covering part of the newly created budget line 1.1. Budget line 2 on preparatory and technical assistance would decrease by 1.5 per cent, meaning from 5.5 per cent to 4 per cent. Once again, this slight difference would be used to cover the creation of these posts and, in fact, should work to improve the low utilization of these mechanisms. Budget line 3 on ‘other functions of the Committee’ would be maintained at 20 per cent of the total budget approved. Funds allocated to this budget would be specifically dedicated to capacity-building programmes, to the integration of intangible cultural heritage into development plans, policies and programmes with a particular focus on education, improving the management of knowledge information, and monitoring the Convention and promoting its objectives through awareness-raising and outreach. Budget lines 4, 5, 6 and 7 would be maintained in general at their respective percentages with slight changes in order to be better aligned with incoming obligations. The draft resolution in this document included the recommendation made by the Committee at its last session to authorize the Secretariat to make transfers between budget lines 4, 5 and 6 of up to 30 per cent of their initial total allocation. The purpose of this recommendation was to make better use of the funds in accordance with the necessities of each cycle. Of course, the Secretariat would inform both the Committee and the General Assembly about the details of such transfers should they ever take place.
6. The **Secretary** gave the example of the last biennium of the 38 C/5 when demands for the participation of States Parties, experts in the Committee, under budget line 5, exceeded the available resources allocated for this purpose. Therefore, requests had to be declined. At the same time, the budget allocation pertaining to financial assistance for the participation of Committee members, experts and representatives of NGOs remained partially unused. In total, some 25 per cent of all the funds allocated to these three lines remained unused during the last biennium. Thus, this recommendation would allow the Secretariat to assess the demands and make transfers to optimize its ability to reply positively to those requests. Finally, budget line 8, related to the Reserve Fund, reached a total amount of US$1M during the previous biennium and new allocations would be suspended from now on in accordance with Decision 10.COM 8 and Resolution 6.GA 9. Concluding, the Secretary brought the Assembly’s attention to the fact that according to the latest report by the Bureau Financial Management of 30 April 2018, a total of US$428,209 of the assessed contributions due for years prior to 2018 remained unpaid. This represented 24 per cent of the total amount due for 2017. The Secretary and the Administrative Officer of the Culture Sector, Mr Abdelghani Baakrim, remained at the Assembly’s disposal to respond to any questions.
7. Thedelegation of **Spain** congratulated the Chairperson on her election and on her able chairing of the deliberations. It expressed thanks to the Chairperson and to the Secretariat as it was pleased to note the need to use the International Assistance mechanism. This Convention could not afford to see this mechanism go underutilized, as was rightly pointed out by the Secretariat. It thus welcomed this initiative, as well as the increase in the budget. The delegation recalled that when it was a member of the Committee, it stressed time and again that perhaps the International Assistance mechanism had not been used much by States because it was excessively complicated to gather the required information. States had put a lot of effort into their files for nominations to the Lists and this was one of the reasons they had not been able to access the International Assistance mechanism. It further recalled that when it was on the Committee, requests for International Assistance were often rejected because of errors only of form and not of substance in the various criteria. The delegation reiterated its pleasure in this very simple solution and it hoped that this would encourage many States to make use of this mechanism when they presented their files.
8. The delegation of **Japan** thanked the Secretariat for the draft plan following the discussions at the twelfth session of the Committee. Japan believed that capacity-building should be a priority for the better functioning of the Convention, and it supported the draft plan and hoped that the Secretariat could respond in a timely and appropriate manner when countries request International Assistance in the future.
9. The delegation of **Estonia** thanked the Secretariat for the well-structured and informative document that clearly outlined the continuing underutilization of the funds dedicated to International Assistance when there was such a great need for resources and support to safeguard intangible heritage in many States Parties. Estonia understood the logic well, as well as the need to set up a dedicated International Assistance implementation team, reducing budget lines 1 and 2 in order to make it happen. It believed that this change would enable the Secretariat to better serve the States Parties, which was also in a way a capacity-building activity for States that need International Assistance. These projects are important examples of safeguarding activities worldwide, and the delegation underlined the need to closely monitor and evaluate the impacts of assistance provided from the Fund. Thus, it was logical that the human capacities allowed the Secretariat to achieve that goal. It therefore welcomed the proposal to create a new budget line for the creation of the three new posts.
10. The delegation of **Palestine** thanked the Secretariat for the draft plan that reflected previous discussions on the new budget line 1.1, which was welcomed by all members of the Committee. Previous delegations stressed the need to adopt the new budget line as the Secretariat’s excellent team needed to increase its human resources to enable it to better assist requests, namely, to provide International Assistance and strengthen capacities. The delegation thus congratulated the Secretariat, thanking the Secretariat and all the States Parties of the Convention for their excellent work.
11. The delegation of **Uganda** appreciated the use of the resources of the Fund, and it was proud of the expenditure rate gain of 53 per cent compared to 21 per cent under the International Assistance mechanism. However, it noted the underutilization of the Fund. Uganda recommended a deliberate effort towards raising capacity of sub-national staff and the communities at the State Party level, which would help identify elements and prepare possible proposals. The delegation requested that the Secretariat invest in research to understand specific State Party constraints that would lead to the use of International Assistance for safeguarding, and the preparation of files, programmes and projects.
12. The delegation of **Venezuela** agreed with the previous speakers who congratulated the Secretariat for the high quality of its report. Echoing the remarks by Uganda, it also highlighted the underutilization of the Fund and that priority should be given to certain investments in capacity building. Budget line 3 was said to be precise in its wording but was somewhat vague in its content, as it referred to funds dedicated to the capacity-building programme as well as intangible cultural heritage in formal and non-formal education. The delegation concurred that this was of course important and that it should reflected in the budget, but it was also important to emphasize International Assistance and it wished to see this more clearly reflected in the resolution as a whole.
13. The delegation of **Senegal** warmly congratulated the Secretariat for its report, adding that States had always expressed expectations with regard to the Secretariat and the Committee in attaining their objectives, of which the main objective was the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage. This safeguarding involves activities and actions developed at the national level for which International Assistance was requested. It welcomed the increase in the number of countries benefiting from International Assistance, including Senegal, for which it thanked and congratulated the Secretariat. Beyond this expectation, the Assembly could not ask the Secretariat to increase the number of beneficiary countries when the Secretariat had few human resources to process and follow-up on these requests. Hence, the need to be realistic, with the Secretariat needing the human resources through this budget line to achieve that aim. The delegation had always supported this budget line and would continue to support it so that the monitoring mechanisms at the Secretariat or at the national level would become truly operational. It was thus grateful for the increase in International Assistance and it urged the Assembly to support the Secretariat in its work.
14. The delegation of **Zambia** congratulated the Chairperson for efficiently managing the meeting, thanking the Secretariat for the good report. Zambia also benefitted considerably in terms of International Assistance, especially inventorying and capacity building. Currently, UNESCO was funding an education project for which it thanked the Secretariat. It was noted that the report indicated an underutilization of International Assistance. Zambia’s experience showed that there was a need for capacity building so that States Parties could start understanding the processes and procedures that would allow them to apply to the Fund.
15. The delegation of **Turkey** welcomed the plan drafted by the Secretariat and it looked forward to its approval by the General Assembly. Bearing in mind the steady increase in demand for International Assistance and the need to enhance the human resources of the Secretariat to manage this mechanism, the delegation hoped that more extrabudgetary fixed-term posts would be created in the medium term to better implement International Assistance, as well as some basic tasks such as capacity building. It therefore welcomed the sustainability of these posts. The Assembly should also give due consideration to the underutilization of the International Assistance mechanism with a view to developing a comprehensive long-term approach to remedy the problem and to effectively deliver International Assistance to requesting States Parties.
16. The delegation of **Austria** expressed its appreciation of the Secretariat’s work, adding that it was happy about the increase in the utilization of the Fund under budget lines 1 and 2 from 21 per cent to 53 per cent, which saw an increase in the ceiling of International Assistance. However, this engendered an additional workload for the Secretariat, which was highly likely to continue in future cycles. However, as mentioned by the Secretary, a specific strategy was still needed to address the underutilization of the Fund with regard to International Assistance; the primary function of the Fund according to the Operational Directives. The delegation understood that activities to encourage or enable States Parties to request International Assistance required additional human resources in the short and medium term and that the costs for additional posts could not be funded through cost recovery as generally foreseen for activities related to the Fund. It therefore supported the Secretariat’s proposal to establish a new budget line for additional fixed-term posts in order to fully activate the International Assistance mechanism and to also effectively monitor and evaluate its implementation.
17. The delegation of **China** warmly thanked the Secretariat for its report. The Fund plays a very important role in capacity building in Member States and China had contributed to the Fund over the last few years and would continue to do so, as it would like to see the largest possible number of countries taking advantage of International Assistance, especially developing countries. The delegation believed that for a more effective use of the Fund, the Secretariat did in fact need a team dedicated to International Assistance. The Secretariat must therefore be provided with the means to better utilize the available resources so as to provide more International Assistance. China encouraged the Secretariat to recruit candidates from developing countries to fill the positions funded by the extrabudgetary resources with a view to assisting those developing countries and ensuring a better geographical balance within the Secretariat, which should be reflected in the resolution.
18. The delegation of **India** thanked the Secretariat for the excellent report and it appreciated that the underutilization of funds under the International Assistance mechanism had been taken into account, providing a well-researched document to address the problem. It welcomed the proposal to create three new posts and it supported the new budget line. It was also noted that the report mentioned an increase of 30 per cent in the number of States Parties since 2010, while at the same time there had been a decrease in staff by 20 per cent. The delegation hoped that the creation of these three posts would address this imbalance. It also supported China’s remark on the creation of these posts and whether they would follow the same rules of geographical representation followed for regular posts under UNESCO. It was noted that the P-3 post holder would mainly be in charge of setting up an improved International Assistance mechanism from a strategic point of view, while the P-2 post holder would manage the day-to-day implementation and monitoring of each project. The delegation remarked that countries who required assistance and capacity building the most might also be in a situation where their knowledge [of the Convention] might be lower. Hence the call to the Secretariat and the General Assembly to make an extra effort to hire people for the posts from these regions. Cultural translation is an extremely difficult activity and many developing countries had had centuries of other people telling them what was best. Thus, it was important that a person who understood the local culture make and plan these projects for the better implementation and utilization by States who needed them most.
19. The delegation of **Saint Vincent and the Grenadines** welcomed the Secretariat’s proposal to enhance its human resources to improve the implementation of International Assistance, and it agreed with the remarks by Uganda and Venezuela about the use of this mechanism. As a Small Island Developing State (SIDS), it mostly needed capacity building, training and the preparation of inventories. Although the islands are small, the country could be considered to be big because island communities were spread widely and also overseas. The delegation also echoed the sentiment shared by India on the hiring of experts who should belong to developing countries and come from countries needing International Assistance the most.
20. The delegation of **Italy** voiced its support for the Secretariat’s proposal to reinforce its structure with the establishment of the new posts to ensure a more efficient implementation of the provisions related to International Assistance.
21. The delegation of **Botswana** appreciated the Secretariat’s professional report. It appreciated the challenges presented and the proposed draft for adoption by the Assembly. Botswana spoke of its appreciation of the International Assistance it had received in 2015, which helped the country enlist elements of its cultural heritage in need of safeguarding. The delegation also noted the underutilization of the Fund, in particular, the 3 per cent associated with the Africa Group. It believed that this called for capacities within the Secretariat to facilitate States Parties in this regard. Thus, it fully endorsed the Secretariat’s proposal for the budget provision for the creation of the new posts and hoped that the Assembly would approve the plan.
22. The delegation of **Ethiopia** thanked the Secretariat for the hard work as well as for the excellent and very transparent report. The Convention was very important for Ethiopia, which has a mosaic of eighty-five ethnic groups, hence its hosting of the eleventh session of the Committee. The delegation apologized on behalf of Mr Yonas Desta Tsegaye, the Chairperson of the eleventh Committee Meeting, who was unable to attend and present his report. Ethiopia had ratified the Convention in 2006 and immediately started its inventory thanks to International Assistance received from the Secretariat. Today, almost 90 per cent of the different communities who practise intangible heritage were nationally inventoried, which was published in ten volumes. The delegation believed that International Assistance was still the main component of the Convention, especially for African countries. As a Committee member, Ethiopia had already supported the additional budget line and was happy to see that the General Assembly was also considering the everyday reality of the Secretariat and allowing the Secretariat to enhance its resource capacities so as to cope with the ever-growing demands from States Parties.
23. The delegation of **Viet Nam** thanked the Secretariat for its very detailed and clear report. It also regretted the underutilization of the International Assistance mechanism but acknowledged the efforts of the Secretariat, encouraging it to continue to help developing countries. The delegation also recognized the challenge of human resources faced by the Secretariat. It therefore considered the financial proposals made by the Secretariat to be reasonable, including those concerning the creation of three new posts for the Secretariat and the transfer of budget lines. The delegation supported the view expressed by China to encourage the Secretariat to recruit experts from developing countries for the new posts.
24. The delegation of **Portugal** remarked that the Secretariat’s proposal seemed logical in that in order to more effectively implement the Fund’s International Assistance mechanism, more human resources were needed, which it supported. It was also necessary to continue to evaluate the implementation of the International Assistance mechanism so as to achieve the best possible results, notwithstanding the positive achievements so far but they could still be improved upon. The delegation was also sensitive to the calls made by India and China, in particular regarding the recruitment process, and to the origin of these experts in implementing the work of the Convention.
25. The delegation of **Iceland** greatly appreciated the hard work of the Secretariat, thanking the Secretariat for the clear and informative meeting documents. It fully supported the proposal to create a new budget line to strengthen the capacities of the Secretariat and its excellent work on the implementation of this important Convention. As with many other countries, Iceland was concerned about the resource situation and the challenging circumstances in implementing the Convention. In light of this, Iceland had decided to increase its annual contribution to the Convention from 1 per cent to 2 per cent as of 2018, and it encouraged other States Parties to consider supporting the Convention in this way. Iceland placed an increasing priority on the implementation of the Convention. It had now comprehensively identified institutions, organizations and individuals working with intangible cultural heritage in Iceland and it was in the process of setting up a database inventory to fulfil the requests of the Convention. Civil society was indeed a key partner in this process, providing valuable input and reflection as practitioners of intangible cultural heritage. The involvement of NGOs and civil society partners is crucial for safeguarding heritage and it encouraged the Committee to further explore opportunities to exchange and engage NGOs in its work, while considering the best practices of other UNESCO Conventions in this regard, and keeping in mind the crucial role of communities and civil societies in keeping intangible cultural heritage intact and alive.
26. The **Secretary** responded to the question by Venezuela, relating to budget line 3 under ‘other functions of the Committee’, to explain that the details of budget line 3 had been delegated to the Bureau, as has been the practice. Consequently, the Secretariat was not in a position to show its itemization until the General Assembly approved it. Once approved, on Thursday the Secretariat would present to the Bureau of the Committee a detailed budget line 3 with the expected results of those budget lines. The principle was that the budget line be used to reflect the ‘other functions of the Committee’ whenever requested by the Committee, for instance, on capacity building, the knowledge management system, work on emergencies, work on intangible cultural heritage in education and so on. The rationale was that the money be used, for example, in capacity building for upstream work such as the development of materials, i.e. the kind of work for which it was more difficult to obtain funding through extrabudgetary sources even though this global level work was needed in various countries and regions. With regard to the question from India, and whether these posts were subject to the geographical distribution requirement, the Secretary was of the understanding that the geographical distribution set up under the C/5 related to the assessed contributions of the C/5 Regular Programme. These posts were in fact technical extrabudgetary posts, and until an accurate answer could be provided, the Secretary believed that they were not subject to the geographical distribution of reporting as Regular Programme posts, though this would have to be confirmed. Nevertheless, the Secretariat took note of the many interventions of the importance of geographical distribution in the potential recruitment of these posts.
27. The **Chairperson** then proceeded with the adoption of the draft resolution on a paragraph-by-paragraph basis. With no comments or objections, paragraphs 1–3 were duly adopted.
28. The **Chairperson** thus turned to paragraph 4, which was duly adopted. She then turned to paragraph 5.
29. In light of the discussion, the delegation of **India** wished to propose a small amendment to paragraph 5; after the semicolon it wished to add, ‘keeping in mind the principle of equitable geographic distribution’.
30. Thedelegation of **China** also proposed an amendment that was seconded by **Viet Nam**.
31. The delegation of the **Philippines** supported India’s proposal.
32. Thedelegation of **Chile** was grateful for the way the Chairperson was steering the session, and also added its support to India’s proposal.
33. The delegations of **Jamaica, Serbia, Hungary, Tunisia, Egypt, Ghana, Bangladesh** and **Indonesia** all supported the amendment proposed by India.
34. Thedelegation of **Bosnia and Herzegovina** also supported India’s proposal.
35. The **Chairperson** projected China’s proposal onto the screen to see whether it improved the paragraph, given that India’s proposal was widely supported. China’s amendment would read, ‘giving priority to competent candidates from developing countries with a view to better responding to the specific needs of developing countries for international assistance and improving geographical representation’.
36. The delegation of **Tunisia** remarked that China’s proposal was fully compatible with India’s proposal, so both proposals were valid. The Assembly could therefore consider China’s proposal, which was more expressive.
37. The delegation of **Palestine** supported both amendments as they were both compatible and drafted in the same spirit. The delegation suggested a minor amendment, which would read, ‘keeping in mind the principle of an equitable geographical distribution *and* giving priority to developing countries’.
38. The **Chairperson** noted that Palestine suggested merging the two amendments, while India agreed to merge the two. The Chairperson asked the delegations to thus focus on merging the two amendments given that everyone appeared to agree that they were compatible.
39. The delegation of **Algeria** was not against the principle of the two amendments, and in fact welcomed the spirit, but one could not require equity on the one hand and give priority on the other. Thus, for the sake of coherence, the delegation suggested keeping the amendment of India, which maintained the principle of geographical equity, while adding the latter part of China’s proposal, ‘responding to the specific needs of developing countries’, otherwise the two proposals would appear contradictory.
40. The delegation of **Saint Vincent and the Grenadines** supported the proposal to merge both proposals from India and China, as China’s amendment mentioned ‘developing countries’, which was mentioned during the debate, and ‘with a view to responding to the specific needs of developing countries’.
41. The delegation of **Ecuador** supported Palestine’s suggestion to merge the two paragraphs. However, mindful of Algeria’s remarks that was really an issue of wording and not content, it suggested deleting ‘keeping in mind the principle of equitable and geographical distribution’ as it was already included in China’s proposal. In fact, China’s proposal went further, and the delegation suggested ‘improving the principle’ or ‘strengthening the principle of equitable geographical distribution’. It was noted that all the delegations agreed with the strongest expression of equitable geographical distribution with both proposals on the right track.
42. The **Secretary** wished to clarify that the principle of equitable geographical distribution meant that priority would be given to under-represented States based on candidates of the same capacity, capability and competence. However, under-represented States did not necessarily mean developing countries, which was the principle of equitable geographical distribution. The Secretary concurred with Algeria’s interpretation that the proposals were slightly contradictory. One proposal mentioned equitable recruitment with the principle of geographic distribution, and the other proposal mentioned preferential or priority treatment of candidates, in which the needs of developing countries did not pose that problem. Thus, the principle of equitable geographical distribution implied that preference should be given to candidates from under-represented States in the Organization at the same level of competence.
43. The delegation of **Viet Nam** was a co-sponsor of China’s proposal and wished to make clear, as explained by the Secretary, that the principle of geographical representation did not include the priority given to developing countries, yet it wished to take into account the specific needs of developing countries. For this reason, the proposal clearly mentioned the priority given to recognized experts in developing countries.
44. The delegation of **Venezuela** joined others in lending its support to both proposals, and trusted the Assembly to agree to the appropriate wording.
45. The delegation of **Benin** supported the proposal by China and Viet Nam. It believed that the two proposals were not contradictory, and it understood from the Secretary’s explanation that the principle of geographical distribution did not apply for posts under extrabudgetary funding. Thus, the two proposals could be merged and adopted with acceptable wording.
46. The delegation of **Botswana** accepted that the proposals were similar in principle. It supported the idea expressed in China’s version, but it requested that the Secretariat do the necessary editorial work to adequately represent the principle.
47. The delegation of **Algeria** wished to move forward, as obviously everyone in the room agreed with the principle and the spirit of the amendment. Thus, the amendment could be retained as it currently stood, while keeping in mind the principle of equitable geographical distribution to better meet the specific needs of developing countries for International Assistance. The Secretariat could be entrusted to complement the paragraph.
48. The **Secretary** remarked that the spirit of the resolution was fully understood. However, in terms of recruitment ‘giving priority’ was problematic owing to the idea of equitable geographical representation that made the paragraph contradictory. The Secretary explained that giving priority to a candidate from a country or a certain group of countries could be problematic as UNESCO had established procedures in this regard. He therefore sought to add ‘and improving geographic representation’ after the principle of equitable geographical distribution with a view to responding to the specific needs of developing countries. Thus, without prioritizing, which could be perceived as a bias in recruitment, it would be understood that equitable geographical distribution was the principle by which the recruitment would take place and on an equal basis of candidates who are under-represented. There was also a specific requirement to respond to the needs of developing countries and to improve this geographical distribution. This would sidestep the technical problem of the post as a result of the contradiction that was rightly pointed out by Algeria. Thus, Algeria’s proposal maintained the spirit of both proposals by India and China and allowed the Secretariat to move ahead with these recruitments as early as possible.
49. The **Chairperson** noted that there were two proposals, one that merged the proposals by India and China and a second proposal. Ecuador called a point of order.
50. Having listened to the Secretariat, thedelegation of **Ecuador** had understood that the principle of geographical distribution did not necessarily mean that the experts hired would come from developing countries. It therefore suggested deleting the part proposed by India, ‘keeping in mind the principle of equitable geographical distribution’, to which India agreed, and retaining China’s proposal as it stood. In this way, the team hired would come from developing countries. The Secretary was indeed correct in the observed contradiction in the principle of equitable geographical distribution, as it did not correspond to the other stated principle [concerning the specific needs of developing countries]. The delegation was not against the proposal from Algeria, but difficulties would be encountered by adhering to that principle. It therefore sought to delete the proposal by India and retain China’s proposal.
51. The **Secretariat** fully understood the sentiment of the floor. However, giving priority to a specific country or a set of countries in a recruitment phase was not in line with UNESCO’s rules of recruitment.
52. The **Chairperson** noted the two proposals on the table. Palestine called a point of order.
53. Thedelegation of **Palestine** did not agree with the Secretariat’s explanation. It noted that Ecuador had consulted with India that accepted to withdraw its amendment, while the second amendment was supported by the whole room. Additionally, the issue of priority was not thought to be an impossible endeavour, as the Assembly could consider granting priority that had previously been seen in the functioning of UNESCO. For example, Africa was a priority so why not ‘developing countries’? Thus, retaining China’s amendment, as suggested by Ecuador and agreed by India, would solve the problem and put an end to the discussion.
54. The **Chairperson** understood the situation, and the Administrative Officer of the Sector of Culture was also at hand to clarify.
55. Thedelegation of **Kuwait** congratulated the Chairperson and supported China’s proposal.
56. Thedelegation of the **Syrian Arab Republic** wished all the delegations a fruitful discussion. It joined the spirit of consensus that the two proposals from India and China had a common concern to preserve equitable representation at the level of expertise; both allowed under-represented countries to benefit. The delegation also wished to hear from India on whether it had withdrawn its proposal, as well as to ask the Secretariat to come up with a proposal text that could be submitted to the Assembly.
57. The delegation of **India** remarked that had China’s proposal been on the screen earlier it would not have submitted its amendment, adding that China’s proposal was more in line with its earlier statement regarding people from developing countries understanding their intangible cultural heritage better, which it fully supported. The delegation also thanked the Secretary for the clarification and Palestine for pointing out the issue of ‘giving priorities’, as gender and Africa priorities did exist. Thus, giving priority to capable candidates from developing countries should not pose a problem administratively. It therefore called upon the Assembly to support China’s proposal for equitable geographical distribution.
58. After hearing the discussion, the delegation of **Bangladesh** believed that China’s proposal captured the sentiment expressed, which it therefore supported.
59. Thedelegation of **Grenada** congratulated the Chairperson and the Bureau members. It favoured the proposal by Algeria, as the principle of equitable geographical distribution was the principle guiding the policy of human resources that was also a principle agreed by the General Conference, the Member States and all the governing bodies, and which was currently being followed. Changing the principle would thus require a decision by the governing bodies. Moreover, going into the detail of priorities should not be undertaken by the General Assembly. The delegation concurred that the [hired] experts should take into consideration the needs of developing countries. However, it did not wish to state in writing that experts from developed countries were incapable of understanding the needs of developing countries. The delegation recalled its own experience since the beginning of the creation and negotiation of the Convention, which had been very positive with many experts from both developed and developing countries. The Assembly should therefore not take a position against one category of States. For this reason, it strongly supported Algeria’s proposal.
60. The delegation of **Ethiopia** took note of India’s remarks and the specific needs of developing countries and supported China’s proposal.
61. The delegation of **Germany** favoured Algeria’s proposal, citing the reasons expressed by Grenada. However, it was unsure whether the wording ‘giving priority’ was in line with current recruitment procedures that had been agreed upon during the General Conferences in the past.
62. On a technical observation, the delegation of **Palestine** noted that the names of all countries supporting the different proposals did not appear on the screen. It remarked that Algeria’s proposal had reproduced a contradiction in its paragraph. Bearing in mind the principle of equitable geographical distribution, as pointed out by the Secretariat, priority would be given to under-represented countries, which may not necessarily meet the ‘specific needs of developing countries’. The delegation did not see the link between meeting the specific needs of developing countries and the principle of equitable geographical distribution. It believed that China’s amendment was clear. In fact, although conferring priority was not standard practice, it must be kept in mind that these posts were also funded in an unusual, exceptional way. Occasionally, exceptions determined the rules. China’s proposal was thus applicable.
63. The **Chairperson** understood the democratic process but before changing the rules, it was important to understand what was at stake and to have a clear vision.
64. Thedelegation of **Algeria** suggested that, before listening to the delegations any further, since all agreed with the spirit of the amendment but had issues with the wording, the floor be given to the Secretariat and its administration to make a clarification. For example, it was unclear to which countries ‘developing countries’ alluded and whether in fact there was an exhaustive list of developing countries determining their classification, given that ‘equitable distribution’ meant ‘equity’.
65. Thedelegation of **Botswana** sought to avert the deadlock by asking the Secretariat to resolve the wording issue as India very clearly accepted the amendment proposed by China, which would help the discussion come to a conclusion. It was thus unnecessary to return to subsequent proposals to tweak India’s original proposal. The Secretariat could therefore clarify any technical difficulty they would see in implementing China’s amendment.
66. The **Secretary** fully understood the floor in terms of recruitment. However, it was important to understand that the General Assembly of the Convention had no authority to override decisions of the General Conference and of the Executive Board, which governed the rules of staff recruitment. The Secretariat foresaw a technical problem with the wording of China’s proposal as it was not fully in line with the principles of recruitment. The Secretariat was concerned that this would consequently render recruitment difficult. In addition, the Secretary endorsed the remark concerning the definition of a developing country, as there was no clarity in this regard, i.e. do lower middle-income or upper-middle income countries consider themselves as developing countries? The Secretary fully respected the spirit of the amendment, but the wording could significantly delay recruitment if it was not in line with the approved recruitment policy of the General Conference of UNESCO. However, it was noted that the principle of geographic distribution was understood and approved by the General Conference. Responding to the needs of developing countries did not pose a problem as such, but the Secretariat wished to include, ‘to reflect the rules of recruitment of UNESCO’. The problem lay in the fact that ‘giving priority to capable candidates from developing countries’ prioritized a specific group outside the principles of equitable geographical distribution, which was not a rule of recruitment and which may in fact impede it. Thus, it was important to make sure that the posts were subject to the approved rules of UNESCO, which was the case in the proposal by Algeria, Grenada and Germany. The Secretary suggested ‘taking into account the rules of recruitment of UNESCO’ followed by ‘keeping in mind priority to candidates from developing countries with a view to responding to specific needs of developing countries and improving geographical representation’. This proposal would thus allow the Assembly to move ahead and ensure that the resolution was in compliance with the decisions of the General Conference.
67. The delegation of **China** asked the Secretariat whether the team dedicated to International Assistance, which was funded through extrabudgetary resources, still had to conform to UNESCO’s rules of recruitment.
68. The **Secretary** explained that it was always necessary to conform with the house rules of UNESCO and that any recruitment, whether from the Regular Programme or extrabudgetary funds, was subject to the rules adopted by the General Conference of UNESCO. He reminded the Assembly that the so-called extrabudgetary funds still came from the ICH Fund, which was a multi-donor Fund and not country-specific like a Funds-in-Trust arrangement. The Secretary believed that the current proposal very much kept in mind the spirit of priority to candidates from developing countries, while remaining within the rules of UNESCO.
69. The delegation of **China** understood the need to conform to the rules of recruitment even though these were extrabudgetary resources. It therefore accepted the Secretariat’s revised amendment. With regard to the reference to developing countries, it was noted that this was in the Convention and should thus continue to be underscored.
70. The **Chairperson** presented the amendment in paragraph 5, which would read, ‘conforming with the rules of recruitment of UNESCO and keeping in mind priority to candidates from developing countries with a view to responding to specific needs of developing countries and improving geographical representation’. It was noted that China, Algeria and India agreed with the revised proposal and that there was general consensus on the wording. The amendment was read out in full, ‘Requests the Secretariat to initiate as soon as possible the recruitment procedures for the three posts to form a dedicated team to operationalize the implementation of International Assistance mechanism conforming with the rules of recruitment of UNESCO and keeping in mind priority to candidates from developing countries with a view to responding to specific needs of developing countries and improving geographical representation’, which was duly adopted.
71. The delegation of **Venezuela** proposed a new paragraph 6, which would read, ‘Requests the Secretariat to redouble its efforts in favour of greater International Assistance, including support in the preparation of inventories, capacity building and the implementation of the initiative to mainstream the intangible cultural heritage into formal and informal education, with a view to improving the effectiveness and the scope of the Convention at national, regional and global levels’.
72. The **Chairperson** suggested replacing ‘redouble its efforts’ with ‘strengthen its efforts’ or ‘intensify its efforts’.
73. The **Secretary** remarked that after many discussions with Education Sector colleagues, the use of ‘mainstreaming’ intangible heritage might be problematic. Some countries were looking towards mainstreaming, but this implied the inclusion of all aspects of the curriculum, which was difficult to implement, and thus ‘integrate’ was used in these cases. Also, ‘integrate’ allowed greater flexibility than mainstreaming. Thus, changing ‘mainstream’ to ‘integrate’ would retain the sense of the amendment, while making it easier to work with colleagues in Education.
74. The delegation of **Venezuela** explained that this paragraph intended not only to reflect the views expressed during the debate, but also to reflect the proposal contained in the Secretariat’s report in paragraph 21. Thus, for the sake of consistency and in light of the discussion, it wished to see intangible cultural heritage included in school curricula.
75. The delegation of the **Philippines** thanked Venezuela for its proposal, which complemented the previous paragraph adopted and it fully supported it.
76. The delegation of **Morocco** had no objections to the spirit of this paragraph, but agreed with the Chairperson that the Secretariat could not go beyond its limited resources and thus wished to add ‘taking into account the means at its disposal to strengthen International Assistance’.
77. The delegation of **Palestine** thanked Venezuela for the paragraph, which was a logical consequence of paragraph 5 that had just been adopted. However, it sought to clarify the wording and to correct the amendment with regard to ‘mainstream’, as agreed by Venezuela, and ‘intensifying the efforts’ instead of ‘redoubling’.
78. The delegation of **Saint Vincent and the Grenadines** thanked Venezuela for its proposal, which was in line with its intervention about the use of the Funds in the preparation of inventories and capacity building. However, it did not support the proposal by Morocco as the Convention was plentiful in terms of voluntary contributions given the US$10M in the Fund when other Conventions had no additional funds. Thus, the amendment ‘bearing in mind the resources at the disposal of the Secretariat’ could be deleted.
79. The delegation of **Ecuador** thanked Venezuela for its proposal, which it endorsed. It also agreed with Saint Vincent and the Grenadines that there was no need to include any reference to the availability of resources, and thus Morocco’s proposal could be deleted.
80. The delegation of **Morocco** explained that it was also thinking of the human as well as financial resources given the limited staff in the Secretariat. It thus wanted to hear from the Secretariat on the feasibility of the requested task.
81. The **Chairperson** remarked that the amendment spoke of ‘intensifying efforts’ and the Secretariat agreed that the amendment could be deleted.
82. The delegation of **Cuba** supported the proposal by Venezuela, which was fully consistent with the Operational Directives adopted by this Assembly. It was also compatible with the criteria for requests for International Assistance.
83. The delegation of **Djibouti** congratulated the Chairperson on her appointment as Chair, as well as the elected Bureau members. It also congratulated the Secretariat for the fundamental role it plays in the promotion and development of the Convention. The delegation thanked Venezuela for its proposal, adding that it should take into account the priorities and therefore ‘capacity building’ should be placed before ‘preparation of inventories’.
84. The **Secretary** also wished to clarify that the text of the Convention referred to ‘non-formal education’ and not ‘informal education’, which should also be corrected in the paragraph.
85. The delegation of **Viet** **Nam** supported Venezuela’s proposal with the change to ‘intensify the efforts’. It also wished to see the names of those that supported Venezuela on the screen.
86. The delegation of the **Syrian Arab Republic** supported the relevant proposal by Venezuela. It sought a clarification from the Secretariat concerning formal and non-formal education and whether their meaning encompassed the overall objectives that this decision sought to achieve. The delegation surmised that a broader chapeau could include formal and non-formal education.
87. The **Secretary** remarked that this was taken care of in the resolution adopted on the Secretariat’s report for which there a 20 per cent budget and instructions to work on formal and non-formal education. The Secretary therefore did not think it necessary to reopen another chapeau on this issue as it was already in line with its budget forecasts.
88. Thedelegation of **Bangladesh** thanked Venezuela for the amendment, which it supported.
89. The **Chairperson** then proceeded to the adoption of the new paragraph 6, which was duly adopted. Paragraph 7, approving the plan for the utilization of the resources of the Fund, was duly adopted. Paragraph 8 on the possible readjustment of the budget plan, was duly adopted. Paragraph 9, using voluntary contributions, was duly adopted. Paragraph 10, authorizing the Committee to use any voluntary contribution for specific purposes, was duly adopted. Paragraph 11, taking note of the amount fixed by the Committee for the Reserve Fund, was duly adopted. Paragraph 12, taking note of all the generous contributors to the Fund, was duly adopted. Paragraph 13, thanking all the contributors who had supported the Convention, was duly adopted. Finally, paragraph 14 on the transfers between budget lines was also adopted. Turning to the adoption of the draft resolution as whole, the **Chairperson declared Resolution 7.GA 8 adopted**.

**ITEM 9 OF THE AGENDA:**

**DRAFT OVERALL RESULTS FRAMEWORK**

**Document:** [*ITH/18/7.GA/9*](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/ITH-18-7.GA-9-EN.docx)

**Resolution:**[*7.GA 9*](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Resolutions/7.GA/9)

1. The **Chairperson** then turned to agenda item 9 on the draft overall results framework for the Convention. Following a long process that began in 2013, the General Assembly was invited to take a decision on this key monitoring instrument that had been developed in recent years.
2. The **Secretary** reminded the Assembly that this item originated from the evaluation of the standard-setting work of UNESCO’s Culture Sector conducted by UNESCO’s Internal Oversight Service (IOS) in 2013. According to IOS, it was difficult to understand the progress made with regard to the implementation of the Convention if the objectives, indicators and benchmarks were not clearly defined. At its eight session in 2013, the Committee had therefore decided to develop an overall results framework for the Convention. From the beginning, at its ninth session in 2014 the Committee had emphasized the need for an inclusive process of consultation and discussion in the development of such a framework, and asked that an open-ended working group discuss it. In 2016, the Committee acknowledged the outcomes of a preliminary meeting of experts, generously hosted in September 2016 by the National Commission of the People’s Republic of China for UNESCO in Beijing. It satisfactorily took note of the results map that the experts had produced, calling it a ‘thinking tool for developing an overall results framework’. In June 2017, UNESCO organized an open-ended working group in Chengdu, thanks to the generous support of the Centre of Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage in Chengdu and the Ministry of Culture of China. Fifty-three States Parties took part, as well as three category 2 centres and eight accredited NGOs. This meeting represented a fundamental step in the process of consultation and dialogue between States Parties to achieve the ultimate goal of adopting the framework. Based on the high-level results map put forward by the 2016 expert group, after three days of deliberations the working group unanimously approved a draft overall results framework. In December 2017, during its twelfth session, the Committee endorsed the draft overall results framework and recommended that this session of the General Assembly approve it. In addition, the Committee requested that the Secretariat convene an information meeting in Paris to allow States to familiarize themselves with the overall results framework, its content and the practical implications for them in the future. The information and exchange session was thus held on 20 April at UNESCO Headquarters. This meeting gathered a wide participation from States and accredited NGOs, and the Secretariat presented the draft overall results framework as it stood along with the possible rollout and implementation strategy. A number of States, along with one NGO, raised queries regarding the mechanism and the implementation strategy to be adopted.
3. The **Secretary** presented the results framework annexed to [Document 9](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/ITH-18-7.GA-9-EN.docx), which was presented on two tables. One was the so-called high-level framework and the other provided ‘core indicators’ and ‘assessment factors’. With regard to Table 1, High-level framework with brief indicators, the structure was intended to provide a general overview and summary of the results framework at a glance. The top four rows comprised the impacts and outcomes proposed by the expert group in Beijing and welcomed by the Committee at its eleventh session in 2016. The next rows of the framework presented the eight thematic areas, corresponding to ‘core indicators’ as adopted by the open-ended working group and endorsed by 12.COM. The twenty-six core indicators presented in Table 1 were abbreviated statements. The content of the eight thematic areas was presented during the information and exchange session on 20 April. These eight thematic areas were chosen to address key areas when implementing the Convention. With regard to Table 2, Core indicators and assessment factors, arranged by thematic areas, it represented the set of twenty-six core indicators in full detail and the eighty-six assessment factors grouped together into these eight thematic areas. The eight thematic areas were not strict or mutually exclusive. Some indicators concerned multiple thematic areas that sought to bundle together three or four indicators, which were related. Thus, certain indicators were closely tied to other thematic areas rather than the one to which they were assigned, but these groupings were meant to be useful and to help keep the indicators in line. For each indicator, the framework presented one or several assessment factors against which that indicator was meant to be assessed. These generally referred to the results within a single State Party and variously included outputs or outcomes. The approach adopted was that of UNESCO’s current programme document, the 39 C/5. The assessment factors were all concrete results that could be attained and reported, and those results then demonstrated the extent to which the indicator was attained. Because most indicators have two or more assessment factors, it would be possible to conclude that within the given State Party, an indicator was accomplished fully or to a lesser degree. For example, in indicator 5, part of the theme ‘Transmission and education’, this indicator sought to measure the extent to which intangible cultural heritage and its safeguarding were integrated into primary and secondary education. Four assessment factors had been defined, each one dealing with a specific aspect of this general topic. As mentioned, these assessment factors were expressed as results. Although some were simple outputs, most of them were higher-level outcomes to the extent possible. The far-right column included citations to relevant provisions of the Convention or Operational Directives. This column was important to show that States Parties report on things that they had already been encouraged to or were required to do by the Convention or by previous decisions of the General Assembly. There were a few cases that did not have specific citations but which referred to Good Practices or other measures that had been seen to work effectively in different countries.
4. The **Secretary** explained that a major challenge, of course, was having a results framework that represented the contributions of many diverse actors who have a role in implementing the Convention. Indicator 5 covered interventions by State actors, as primary and secondary education was generally a public responsibility. However, indicator 4, for example, indicated that the assessment factor also included results obtained by non-State actors. For instance, factor 4.3 referred to programmes and initiatives undertaken by communities, groups, NGOs or heritage institutions. While developing the results framework, there had been an attempt in the spirit of the Convention to include results that came from the bottom up, from initiatives of communities, groups and individuals, and from civil society actors involved in implementing the Convention. These were all important results and it was essential that the results framework capture these alongside interventions by States. It was also noted that the indicators were never expressed in terms of the ‘extent to which’ the State Party had done *x* or accomplished *y*. The States were indeed the primary reporters, but once again there were many diverse actors contributing to the results. Each State Party may report results for one or more of these assessment factors, and by considering them together one could measure at a certain time the extent to which the indicator was achieved at the country level. By having multiple assessment factors for each indicator, one was able to calculate whether the indicator was fully attained, partially attained or to what degree. In the longer term, as the Secretariat collects and compiles information from the States, one could also see the extent to which the indicator could be achieved globally or was being achieved globally—how many States were fully achieving it, partially achieving or not at any given time. Therefore, the purpose of the indicators and assessment factors was to get a global picture on the status of the implementation of the Convention, but they were very much intended to also be useful to States Parties themselves for use in monitoring implementation at the national level. So, this should allow each State to assess its own achievements and results using a shared framework, and for all States to see how well the Convention was being implemented at the global level. This did not mean that States were given marks or scores, or that they were ranked against each other. Therefore, these indicators needed to function both at the country level and at the global level. When core indicators referred to the ‘extent to which’, this should be understood in two ways depending on the context. For monitoring and evaluation on the global level, ‘extent to which’ would mean the proportional percentage of States Parties in which a given situation existed, or change that had been achieved and its degree. When the same indicator was used by a State Party for its monitoring and evaluation at the country level, the ‘extent to which’ referred to the degree to which that given situation existed or change had been achieved within the territory of that State.
5. The **Secretary** drew the Assembly’s attention to illustrate its future use. First of all, the results framework would have to be complemented by other tools. If the indicators were going to be applied consistently it would be important to provide clear guidelines to States Parties. Typically, with a results framework like this, each indicator is accompanied by a guidance note or explanation. For the open-ended working group, the Secretariat had prepared two samples of such guidance notes and it planned to further develop one note for each of the twenty-six indicators should the overall results framework be adopted in this current session. However, a results framework is not complete until it has baselines and targets. Their establishment would happen at a later stage as it was important to first agree on the framework itself. The baselines and targets were also tied to specific monitoring and reporting periods and would always be adjusted from one period to the next, while indicators and assessment factors were expected to be more stable over time. This did not mean the indicators were unchangeable, but they were not expected to change with every reporting cycle. The 2013 IOS recommendation to develop an overall results framework for the Convention on clear objectives, time frames, indicators and benchmarks also provided recommendations on the results-based approach to improve the periodic reporting. Therefore, the adoption of an overall results framework called for a reflection on how the periodic reporting process could become more than just a reporting obligation, but rather a learning opportunity for States Parties to periodically take stock of their achievements and challenges, and to define or redefine their national priorities for safeguarding intangible cultural heritage. It was clear from the beginning that the adoption of an overall results framework should not mean additional reporting obligations for States nor a parallel system of reporting or monitoring of the implementation of the Convention. It was hoped that the usefulness of periodic reporting to States Parties themselves could be an answer, at least in part, to the low submission rate of periodic reports. As the latter focused increasingly on results, the process of preparing them could progressively benefit the various actors involved in implementing the Convention by promoting dialogue and participation. If the overall results framework were adopted by the General Assembly, the ICH-10 periodic reporting format would be aligned with it to ensure that the information solicited in the form contributed as directly and adequately as possible to the framework. This process of orienting Form ICH-10 towards results reporting would also aim to keep in the forefront how the reporting process itself could be made as useful as possible to States Parties and other actors. Some possible improvements to the periodic reporting system had already been addressed by 12.COM, which had begun its reform. In particular, these concerned the possibility of realigning reporting deadlines so that States Parties would no longer report every six years on the anniversary of their ratification of the Convention but would instead report concurrently with other States from the same region. If the seventh General Assembly confirmed the wish of the Committee and amended the Operational Directives accordingly, then there would be a move towards a regional cycle of national reporting, to be discussed under agenda item 10.
6. The **Secretary** mentioned another important aspect of the reform and the roll-out of the results framework, which was the need to prepare properly for the implementation of the framework itself and to accompany its introduction with informational and capacity-building activities. This would allow States Parties and other actors concerned, including communities, groups and individuals, to implement the framework effectively and to focus on results when reporting. Operationally, the move towards the regional cycle of national reporting required several steps before the new calendar could be fully put into place. The series of regional workshops to introduce the overall results framework and the revised results-oriented ICH-10 periodic reporting form could be complemented with more intensive working sessions at sub-regional or national levels to begin to define country-level baselines and targets in the national reports. In that context, one of the main advantages of moving the reporting cycle to a regional rather than ratification-based calendar were the opportunities it could offer for more efficient capacity building, including peer-to-peer and neighbour-to-neighbour technical assistance. Given that communities, NGOs and many other stakeholders play a key role in the implementation of the Convention, the actual implementation of the overall results framework would also need to consider how non-State actors to the Convention could best be involved in future processes of reporting, monitoring and planning. Finally, since the indicators in the framework attempted to assess the impact of intangible cultural heritage safeguarding on fostering human well-being, dignity and creativity, it could be expected that the information collected would support other reporting frameworks, notably those related to the 2030 Agenda. The 2030 Agenda itself recommended that the follow-up and review of the implementation of the SDGs should build on existing reporting mechanisms, acknowledging that Member States had already been subject to reporting obligations in many relevant areas. UNESCO had already begun this work of integrating its programmatic framework into the SDGs. The programmes for 2018–2021 and the 39 C/5 were based on in-depth mapping proposed by the expected results of the Organization’s contribution to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. At the global level, greater consideration of the articulation of the results framework of the Convention with other frameworks, such as those of the SDGs, should also help UNESCO continue its advocacy for the contribution of culture to sustainable development and as a support to Member States in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda by providing evidence-based policy recommendations and reporting.
7. The **Chairperson** thanked the Secretary for the complete and exhaustive presentation, adding that it was rare for an international instrument to incorporate this type of results-based tool, which would undoubtedly help determine the impacts of the Convention in a very comprehensive way. Member States could also be proud of the fact that this overall results framework had been developed in a participatory and inclusive manner and was thus developed by the States themselves.
8. The delegation of **Jamaica** remarked that in the spirit of its continued commitment to the Convention, it had participated in the open-ended working group in Chengdu in June 2017, and it extended its gratitude to China and UNESCO for the organization of this important consultation. Jamaica’s cultural identity was inextricably linked to its rich and diverse intangible cultural heritage, with descendants from Africa, East India, Asia and Europe out of which a unique and vibrant cultural ethos emerged. Given its cultural reality, the Minister of Culture, Gender, Entertainment and Sport had been working hard not only on building the capacities of its cultural agencies but, more importantly, on enhancing the capacities of traditional communities to safeguard their cultural heritage through documentation and the creation of inventories. As an active participant in the implementation of the Convention, Jamaica recognized the need to have appropriate and robust monitoring and evaluation regimes in place to enable it to effectively assess its work in this regard. Jamaica commended the Secretariat for organizing the working group and therefore supported its recommendations, which resulted from intensive consultations and discussions.
9. The delegation of the **Republic of Korea** congratulated the Chairperson on her chairpersonship and able leadership, and it warmly welcomed the new Bureau members. It appreciated the experts’ and the Secretariat’s efforts in developing the overall results framework and thanked the government of the People’s Republic of China for its support that enabled the two meetings that had led to this framework. As mentioned in the Secretariat’s report, the Republic of Korea once again placed emphasis on the tertiary educational institutions, which play a key role in training future administrators and decision-makers in safeguarding intangible cultural heritage. In this regard, the Cultural Heritage Administration, a governmental agency, which had supported the CollAsia programme together with ICCROM in training a conservation expert since 2012, would like to suggest a training programme in the field of intangible cultural heritage. The Cultural Heritage Administration, in charge of managing cultural heritage in the country, established the National Intangible Heritage Center to safeguard and promote Korean intangible cultural heritage. The delegation firmly believed that the National Intangible Heritage Center could play a crucial role as an educational institution for safeguarding intangible cultural heritage. In collaboration with UNESCO and category 2 centres, the National Intangible Heritage Center established educational curricula and courses for experts and decision-makers in intangible cultural heritage, including the overall results framework. The Republic of Korea was ready to support such action and it welcomed others willing to make joint efforts.
10. The delegation of **Indonesia** congratulated the Chairperson on her election. It appreciated the very comprehensive draft overall results framework presented by the Secretariat. However, it wished to propose an additional idea with regard to core indicator 5 on ‘Transmission and education’. It was noted that it focused solely on primary and secondary education, however Indonesia had experience in conducting and creating intangible cultural heritage education in schools at the tertiary level, in addition to primary and secondary education. Programmes in vocational studies had also been successfully undertaken.
11. The delegation of **Senegal** began by thanking the Secretariat for this very clear report, as well as China for hosting the two workshops that had led to the development of the overall results framework. Having taken part in this work, especially at the Chengdu meeting in June 2017, the delegation remarked that this work was the culmination of a long process of reflection and efforts conducted in an inclusive, participatory way that mobilized experts from many States and with a strong mobilization of NGOs. It was important to acknowledge the brilliant work carried out, which had resulted in consensus on a set of indicators that could be used to determine the success and progress in the implementation of the Convention. These factors of appreciation were designed as outcomes to evaluate these indicators, which would improve the periodic reporting process, especially with the option of results-based reporting. In addition, it was also a regional cycle format based on capacity-building workshops. It was noted that during the past sessions, the Committee regretted that not enough reports had been submitted, as countries were perhaps unable to produce reports owing to human resources or a lack of expertise. This framework would therefore resolve this issue. Also, the explanatory notes would ultimately help to design and implement these indicators. In short, the results framework is a set of monitoring tools. Thus, it was absolutely necessary for the General Assembly to adopt this framework to enable States to take a step forward in the implementation of the Convention. For two and a half years, Senegal had been working on an inventory and a capacity-building framework prior to submitting elements on the Urgent Safeguarding List or the Representative List. It had quickly realized that work had to first be conducted on the ground before reaching that stage. For this reason, it welcomed the work carried out by all the experts and NGOs, and urged the Assembly to adopt the framework.
12. The **Secretary** noted that Indonesia had remarked on tertiary education, explaining that this framework was the result of deliberations within the group and that there was a specific decision to have one set of indicators related to primary and secondary education, with core indicator 6 specifically dedicated to post-secondary institutions. In this way, all the education establishments were covered but separated into two different indicators.
13. The **Secretary** then informed the Assembly of the several side events that would take place over lunch, in particular, a roundtable under the theme of safeguarding intangible cultural heritage for quality and relevance in education. There were also performances organized in the foyer by NGOs from India and China, and accredited NGOs would meet for a plenary meeting.
14. The **Chairperson** adjourned the morning session.

*[Tuesday 5 June, afternoon session]*

**ITEM 9 OF THE AGENDA (CONT.):**

**DRAFT OVERALL RESULTS FRAMEWORK**

1. The **Chairperson** welcomed the delegations to the session, noting the list of speakers.
2. The delegation of **Djibouti** acknowledged and appreciated the quality of the draft overall results framework, whose design had benefited from the constructive input of multiple experts from States Parties, NGOs, independent experts, as well as the generosity of China. The delegation agreed that the overall results framework marked a decisive and important step in the implementation of the Convention, introducing evaluation tools to the Convention that were more precise in highlighting its impacts in a tangible way. Indeed, this was a turning point and thus it was vital to adapt. This new tool would require capacity building at all levels, especially for the actors involved in the management of intangible cultural heritage so that they could become more involved and have greater capacities to better safeguard intangible cultural heritage. It was noted that the explanatory notes for each of the indicators would help understand the text, but the Assembly should nonetheless put in place a capacity-building programme aimed primarily at understanding this new overall results framework. The delegation supported the draft overall results framework and urged the Assembly to adopt it.
3. The delegation of **Mexico** congratulated the Chairperson on her work and thanked the Secretariat for the presentation of the overall results framework, which is an extraordinary tool to help monitor intangible cultural heritage. Mexico had also been making efforts to improve its implementation of the Convention. It had established a law on cultural issues, and a law defining the cultural rights of citizens. It was also developing a law on collective community rights. Indeed, Mexico had set up a national commission focusing on intangible cultural heritage so that it could better outline the criteria and principles needed to fully implement the Convention. It was also establishing a series of strategies to improve the knowledge and skills needed to better manage intangible cultural heritage through its established system, as well as in the introduction of certain policies to continue moving forward in implementing the Convention. Mexico also worked with different stakeholders in this process. The delegation was fully supportive of this framework as it was an excellent tool for continuing to implement the Convention.
4. The delegation of **Turkey** thanked the open-ended working group for developing the overall results framework, and China for the support it had provided to this end. Following its possible adoption, and if carried out successfully, this framework would serve as a reference for other Conventions. As the application of the overall results framework would be a new approach, States Parties would require support and guidance for its realization, particularly for the establishment of targets and baselines at the country level. The delegation remarked that given the low level of reporting under the current format, it might be even more challenging for States Parties to report under a new format. Nevertheless, it hoped that the rate of submissions would increase in line with the expectations of the Secretariat and the periodic reporting process under the World Heritage Convention. The delegation trusted that the Secretariat would be equipped with the necessary funds to fulfil its capacity-building activities, and it encouraged the rich cooperation and exchange of information at the regional level.
5. The delegation of **Thailand** congratulated the Chairperson on her election and commended the Secretariat for the smooth management of the session. It appreciated the hard work of all the parties concerned in the development of the overall results framework, which would not only help States Parties to assess their progress in the implementation of the Convention but also mobilize resources effectively at national and international levels while serving as a guideline for States Parties to effectively plan and implement the Convention in all aspects towards achieving its objectives and the SDGs. The delegation fully supported the overall results framework.
6. The delegation of **Finland** thanked the Secretariat, the Committee and the participating experts for all the work achieved over the past two years. Finland actively took part in the process and it expressed its admiration for the way the framework combined the many views of so many countries, including States Parties, NGOs, communities and other experts in the field. It was truly a major step in the implementation of the Convention both at international and national levels. The delegation welcomed the overall results framework and saw it as a tool to help States Parties better plan and implement the Convention. As Finland was soon to embark on the next national four-year plan, it was indeed happy to use the framework together with the communities as a tool while planning for the future. It was especially delighted in relation to the inclusive approach of the framework, which included indigenous people, migrants, immigrants, refugees, people of different ages, and so on. It also took note that the role of gender was better taken into account. The framework was ambitious and its implementation would require capacity building among States Parties and the coordinating bodies in each country. It was therefore hoped that the approval of the framework and the move towards the regional cycle of reporting would bring opportunities for national coordinators to come together to learn how to use this tool effectively. Finland warmly congratulated the Secretariat and all the participating experts for their excellent work, wishing them all strength in accompanying this framework into its practical application.
7. Thedelegation of **Latvia** welcomed the substantial work accomplished in the draft overall results framework that would closely monitor the implementation of the Convention. It thanked China for its generous contribution to making this reflection possible, as well as all the countries that had contributed to the work of the working group. The delegation appreciated the inclusive approach of the draft overall results framework, which reflected the various significant aspects of intangible cultural heritage safeguarding, which it believed would serve as a valuable reference for observing the impact of the Convention worldwide. It also welcomed the framework as a basis for periodic reporting, as well as its contribution to developing capacity-building approaches for existing States to apply in adapting the framework at the national level for their own monitoring mechanisms. In addition, the delegation believed that this framework could encourage additional evaluation formats and diverse impact studies at local, national, regional or international levels, contributing to the overall interest in assessing the impact of the Convention at these various levels. The delegation asked the Secretariat for additional insights into the current state of reflection. Although the proposed draft resolution mentioned that baselines and targets would need to be established at both global and country levels, it sought to know whether an initial reflection had already been carried out on the baselines for the first outgoing periodic reporting cycle at the global level, namely, whether it would concern the reporting period in question or the moment of joining the Convention, or perhaps another approach. It would, however, understand if this reflection were to take place at a later stage, but it just wished to flag the importance of this aspect.
8. Thedelegation of the **Netherlands** had participated in the Chengdu working group on the draft overall results framework and it thanked China for hosting this meeting, as well as all the countries that had participated in drafting this framework. It considered the work on good governance as a very important issue and in that spirit, it welcomed the overall results framework. The delegation hoped that this would become an effective instrument at national and international levels for the monitoring and evaluation of the results and impacts of the Convention in such a way as to make visible the initiatives from the different actors, communities, groups, NGOs, civil society and the State. It was also an ambitious results framework, but it was hoped that it would also serve as a practical tool in terms of implementation and execution so that it would make reporting easier and thus help raise the number of timely reports. The implementation of the overall results framework and the integration of the periodic reports would take time and required capacity building at all levels. The delegation hoped that this would improve the process of dialogue and the participation of the various stakeholders, also at the regional level, and it looked forward to working on preparing the reports that would not only provide results but also fruitful cooperation among all the stakeholders. The delegation wished to know whether all twenty-six indicators needed to be fulfilled by every Member State.
9. Thedelegation of **Sweden** thanked the Chairperson for her efficient chairing of the session. Sweden supported the proposal for the draft overall results framework and thanked both the Secretariat for the inclusive process and everyone who had participated in its development. It was particularly grateful to China for hosting the working group. A results framework was a prerequisite to measuring the impact of UNESCO’s normative work and it would be seen as a model for other areas of work within UNESCO. Bearing in mind the difficulties in measuring this type of work, the delegation saw this framework as a tool to increase the usefulness and quality of the periodic reports as it improved the reporting process by providing national baselines and targets for the reporting. Sweden welcomed the participation of civil society actors in monitoring and noted the special attention attributed to gender-related issues. It fully agreed that special attention should be given to the reporting mechanisms on the SDGs, as well as the contribution of culture to the 2030 Agenda. In this vein, it took the opportunity to invite the delegations to an event that it was hosting later that evening on creatively communicating the SDGs and how to translate the targets and indicators into a language that was understandable to a broader audience.
10. Thedelegation of **Belgium** thanked and congratulated the Secretariat, the expert meeting, the open-ended intergovernmental working group facilitated by China, and the Committee for their hard work and remarkable achievements. The overall result of this work and consensus-building was balanced, empowering and wise. Belgium hoped that it could adopt the framework as a whole. Even in its present form, the framework had a positive impact. As Finland had already indicated, it was already inspiring strategic plans of actors, ranging from governmental policy workers to NGOs. The delegation appreciated that due attention had been paid to the new instruments included in the Basic Texts since 2016, notably the sixth chapter of the Operational Directives, the 2030 Agenda and the [twelve ethical principles](https://ich.unesco.org/en/ethics-and-ich-00866). It noted with satisfaction that ‘Transmission and education’ was very high on the agenda of core indicators 4–6, and that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was present throughout the instrument, but especially in core indicators 13, 15 and 16, including the very important footnotes 7 and 8, and core indicator 20 on ethics, which was interesting. The delegation welcomed the new impulses for awareness-raising, notably assessment factor 17.5 on the use of new social media, and of course the incentives to involve NGOs in reaching those goals. As far as performance indicators were concerned, it appreciated the suggestion that the results-based framework could function as a source of inspiration at both global and country levels. As far as the global level was concerned, the delegation requested that the Secretariat be ambitious, inspiring, but above all, realistic in crafting the reporting mechanism. It echoed Latvia’s remark in that it looked forward to hearing more about the way forward. In implementing this important mechanism, it was hoped that an ambitious and realistic capacity-building programme could be set up that involved all actors, including NGOs.
11. The delegation of **Germany** endorsed the draft overall results framework, adding that the process of its elaboration was a very positive and rewarding experience. The framework provided a good foundation for a modern implementation of the Convention. It welcomed the proposed reporting format, which would enable regional cooperation as well as a comparison on the implementation of the Convention on a global level, and it would contribute towards measuring the progress achieved in safeguarding elements of intangible cultural heritage.
12. The delegation of **Colombia** thanked all the delegations for the work carried out, which bore witness to all the efforts made during the meeting in Chengdu with many countries participating and sharing their experiences. The delegation wished to know whether there would be quantitative indicators in addition to the qualitative indicators. With regard to research on inventories, the delegation believed that it was important not only that tools be developed by professionals or experts, but that certain tools could also be made easy to use by local communities. It understood that UNESCO required a level of proficiency with regard to drafting documents, but in terms of national safeguarding measures, tools should be promoted that could be used, for example, by farmers, artisans and members of the community rather than solely by experts or academics. In this way, the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage would consider other forms of interpretation and experience. In Colombia, for example, there were different stakeholders with more or less different ways of expressing safeguarding plans. For example, when communities wished to express an element for inscription on the List in Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta, and given that academic language would be difficult to understand, a short video might be considered as a better communication tool. The delegation also believed that communities required different types of administrative and legal tools.
13. Thedelegation of **Algeria** welcomed this overall results framework and supported the draft resolution, especially because of the dynamic that its implementation would likely create, although the implementation of the twenty-six indicators would invariably require a lot of capacity-building. However, the dynamic was there, and it was integrated and inclusive. The delegation thanked the Committee, the Secretariat and the experts for having produced this extremely important instrument for the Convention, as well as China for its generosity and commitment to all matters of the Convention.
14. Thedelegation of **China** spoke of its honour in having worked with the Secretariat in Chengdu and in Beijing on the occasion of the working group and in its work with the experts. The in-depth discussions led to very satisfactory results and the Secretariat had been invited to summarize this work and to submit its report to the General Assembly. China believed that the overall results framework would be a very useful tool for the implementation of the Convention in terms of its monitoring and evaluation at both national and international levels. In a spirit of openness and consultation, it believed that the viewpoints of all parties should be taken into consideration in revising the form and when setting the baseline references, which needed to be carried out on the basis of a carefully chosen timetable with well-identified targets in a process acceptable to all without creating additional work for States Parties.
15. Thedelegation of **Switzerland** congratulated and thanked the Committee, the Secretariat and the experts for this high-quality proposal, which it supported. The establishment of an overall results framework based on the submission of periodic reports seemed timely and appropriate, without creating an overload of work. This results framework made it possible to optimize periodic reporting for States Parties, but it also optimized the implementation of the Convention at the global level by establishing criteria that also provided a perspective and follow-up of implementation measures. Switzerland supported this framework and the revision of the method of submission of national reports. It encouraged the Secretariat to provide guidance notes that were as explicit as possible, but also that States Parties strengthen their collaboration, with greater attention accorded, notably, to the processes and reflections concerning regional dynamics, particularly those reflecting the safeguarding of multinational elements which were particularly important to Switzerland.
16. The delegation of **Viet Nam** supported the overall results framework as a very useful tool to evaluate and monitor the implementation of the Convention at the national and international levels. The delegation thanked all those who had contributed to the development of the framework, China, the working group, the experts and the Secretariat. Viet Nam was ready to cooperate with the Secretariat, NGOs and other countries in the implementation of this framework.
17. Thedelegation of the **Syrian Arab Republic** welcomed the framework and hoped that this would lead to success in implementing the Convention. It believed that the overall results framework, containing guidance notes and the various indicators, would help assess and evaluate the achievements of States Parties and thus determine the level of progress in implementing the Convention. Furthermore, it believed in the need for partnership within the Convention, with national, international and NGO actors having a clear role in this regard. The delegation wished to see contributions from the communities, i.e., those entrusted with the task of implementing these indicators and criteria, and it believed that country offices and UNESCO had a major role to play in implementing this framework. The delegation thanked the People’s Republic of China for its efforts and generosity, as well as the open-ended working group and the Secretariat for their work.
18. Thedelegation ofthe **Philippines** saw the draft overall results framework as a comprehensive tool for taking the implementation and evaluation of the Convention forward to a newer and higher level. However, there were some factors to consider before adopting this new, ambitious framework. First, since the results framework would depend on information from periodic reports, the non-submission or late submission of these reports may hinder the development of the new system. Second, the large number of core indicators, as alluded to by some delegations, might pose a challenge to many States Parties that did not have existing procedures in place to measure these given the complexity of the framework that may require substantial resources. For example, the ‘thematic areas’ and indicators such as legal aspects, education, media, vulnerable groups, among others, would involve various ministries and line agencies. Thus, dedicated capacity building over a significant amount of time would be required for the results framework to bear fruition and become feasible as a template for all States Parties. Third, the objective was not to inadvertently create a quasi-grading system between States Parties as the indicators may superficially capture quantitative statistics over qualitative ones without really looking at the specificities of each element or community. This should be kept in mind as each State Party—and in fact each community—is different and faces different challenges, and of course each one has different resources and conditions to promote the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage. However, this also presented new opportunities such as bringing the true objectives of the Convention to light more, as opposed to branding or listing elements, thus opening the door for a wider engagement of communities and accredited NGOs in the mechanisms of the Convention. Nevertheless, this would be challenging and must be approached in a progressive and incremental manner.
19. Thedelegation of **India** joined in the remarks so eloquently made by the Philippines regarding quantity over quality. It also wished to share the significant challenges faced by the country in implementing this framework. India is roughly five times the size of France. Its largest state, Uttar Pradesh, has a population of a little over 200 million, or about the same as the population of Brazil. In India, there are 640,860 villages, 53 cities with a population of over 1 million, 22 constitutionally recognized languages, 700 other languages, 1,400 dialects and of course 1.3 billion people to which 86 assessment factors would be applied to feed into 26 core indicators over 8 thematic groups. While it thanked the Secretariat and the working group for preparing this excellent report, the delegation again reiterated that the capacity-building exercise should not result in training people to fill out forms. The idea of the Convention was to promote intangible cultural heritage itself, which had existed for years and centuries, and in the case of India for millennia, having been passed down from father to son, mother to daughter, teacher to student within communities. However, when one element of intangible cultural heritage is promoted it would be done at the cost of another because there is so much heritage. Every region, village and city has its own history so when we look at some of these criteria, it could not be promoted without harming another, and hence the complexity of the issues faced by India in the implementation of these criteria. As an outgoing member of the Committee, the delegation thanked everyone for the excellent opportunity.
20. The **Secretary** thanked the floor for the many positive comments and for the very relevant points raised—especially by India, the Philippines and the Netherlands—that pointed directly to the challenge of establishing a results framework of a Convention. It was known how to create results frameworks for projects and programmes, but to capture the activities of so many stakeholders of such different contexts and countries, and sizes, scales and relationships to intangible cultural heritage was indeed a hugely ambitious undertaking, and of course the targets constantly evolve. Thus, the question by the Netherlands, which brought up the issues raised by both the Philippines and India, was whether it was necessary for a State Party to address every indicator. As discussed in China, the answer was ‘not necessarily’, although ideally they could. However, the Secretariat had realized the vastness of the undertaking and therefore the results framework was a step forward in the right direction. In response to India’s question about privileging one element of intangible cultural heritage over another, the Secretary explained that this was precisely why the results framework was not element-focused and whether an element was or was not inscribed. The aim was to capture the overall efforts made by States. It had been deliberately designed to be iterative with structures other than, for example, the Ministry of Culture, because it takes into the account the Operational Directives on sustainable development and the understanding that intangible cultural heritage is related to other aspects of life. In short, it was not expected that every indicator in the first round would be relevant to every country in the same way. Some countries would even find it difficult to address certain indicators because they may not be relevant, but it was based on a constantly evolving situation. With regard to requests for capacity building, the Secretary explained that the overall results framework was conceived to address the problems in periodic reporting, not only in the low submission rate of periodic reporting but also in terms of content, which tended to list activities or the elements inscribed. Recognizing the need for sustained and continual capacity building and linking it with periodic reporting was the reason behind the practical proposal to move towards reporting on a regional cycle. The example was provided by the World Heritage Convention where periodic reports were carried out on a region-by-region basis, allowing countries to get together to think about the issues and share experiences, which also allowed the Secretariat to work with its field offices and regional offices to support that process.
21. The **Secretary** further explained that this process was difficult to manage when it was based on a ratification calendar with countries in the same year coming from different regions. The Secretary wished to reassure States Parties that this framework was not meant to be strictly followed, as not all indicators were equally relevant to each situation. The aim was to *capture* a situation that was both global and extremely diverse. Latvia’s question was also very pertinent and complex in where one starts with the baselines. The Secretary referred to the remarks by China, adding that it had indeed informally reflected on this issue. The Secretary explained that it would be difficult to start from the point of ratification of the Convention, which would mean reverting back and understanding where each country stood at that time. Thus, following some of the discussion with the experts, the way forward tended towards letting countries set their own baselines and targets in relation to their own situations, as the new periodic reporting was rolled out. This would essentially mean that it would take a full six-year cycle to obtain a global picture, but it would also capture the diversity of needs, allowing each country to effectively use the periodic reporting not only to report but to set its own system of projections, i.e., where it wished to be in six years’ time. Turning to the question raised by Colombia, and how to communicate to people who do not use a results-based language or who are not in that field of work, the Secretary explained that some of the indicators did in fact speak to them. However, communication would indeed need to be determined in that sense. Ultimately, the reports would be collated by people who understand this kind of language. The challenge for countries, and particularly large countries, would be how to access the information within the country. In this sense, the Secretary conceded that the framework needed to be both ambitious and realistic, as pointed out by Belgium, and a results-based framework on such a large scale as a Convention was indeed incredibly ambitious. The results framework was not yet perfect but it would be reassessed over time. Nevertheless, it was a starting point that had reached a consensus in its attempt to improve the periodic reporting and to start understanding the actual impacts of the Convention, and not just the number of elements inscribed on a list or the activities happening at the international level. The framework would thus help States Parties understand what was actually being undertaken *in* their countries, which made this a very exciting undertaking that had been five years in the making, and requested by the IOS, the Committee and so on.
22. The **Director of the Division of Creativity, Ms Jyoti Hosagrahar**, added that the idea of the results framework was not only about the results obtained in the end, but also the process undertaken and that would in itself help move the country towards the implementation of the Convention. It was thus the process by which each of the questions or each of the indicators lead to answers that are in themselves a process directing the type of work undertaken. This process was thus very important in setting out the form and direction of the implementation.
23. The **Chairperson** then proceeded to the adoption of the draft resolution on a paragraph-by-paragraph basis, beginning with the adoption of the overall results framework, as it appeared in the Annex of Document 9. With no comments or objections, it was duly adopted. Paragraph 1, recalling the document and its annex, was duly adopted. Paragraph 2, thanking China for hosting and co-financing the expert meeting, was duly adopted. Paragraph 3, approving the overall results framework for the Convention, was duly adopted. Paragraph 4, with a view to revising Form ICH-10 for the submission of periodic reports and its adaptation to the overall results framework, was duly adopted. Paragraph 5, encouraging the Secretariat to continue developing guidance notes and other information materials, was duly adopted. Paragraph 6, encouraging the Secretariat to develop targets and, where possible, baselines, was duly adopted. Paragraph 7, inviting the Secretariat to develop a capacity-building approach with the necessary materials, was duly adopted. Paragraph 8, inviting States Parties to provide additional voluntary contributions to implement capacity-building activities, was duly adopted. Turning to the adoption of the resolution as a whole, the **Chairperson** **declared Resolution 7.GA 9 adopted**.
24. The **Chairperson** apologized to the Assembly for her temporary absence in the next session. The Vice-Chairperson from Serbia would chair agenda item 10.

**ITEM 10 OF THE AGENDA:**

**REVISION OF THE OPERATIONAL DIRECTIVES FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION**

**Document:**[*ITH/18/7.GA/10 Rev*](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/ITH-18-7.GA-10_Rev.-EN.docx)

**Document:** [*ITH/17/12.COM/4*](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/ITH-17-12.COM-4-EN.docx)

**Document:** [*ITH/18/13.COM/4*](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/ITH-18-13.COM-4-EN.docx)

**Resolution:** [*7.GA 10*](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Resolutions/7.GA/10)

*[The Vice-Chairperson from Serbia replaced the Chairperson]*

1. The **Vice-Chairperson** had the pleasure of introducing agenda item 10 on the revision of the Operational Directives for the implementation of the Convention, which was directly linked to item 9 on the overall results framework. She invited the Secretary to present the item.
2. The **Secretary** remarkedthat this item continued from the previous discussion, noting that the open-ended working group in Chengdu had highlighted the need to reform the periodic reporting process to make it more useful to States Parties. It thus made a recommendation to the Committee at its twelfth session in December 2017, which endorsed the recommendation and decided to move ahead to reform the periodic reporting structure to address the several challenges it faced. The primary challenge was not being able to demonstrate the full potential of periodic reporting despite the wealth of information gathered since 2011. The main issues in this respect were the low rate and tardiness of submissions, and that the Secretariat did not know in advance how many reports would have to be treated in a fixed cycle, as well as reports focusing overly on activities and not on results and impacts. It was therefore decided that the reporting Form ICH-10 would be revised in light of the overall results framework in order to make it easier for States to report on the impact of the Convention against clear indicators and benchmarks. The Secretary reiterated that the reporting exercise should not simply be an obligation, but hopefully a useful tool for States Parties to self-assess the implementation of the Convention at the national level through their strengths and weaknesses, and to share with others their experiences gleaned and lessons learned. The open-ended intergovernmental working group also recommended that the Secretariat ‘propose to the Committee for its consideration possible changes to the periodic reporting mechanism to move towards a regional cycle of national reporting and prepare draft revisions of the Operational Directives necessary to that end’. The Secretariat’s proposals for such revisions were presented at the twelfth session of the Committee, which in turn recommended to this session of the General Assembly the amendments to the Operational Directives, as found in the Annex of [Document 10](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/ITH-18-7.GA-10_Rev.-EN.docx).
3. The **Secretary** wished to clarify the following points. The procedure for the Urgent Safeguarding List reporting would not change because of the broader reflections on the future of the Lists. The transfer and removal of elements inscribed on the Urgent Safeguarding List would remain a separate reporting system on a quadrennial and an inscription year-based schedule. No revision was proposed for the procedure for States non-party to the Convention reporting on elements inscribed on the Representative List, which currently concerned only the Russian Federation. This would remain a sexennial reporting process based on the year of incorporation of Masterpieces on the Representative List. In order to help the implementation of the new reporting system, specific training modules would be prepared. Using these training materials, capacity-building activities would be conducted at the regional level. This would be an opportunity for collaboration at the regional and sub-regional levels to foster dialogue and exchange on national experiences. Operationally, the move toward the regional cycle of national reporting required several steps before the new calendar could be fully put in place. The Secretary displayed a graph to explain the idea. During the 13.COM in November 2018, the Committee would examine for the last time under the existing procedure the reports submitted by the deadline of 15 December 2017. The transition period would then last from the present General Assembly until the fourteenth session of the Committee in November 2019. Now that the results framework had been approved under item 9, the Secretariat would work on revising the periodic reporting Form ICH-10, as requested, develop a capacity-building approach and prepare the necessary materials. The submission of periodic reports on the implementation of the Convention would therefore be suspended for the deadlines of 15 December 2018 and 2019, including for overdue reports. The updated Form ICH-10 and the new capacity-building approach and materials would be presented to the Committee at 14.COM in November 2019. The preparation of reports in the first region would then start in early 2020 and last until the submission deadline of 15 December 2020. The Committee would then examine these reports from the first region at the 16.COM in November 2021. At the same time, the second region would start preparing reports in early 2021 in order for them to be submitted by 15 December 2021 and examined by the Committee at the 17.COM, and so on for the other four regions until a full cycle was completed at the 21.COM in 2026. Thus, in this proposal, the regional cycle of national reporting would be six years on the basis of a region-by-region rotation. The Committee would decide on the order of examination by electoral groups for each six-year regional cycle at the beginning of the cycle, bearing in mind that each cycle lasts six years. The decision for the first regional cycle would be taken in 2018 during the 13.COM in Mauritius. The Committee could dedicate one year to each electoral group, or another possibility would be to group two regions, Electoral Group I and II, as is the case for periodic reporting under the World Heritage Convention. In this scenario, the sixth year could be foreseen as a year of reflection, stocktaking all the reporting. The move towards a regional cycle of national reporting on the implementation of the Convention and on the status of elements inscribed on the Representative List required revisions to the Operational Directives, which were presented in the Annex of Document 10.
4. The **Secretary** mentioned once again that the Secretariat would develop a capacity-building approach to accompany the reform of the periodic reporting mechanism, which was coherent with Resolution 7.GA 9 that had just been adopted. Needless to say, the new reporting based on the regional rotation would make it much easier or logistically pragmatic to organize capacity-building activities. Other minor revisions proposed concerned paragraphs 152, 161 and 169 to introduce the possibility of submitting reports online. They were already available from this year on an experimental basis for the Urgent Safeguarding List, but obviously it was hoped that this would facilitate the process if they could be submitted online in the future. Paragraph 162 on the Urgent Safeguarding List reports had a minor revision to comply with the request of the Committee at its tenth session in 2015 to include the possibility for reporting States to update their safeguarding plans. Finally, the Secretariat had issued a revised working document on this item on 31 May [2018] to clarify a technical point in the newly proposed paragraph 166, which was done after consultation with the Office of International Standards and Legal Affairs of UNESCO. The proposal was meant to confirm the existing practice for the publication of reports and to merge it with paragraph 167 on the processing of reports. It had now become an established practice for the Secretariat to prepare an overview of all the reports on the implementation of the Convention using Form ICH-10 and to submit it to the Committee. For reporting on elements inscribed on the Urgent Safeguarding List using Form ICH-11, no such overview was prepared but a summary and draft decision for each individual report was submitted. The first sentence of paragraph 166 was therefore to reflect this practice. The second sentence of this paragraph also clarified the substance [of the reports] published online for public consultation. The overview of the report on the implementation of the Convention was thus submitted using Form ICH-10 together with the reports on the implementation of the Convention received in compliance with paragraph 151, and the reports on the status of elements inscribed on the Urgent Safeguarding List were received in compliance with paragraph 161. For this reason, the Secretariat had included the reference to the submission in compliance with those paragraphs—152 and 161, respectively—to ensure unequivocal understanding by all.
5. The delegation of **Cuba** welcomed the information by the Secretariat regarding the revision of the periodic reporting system, believing that this mechanism would allow States to effectively implement the revisions to the Operational Directives. It also understood that this process would move from a national to a regional cycle of reporting. However, the delegation wished to know what would happen to the national reports already prepared by some countries. Moreover, some countries, especially SIDS, might face difficulties in presenting their regional reports digitally given the poor internet connection in some States, and thus paragraph 152 should be modified so that States could continue to send their reports by email.
6. The delegation of **Malaysia** praised the Committee for endorsing the recommendation of the open-ended intergovernmental working group to reform the periodic reporting process so as to enhance its quality and function. It also welcomed the decision of the Committee to amend the periodicity of the submission of national reports, in which States Parties would submit their national report every six years on the basis of a system of regional rotation to enhance regional exchange and cooperation. In this regard, it would propose an amendment to the draft resolution to enhance the monitoring measures discussed and adopted in Resolution 7.GA 9.
7. The delegation of **Latvia** expressed its full support for the amendments proposed to revise the Operational Directives. Latvia was convinced that the regional cycles for national reporting would contribute to advancing cooperation within regions in the exchange of experiences, which would be particularly useful in the case of multinational nominations that unite a number of countries from the same region. Regional cycles could also encourage more active reporting, as well as serve as a regional capacity-building exercise. The delegation would also appreciate an update on the safeguarding plan, either included in the nomination file or in the previous report would be integrated into the Operational Directives, namely, concerning elements inscribed on the Urgent Safeguarding List. This could have a positive impact and encourage States Parties to respect the status of communities, groups and individuals to grant the necessary attention to ensure that continuous safeguarding efforts were carried out for the elements in question. Concluding with Latvia’s experience with the electronic submission on periodic reports, the delegation explained that in 2017, States had been given the possibility to electronically submit their national periodic reports on elements inscribed on the Urgent Safeguarding List. After successfully completing this exercise, it reassured the Assembly of its smooth functionality and it appreciated the Secretariat’s provision of technical solutions in this regard.
8. The delegation of **Lithuania** congratulated the Chairperson on her election and thanked the Secretariat for the very efficient organization of this session. With regard to the revision of the Operational Directives aimed at moving towards a regional cycle of national reporting, the delegation welcomed the draft resolution and the amendments proposed by the Secretariat as this regional approach would certainly contribute to improving cooperation among member countries, and would also help countries better reflect on the panorama of national intangible cultural heritage safeguarding policies. Its only concern lay in the implementation of the transition period, especially the submission of periodic reports of countries from the first region concerned that had to submit the reports from the last few years, just before this change. Although it might be premature, the delegation proposed considering the possibility, in the context of the new cycle, of accepting the same reports from countries from the first region concerned, i.e. the same reports that had already been submitted a year or two ago, just before the implementation of the new periodic reporting procedure. This would take into consideration the short transition period, making it more effective and participatory for certain countries that might otherwise have difficulties with this task. The delegation thanked the Republic of Korea for its generous assistance that had contributed to the development of the much-awaited new reporting tool.
9. The delegation of **Mexico** believed that the processes initiated should first be concluded, followed by the transitional period. In this regard, it wished to share its experiences in 2017 with the Category 2 centre of UNESCO, the Regional Centre for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Latin America (CRESPIAL) based in Cuzco, Peru. A study was carried out by Mexico that benefitted from an evaluation by CRESPIAL undertaken with the participation of its fifteen Member States in a crosscutting effort in a meeting in Fortaleza, Brazil. The delegation believed that this experience could be useful when thinking about this transitional period, as an alternative or as a possibility for implementing this new mechanism.
10. The delegation of **Turkey** welcomed once again the improvements to the periodic reporting process with the submission of reports every six years based on a system of regional rotation and in line with the overall results framework of the Convention. It thanked the Secretariat for its reform efforts that would allow for the effective monitoring of intangible cultural heritage activities with a results-oriented perspective at the national level. The delegation hoped that the rate of submissions would increase in line with the Secretariat’s expectations of the online periodic reporting process of the 1972 Convention. Necessary steps should also be taken to ensure that the Secretariat was equipped with the necessary funds to fulfil its capacity-building activities to encourage cooperation and the exchange of information at the regional level.
11. The delegation of **Germany** welcomed the new reporting format that would enhance international comparability with regard to the implementation of the Convention. It would also enable States Parties to take stock of its implementation of the Convention at a national level and would contribute to greater exchange at the regional level.
12. Congratulating the Vice-Chairperson, the delegation of **Senegal** believed that this [new process] was a logical continuation of the adoption of the overall results framework, and the amendment was thus timely. It fully supported the resolution despite the small technical issues raised regarding the transition period, which would surely be resolved by the Secretariat. Nevertheless, these periodic reports would be an opportunity not only to share experiences but to build capacities with the idea of helping States better prepare their reports as a form of training. The delegation wondered whether this training would require International Assistance at the sub-regional level, which would be extremely important.
13. The delegation of **Jordan** thanked the Secretariat for the information regarding the periodic reports and their preparation. This new format and way of working would help States implement the Convention in a more effective way, both at the State and regional levels. It also welcomed moving from a national to a higher, regional level as this would lead to greater cooperation to help find new ways of strengthening the Convention. Moreover, States would benefit from mutual experiences at the regional level, which would have a positive impact on the quality of reporting, hence it welcomed this new method.
14. The delegation of **Belgium** urged meticulous drafting in the language of the Convention, as for instance, Article 29[[7]](#footnote-7) did not contain the word ‘national’ in reference to the periodic report, which was also articulated in the plural form. The delegation remarked that a lot of attention would go into revising Form ICH-10 with the only exception being one element by the Russian Federation, a non-State Party of the Convention, that also had to report through Form ICH-10. It therefore wondered whether it would be possible to change Operational Directive 168 to create a special form for that particular case, i.e. so as to not include it in Form ICH-10 where perhaps a number of points had to accommodate the special case of the Russian Federation, thus simplifying the form even further. It also wondered whether it was possible to decide on the order of the region today by drawing lots so as to clarify the language in Operational Directive 152, for example, on the order of rotation.
15. The **Secretary** apologized to Cuba regarding the language on the online reporting that came from an older version of the draft, when in fact the idea was to allow States Parties to report online when possible, but that States without sufficient online capacities could report by other means. With regard to the reports that were due, as mentioned by Lithuania, the Secretary explained that this was a consequence of the transition in that the Secretariat simply did not have the resources to treat incoming reports while at the same time developing the new system, not least because the new system involved elaborating the assessment guidelines and the twenty-six indicator guidelines for all eighty-three performance assessments, and developing the capacity-building material in order to roll it out in time for the first regional round. Perhaps a solution would be to accept the reports and to make them available online, but it would not be able to analyse them in the normal treatment of reports and then present them to Committee. Regarding the question by Belgium, on when the first region would be decided, the Secretary explained that this was the prerogative of the Committee and it was foreseen for its thirteenth session in Mauritius. Indeed, in the last session of the Committee there had been discussions about Electoral Groups I and II, but those issues required further discussion ahead of the session in Mauritius so that the Secretariat could prepare for it. With regard to the special case of the Russian Federation, the Secretary understood that the point was to avoid having to redo a new special form for one State that was not actually obliged to report on the implementation of the Convention in general, but on the status of elements initially inscribed on the Masterpieces programme and then automatically transferred to the Representative List. The Secretariat was thus trying to avoid duplicating work for one particular case, particularly as time was limited with a lot to accomplish. The aim was thus to move swiftly in order to implement the full cycle by 2023 and this extra work would only delay the process. The Secretary concurred with the understanding that the Convention referred to national reporting, as the Secretariat was not proposing regional reports. The intention of the new proposal was for States Parties to report on their *own* implementation of the Convention on a country-by-country basis but within a reporting cycle on a region-by-region basis.
16. The delegation of **Austria** fully welcomed the Secretariat’s proposal of a new reporting mechanism, which was in line with the overall results framework just adopted, particularly as it would create a specific capacity-building programme, while supporting and motivating States in the preparation of their reports. The new system would thus encourage peer learning, thereby improving the overall quality of the reports. With regard to reporting on the updates of elements inscribed on the Lists, as referred to by Latvia, the delegation wished to know whether there would be a mechanism for providing updates concerning element already inscribed on either the Representative List or the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices.
17. The delegation of **Sweden** welcomed the new reporting format and supported all the efforts to simplify the submission of reports to make it more efficient. On a technical issue regarding the submission procedure, it was noted from the report that the procedure should be completed online. From Sweden’s side, it was important to ensure that this was in compliance with the respective reporting systems, i.e. for the ministries in the case of Sweden as the responsible minister had to sign off on the reports.
18. The delegation of **Algeria** expressed its support for and approval of the necessary revisions to the Operational Directives in line with the new results framework on periodic reporting, as highlighted by Senegal. In this respect, Algeria was pleased to host a capacity-building workshop in Algiers for countries submitting their periodic reports in 2020 or 2021 through the Regional Centre for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage in Africa.
19. The delegation of **Saint Kitts** **and** **Nevis** reminded the Assembly that it had just ratified the Convention as a SIDS. It was thus at an embryonic stage of developing a national policy for intangible cultural heritage, and one of the areas that presented constant challenges was the reporting requirements associated with all Conventions. The delegation therefore asked that the Secretariat provide the necessary support in terms of helping formulate a reporting framework—perhaps a simple template—that could be completed by ticking a number of boxes, while providing the substantive information needed by the Secretariat to assess its compliance with the Convention.
20. The **Secretary** turned to Austria’s question concerning reporting on the Representative List and the Good Safeguarding Practices, explaining that these would indeed continue. Moreover, the Representative List and the Good Safeguarding Practices were not necessarily part of the report feeding into the overall results framework. However, with regard to the periodic report, the reporting on the Representative List would now follow the same regional cycle on a six-year basis. Regarding Sweden’s query, which echoed Cuba’s remark, the Secretary conceded that there was a language error in the report and that ‘must’ should read ‘may’ [in paragraph 161]. On the possibility of online reporting, it obviously had a number of advantages, for example, States would be able to consult past reports on the online platform. Nevertheless, the Secretariat would look into any impediments and it was not restricting the submission of reports by other means. Responding to Saint Kitts and Nevis, the Secretary explained that Form ICH-10 already provided the format for periodic reporting and the Secretariat would provide capacity building. Hence, these amendments would allow countries to be brought together on a regional basis to provide and build capacities.
21. The delegation of **Tunisia** was delighted to hear the proposal from Algeria to hold a workshop on capacity building for States preparing their periodic reports.
22. The **Vice-Chairperson** proceeded to the adoption of the Annex to Document 10 with the projected proposals in paragraph 152, which would read, ‘States Parties submit their national periodic reports to the Committee by 15 December every six years on the basis of a rotation region by region. The order of such rotation is established by the Committee at the beginning of the six-year periodic reporting cycle. States Parties use the periodic reporting process to enhance active regional exchange and cooperation’. Together with Malaysia’s amendment, it would read, ‘the monitoring measures, as well as active regional exchange and cooperation to ensure efficient safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage’. The paragraph concluded with ‘Form ICH-10 has to be completed online by each State Party and is revised at appropriate intervals’, and Cuba’s amendment that read, ‘or sent by email’.
23. The **Secretary** understoodCuba’s concern but wondered whether it would not be simpler to state, ‘may be completed online’ instead of ‘or sent by email’, as other States may wish to submit their reports by post.
24. The **Vice-Chairperson** noted thatCuba agreed to the suggested change, which was supported by Sweden.
25. The delegation of **Belgium** reiterated that it had issues with the language [in paragraph 152], and ‘national’ could be deleted. It also had an issue with the term ‘region’, i.e. it was not clear whether it designated the electoral group. With regard to the information on States Parties using the periodic reporting process to enhance cooperation, it wondered whether this information [requested from States Parties] could be included in the amendments, and thus it did not have to wait for the Operational Guidelines that would come later. In addition, the term ‘rotation’ could lead to confusion as this suggested possible changes within this six-year period, whereas ‘on a rota basis’ implied an established order every six years.
26. The **Secretary** recalled that the question of regions had come up during the twelfth Committee session, particularly concerning Electoral Groups I and II, and indeed in the World Heritage Convention, Groups I and II report in the same cycle. The Secretariat thus wanted to have this flexibility in the draft resolution for a decision in Mauritius. In this regard, the Secretary invited the Member States of Electoral Groups I and II to come with a position on that issue. The Secretariat was also happy to remove ‘national’. With regard to ‘rotation’, the Secretary concurred that the cycle did not necessarily have to engage the same series indefinitely. It was considered that every six years, perhaps one group would prefer to submit their report, or the order might be changed. Thus, it was foreseen that the Committee would decide after a six-year cycle whether to follow the exact same order or to change the order. This wording was thus designed to afford some flexibility should there be a desire after six years to change the order of submissions.
27. The delegation of **Portugal** supported the request by Belgium to delete ‘national’ as it understood the concerns and duty to align with the wording of the Convention. On the use of ‘region’, the delegation fully understood as ‘region’ was very often used in UNESCO to refer to electoral groups, so it was probably time to clarify its precise meaning. Regarding the rotation, and having heard the Secretary on the opportunity this provided to change the order, the delegation cautioned against such an approach as changing the order in six years would have the effect of reducing or enlarging the time gap [for a particular group] submitting reports. In any case, States wishing to change the order of submissions would have to revisit those concerns at that time.
28. The delegation of **Sweden** sought to have wording that was completely clear and thus suggested not to delete ‘is used for such reports’ in the sentence, ‘Form ICH is used for such reports and may be completed online’.
29. The **Secretary** confirmed the reintroduction of ‘is used for such reports’.
30. The **Vice-Chairperson** noted the deletion of ‘national’ and the reintroduction of Sweden’s proposal, as well as Malaysia’s proposal in paragraph 152. The Vice-Chair noted an Observer wishing to take the floor, but could do so only after the adoption of the draft resolution.
31. In the interest of saving time, the **Secretary** proposedreintegrating the changes in the other paragraphs in line with the proposals by Cuba and Sweden.
32. The **Vice-Chairperson** applied this principle to paragraphs 161 and 169. There were no comments on paragraphs 159, 162 and 166. Malaysia proposed putting the word ‘deleted’ in paragraph 167.
33. The **Secretary** explained that the Secretariat proposed deleting paragraph 167 in order to align with the revisions originally proposed. Malaysia, on the other hand, sought to keep the sequence of numbers with the word ‘deleted’ alongside it, to avoid changing the numbers of each paragraph thereafter.
34. The delegation of **Malaysia** concurred with the Secretary’s understanding that it proposed retaining the sequence of numbers following the deletion of paragraph 167 with the mention ‘deleted’ in paragraph 167.
35. The **Vice-Chairperson** noted a change to paragraph 168 in the number sequence and then turned to the adoption of the Annex with all its amendments, which were duly adopted. The Vice-Chair then proceeded with the adoption of the draft resolution on a paragraph-by-paragraph basis.
36. The delegation of **Belgium** reiterated the deletion of ‘national’, supported by Palestine.
37. With no further comments, the **Vice-Chairperson** proceeded to the adoption of the resolution as a whole. The **Vice-Chairperson declared Resolution 7.GA 10 adopted**.

**ITEM 11 OF THE AGENDA:**

**ACCREDITATION OF NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS TO ACT IN AN ADVISORY CAPACITY TO THE COMMITTEE**

**Document:** [*ITH/18/7.GA/11*](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/ITH-18-7.GA-11-EN.docx)

**Resolution:**[*7.GA 11*](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Resolutions/7.GA/11)

1. The **Vice-Chairperson** turned to thenext agenda item 11 and the accreditation of NGOs to act in an advisory capacity to the Committee.
2. The **Secretary** introduced the item, remarking that there were two main points: i) the accreditation of NGOs; and (b) some preliminary remarks on the participation of accredited NGOs. It was noted that this was the fifth time the Assembly would consider NGO accreditations recommended by the Committee. At its twelfth session in 2017, the Committee had recommended twenty-nine additional NGOs for accreditation, which was presented in the Annex of [Document 11](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/ITH-18-7.GA-11-EN.docx). The request applications could be consulted [online](https://ich.unesco.org/en/accredited-ngos-00331). Accreditation was granted for a period of four years, after which the Committee examined the contribution and commitment of the NGO and its relationship with it. As a result, fifty-nine NGOs accredited in 2012 were reviewed by the Committee at its twelfth session in 2017. After examination, forty-two out of fifty-nine NGOs maintained their accreditation, having sufficiently demonstrated their contribution and commitment to the advisory services they provided to the Committee. As a result, and before the Assembly decided to accredit the twenty-nine NGOs recommended by the Committee in 2017, a total of 147 NGOs were currently accredited to provide advisory services to the Committee. A graph shown on the screen indicated a strong disparity between the electoral groups. Taking into account the current situation, the Assembly might wish to invite States Parties from under-represented groups to encourage the participation of NGOs active in the field of heritage preservation. The Secretary then introduced the second part, concerning some preliminary observations on the participation of accredited NGOs, recalling that in 2017 the Committee had recognized the need to reflect on the advisory functions it wished to receive from the NGOs, as mentioned in paragraph 96 of the Operational Directives. The Committee also took note of the range of issues that needed to be considered in this regard, including: the relevance of current accreditation and renewal criteria; the role of the NGO Forum; the imbalance in terms of geographic representation of accredited NGOs; and the workload of the governing bodies of the Secretariat. In accordance with decisions 12.COM 13 and 12.COM 17, taken by the Committee in 2017, the Secretariat proposed facilitating a process of reflection on the role of accredited NGOs in collaboration with the ad hoc informal working group and in close cooperation with the ICH NGO Forum. This multi-step consultation process was expected to culminate in the fourteenth session of the Committee in 2019. As a first step, an electronic consultation on the potential advisory functions of accredited NGOs would be conducted this summer, as well as possible avenues on how to move forward with the accreditation system. To this end, in early July 2018, the Secretariat would send base information to the ad hoc informal working group and the NGO Forum. Comments and proposals from the States Parties via the ad hoc informal working group, and the accredited NGOs through the NGO Forum would be collected by the Secretariat in July and August 2018. In a second step, and based on the results of the e-consultation, the Secretariat proposed organizing a consultation meeting between the ad hoc informal working group, the NGO Forum and the Secretariat. This meeting would take place in Paris, provisionally in March or April 2019. However, because of budgetary concerns the meeting could only take place should the Bureau of the Committee approve the use of funds allocated to ‘other functions of the Committee’ as part of the ICH Fund. The results of the reflection process would be presented to the Committee at each stage: at its thirteenth session in November 2018, at its fourteenth session in 2019, and finally at the General Assembly at a future session.
3. The delegation of the **Philippines** remarked that this topic had also been addressed by the informal ad hoc working group on 23 May [2018], as mentioned by the Secretary, in which some delegations recalled how the NGO network held untapped potential in terms of promoting the objectives of the Convention. It was noted that statutory engagement with NGOs had largely been limited to the election of six NGOs to the Evaluation Body, notwithstanding the fact that accredited NGOs had an important presence in the field, and that they contributed to advocacy, capacity building and periodic reporting, among others. At the same time, some delegations noted that certain safeguards needed to be put in place to ensure that accredited NGOs did not engage in activities contrary to the United Nations Charter. Some initial ideas raised during the brainstorming meeting included: i) having a better classification of accredited NGOs, determining those with the capacities to contribute in a more active way to the Convention’s activities and mechanisms whether at the national, regional or international levels: ii) developing a clear definition of the possible advisory roles or services accredited NGOs could provide the Convention; iii) addressing the current imbalance in geographic representation in the NGO network by identifying means to encourage or support the establishment of such NGOs in other regions; and iv) developing a code of conduct for accredited NGOs. The delegation informed the General Assembly that the co-Chairs of the Philippines and Algeria would have an informal meeting with representatives of the NGO Forum later in the evening and would later report back to the working group. The delegation would be very happy to hear ideas from NGO colleagues on how to take this reflection forward, as proposed by the Secretariat and reflected in the draft decision.
4. The delegation of the **Netherlands** agreed that NGOs play a key role in this Convention and that the ICH NGO Forum is an indispensable platform for cooperation and the exchange of knowledge on safeguarding practices between NGOs and the Convention. This network had grown stronger every year and the Forum had published some very interesting material and organized symposia and meetings. The ICH NGO Forum was now dependent on the voluntary commitment and efforts of representatives of the NGOs and this had worked out well. However, just like with other issues, the Convention was entering a new phase in which the NGO Forum would have to grow into a professional network. Thus, how could the Assembly support the NGO Forum in such a way that the Forum and its Steering Committee could concentrate on the exchange of knowledge, its advisory functions, regional cooperation and so on? The delegation suggested that the informal open-ended working group include an item on its agenda that considers NGO support, including financial support, for projects and regional cooperation that would contribute to the implementation of the Convention.
5. The delegation of **Latvia** welcomed the ongoing reflection on the participation of NGOs under the Convention and it looked forward to learning about the outcomes of such a reflection at a future session of the General Assembly. It joined the concerns that a better balance of regional representation was needed among accredited NGOs. The delegation also highlighted the significant number of NGOs whose accreditation had been determined based on whether or not it had received reports. In this regard, it congratulated the Committee’s recommendation for the accreditation of NGOs to the Convention and was pleased to see some international NGOs among those accredited whose accreditation had previously been terminated because they had not submitted a report or because it contained inadequate information, but whose motivation and determination were strong enough for their resubmitted request to be successful and it welcomed such incentives. Finally, it was pleased to note the growing involvement of NGOs from non-States Parties of the Convention, which was important to spread the aim and spirit of the Convention beyond the impact of States Parties.
6. Congratulating the Vice-Chair, the delegation ofthe **Syrian Arab Republic** was fully confident in the very constructive dialogue established by the working group, and noted that the Secretariat was doing its best to ensure that the group’s efforts were transformed into decisions for a more active participation of NGOs in the implementation of the Convention. In the case of the Syrian Arab Republic, Syrian NGOs had played pioneering roles and been given the opportunity to become advisory members of the first evaluation group. This group of NGOs had contributed immensely to the visibility of the Convention in Syria, and particularly in making this Convention accessible at the level of public institutions working in the field of intangible heritage in the country, for which they played a very important role in the creation of the first Register of Syrian Intangible Cultural Heritage where 400 elements were inventoried, constituting a very important step in partnership with the country’s official bodies. This transparency meant that this group of NGOs was always present in consultative bodies at the NGO level, and the delegation thanked the Secretariat and the States Parties for providing the NGO Forum with the financial support to allow the organization of this meeting and consequently to better implement the Convention.
7. The delegation of **Senegal** noted that there was only one African NGO from Zimbabwe on the list of NGOs, which clearly demonstrated a problem of under-representation and that all States Parties shared this responsibility, particularly African States. It was thus imperative that States working with NGOs encourage and help them apply for accreditation. This was the lesson to take away, as one had to be realistic and recognize that States could play a more active role. The delegation had worked with at least three NGOs in the past two and a half years, adding that something had to be done from the States’ side to help these NGOs. Considering the important role that NGOs played in the work of inventories, capacity building, and mobilizing communities, States should engage them to a greater extent at the UNESCO level so as to resolve under-representation from within the States themselves.
8. The delegation of **Finland** welcomed the fruitful efforts of the NGO Forum to coordinate NGO activities in recent years to develop capacity-building regional networks, international cooperation for safeguarding projects, and the publication and exchanges of the [#HeritageAlive](http://www.ichngoforum.org/wg/heritagealive/) online journal. It also welcomed and supported the reflection on the modalities of accreditation, while considering other possible roles for NGOs in relation to the Convention. The NGO Forum had demonstrated in recent years its important role in building cooperation, efficiency and confidence among NGOs, as well as in relation to the Convention’s work and meetings. So far, the work of coordinating the activities of some 150 NGOs from all over the world had been conducted through voluntary work without many financial options. It was hoped that ways to support the work of the NGO Forum could be found; an issue that the ad hoc working group could take up in its agenda. One example of NGO cooperation was the Nordic Safeguarding Practices,[[8]](#footnote-8) an initiative of NGOs to share good practices among Nordic countries. The delegation also supported the idea of examining the good practices of other Conventions regarding the participation of NGOs, especially the 2005 Convention.
9. The delegation of **Turkey** welcomed the accreditation of the twenty-nine NGOs, three of which were based in Turkey, adding that NGOs played a key role in this Convention and it always looked forward to benefitting from their advisory services. The co-Chair of the informal ad hoc working group from the Philippines had eloquently summarized the outcomes of the working group with regard to NGO participation, but the upcoming working group would continue to address the challenges of NGO participation and how to further utilize their potential and the renewal mechanism under the Convention. The delegation also sought a more geographically balanced number of accredited NGOs, which was also the responsibility of States Parties, as mentioned by Senegal. It therefore called upon States Parties from under-represented electoral groups to encourage their NGOs in that regard.
10. The delegation of **Palestine** concurred with the remarks so far, including from Turkey on geographical distribution. It noted that Document 11 clearly referenced the Resolutions, yet there was a disparity in the number of NGOs at the regional level, their sizes and thus their effectiveness. It therefore sought to hear from the Secretariat as to whether it foresaw a reflection on or revision to the criteria and modalities [of NGOs].
11. The delegation of **India** took note of the current discussion under the ad hoc working group, adding that it was fundamental to address some of the weaknesses in the current system. It supported the further re-examination of the current accreditation and renewal system for the NGOs along with the Secretariat’s call to have the related criteria revised. The delegation believed that this would enable NGOs to better understand what was expected from their role, while encouraging NGO partners to adhere to the aims of the Convention.
12. The **Secretary** confirmed that the revision of the accreditation process was precisely what had been asked of the Committee and why it had initiated the reflection. The accreditation process was largely administrative and unlike an inscription, the Secretariat simply checked the credentials and technical criteria of the NGO to ensure their authenticity. The Secretary concurred that there were very different sizes of NGOs and a large geographical imbalance. Moreover, the geographical imbalance should be measured against the geographical imbalance in the number of requests for accreditation received, i.e., the Secretariat was not receiving enough demands from under-represented groups, as mentioned by some delegations, causing the geographical imbalance. In other words, the accreditation was not at all being weeded out; there were simply not enough requests from certain regions. Hence the multiple calls made by the Secretariat over several Committees urging States Parties from under-represented regions to encourage NGOs working in intangible cultural heritage in their respective States to seek accreditation.
13. The **Vice-Chairperson** proceededto the adoption of the draft resolution on a paragraph-by-paragraph basis. Paragraph 1 examined Document 11. Paragraph 2 recalled Article 9 of the Convention and paragraphs 91–99 of the Operational Directives. Paragraph 3 further recalled Decision 12.COM 17. Paragraph 4 accredited the twenty-nine NGOs listed. Paragraph 5 encouraged NGOs from under-represented Electoral Groups. Paragraph 6 invited the NGOs accredited in 2014 to submit their quadrennial report in 2019. With no objections, paragraphs 1–6 were duly adopted. The Vice-Chair then turned to paragraph 7 on the ongoing reflection undertaken by the Secretariat and the informal ad hoc working group.
14. The delegation of **Algeria** referred to the wording, ‘Takes note of the ongoing reflection undertaken by the Secretariat and the informal ad hoc working group, in consultation with accredited NGOs, on the participation of NGOs […]’, adding that ‘their participation’ would lighten the sentence, which was followed by, ‘to the Convention and requests that the Committee and the Secretariat present the outcomes of this reflection’. The delegation felt that the order of the sentence was incomplete, as the informal working group must first submit its findings to the Committee which would then submit it to the General Assembly.
15. The **Secretary** remarked that the first part referred to the informal ad hoc working group, followed by the second part that referenced the Committee, but indeed the understanding was that the working group had already been established by the Committee. The Secretary agreed that the sentence could be better articulated, which might require an additional sentence to explain that the informal ad hoc working group reported to the Committee. A Committee decision had invited the Secretariat to continue its reflection, in consultation with the NGOs, and to report the results of the reflection back to the Committee at its thirteenth session. Thus, the procedure had been established, but in two different decisions.
16. The delegation of **Algeria** did not wish to complicate matters but wanted to ensure that everyone agreed on the order of the procedure.
17. The **Secretary** confirmed that the outcomes would first be reported to the Committee and then to the General Assembly.
18. The delegation of **Portugal** referred to the latter part of the paragraph that mentioned ‘a future session’, which was rather open, and wondered whether a two-year timeline could be enough to submit the results of this reflection at the *next* rather than a *future* General Assembly.
19. The **Secretary** explained that the Secretariat had wished to present outcomes and had therefore put together a detailed timeline of the various consultations, which included the possibility for NGOs to consult among themselves. The Secretariat could not therefore be absolutely certain that the report would be ready in two years’ time, as this would depend on how the Committee reacted to the various versions of the consultations. This timeline had been presented to the informal group when it met a few weeks earlier with a view to having the report ready for the next General Assembly, but there were a number of variable factors that the Secretariat could not fully control, such as how NGOs coordinated among themselves, how the Committee would react to the coordination, and whether it would be ready to come up with concrete amendments or outcomes. Hence the ambiguous language in the draft resolution. Moreover, the NGO Forum was consulting during this session and had used its presence to advance some of the discussions among itself. The Secretariat had already met with the informal ad hoc working group, which would subsequently be followed by an electronic consultation both with the NGOs and the informal working group, after which the Secretariat would report back to the Committee. Following the Committee’s reaction, it was hoped that there would be an actual consultation meeting, which would be reported to the Committee. The Secretary further clarified that these timelines were elaborated in consideration of the many other things the Secretariat was doing, such as evaluations, the Committees, and various other processes.
20. The delegation of the **Syrian Arab Republic** was satisfied and reassured by the high level of planning proposed. For the sake of transparency, it also wished to propose that paragraph 7 mention the two co-Chairs of the working group, i.e. Algeria and the Philippines.
21. The delegation of **Portugal** thanked the Secretariat for the explanation of the timeline, adding that it was not presuming that the work would be solely conducted by the States Parties and Committee when the NGOs were of course instrumental actors in this process. Thus, it could not prejudge the decision of the Committee. However, the delegation wondered whether the General Assembly would wish to take stock of the discussion in two years’ time, even if the reflection was incomplete.
22. The **Secretary** agreed that the idea was to take stock of the progress made, which could be included in the report of the Committee or the Secretariat, or perhaps in a specific agenda item, though it was not the preferred method unless there were concrete proposals to submit.
23. The delegation of the **Philippines** supported Portugal’s remarks and the need for flexibility. Noting the keen interest in the subject, the delegation proposed ‘update’ instead of ‘outcomes’, which would inform the General Assembly of any progress made.
24. The **Secretary** understood the issue but sought to avoid any dual processes. The Secretariat had already been asked to report the progress to the Committee in its annual reporting to the Committee. The Committee could then report to the General Assembly, as could the Secretariat in its report. The Secretariat’s understanding of the process was that in any case the informal ad hoc working group, established by the Committee and consulting on its behalf, would report to the Committee, which then reported the progress to the General Assembly.
25. The delegation of the **Syrian Arab Republic** proposed ‘co-chaired by Algeria and the Philippines’.
26. The **Secretary** remarked that the proposal by thePhilippines would replace ‘outcomes’ with ‘updates’ in which case ‘future session’ could be changed to ‘next session’.
27. The **Vice-Chairperson** noted that the Philippines agreed with the Secretary’s proposal.
28. The delegation of **Sweden** spoke of the importance of pushing forward with the reflection that had been ongoing for more than two years, which was why it was keen for the General Assembly to discuss and take a decision on this item at the next General Assembly. The delegation could agree with the proposal by the Secretariat to include ‘next session’, and ‘updates on the reflection’, but from its point of view it was slightly weakened, and it would have preferred ‘outcomes’. Nevertheless, the delegation did not wish to prolong the debate.
29. The delegation of **India** supported the amendment by both the Philippines and the Secretariat for ‘update on the reflection’. The report, although well-researched, missed out an important fact that while there were 147 accredited NGOs, they only represented 51 of the 171 Member States, i.e. 126 Member States did not have a single voice in the NGO Forum. The delegation wished the Committee and the Assembly to take this point into consideration when considering the updates of the reflection at the next meeting.
30. The **Vice-Chairperson** read out the amendment[in paragraph 7]proposed by Syria, co-sponsored by Algeria and the Philippines, which would read, ‘to present the updates of the reflection at the next session of the General Assembly’, which was duly adopted. The Vice-Chair proceeded to the adoption of the draft resolution as a whole. With no further comments or objections, the **Vice-Chair declared Resolution 7.GA 11 adopted**. The Vice-Chair congratulated the twenty-nine newly accredited NGOs and wished them and the Committee every success in their collaboration over the coming years, inviting the Observers for comments.
31. The **NGO Contact Base (India)**, Ms Ananya Bhattacharya, spoke on behalf of the ICH NGO Forum to welcome the newly accredited twenty-nine NGOs during the seventh General Assembly and she was happy to welcome colleagues to join the ICH NGO Forum in its activities. The Forum was glad that the results framework had been adopted at the present session, as this would provide overall guidance in the Forum’s efforts and would be a means of monitoring the work of the Convention. The Forum thanked the Secretariat and all the States Parties for acknowledging the efforts made by NGOs with a focus on safeguarding intangible cultural heritage and working towards the goals of the Convention. It looked forward to dialogue with the informal ad hoc working group, as well as the reflection on the participation of accredited NGOs towards achieving the goals of the Convention.
32. The **NGO World Federation of Chinese Medicine Societies (WFCMS) (China)** spoke of its many activities around the work in support of these activities. It convened conventions on Chinese traditional medicine every year with the objective of Chinese traditional medicine being presented as a complete system and recognized by this Assembly.
33. The **NGO Association of Folk Artists** **(Poland),** Ms Hanna Schreiber, expressed, in the name of the Association, its gratitude and happiness that it was now able to cooperate in the NGO Forum and contribute to the important work being carried out within the framework of this Convention. She also wished to express gratitude on behalf of the NGO Serfenta Association, which was also accredited but was unable to attend. She looked forward to smooth, efficient and friendly cooperation with all NGOs.
34. The **NGO Cultural Interactivity and Development (Mexico)** underscored the importance of the overall results framework because, independent of the size of the NGO in question and of the domain in which they worked, this framework would present many important ideas as to where efforts should be channelled. It was thus a clear instrument that would help NGOs to work with governmental institutions and towards common goals.
35. The **NGO Amagugu International Heritage Centre** **(Zimbabwe)**, Mr Butholezwe Kgosi Nyathi represented one of the two Africa-based NGOs that had been fortunate enough to be accredited at this present Assembly. On behalf of his organization, he expressed deep gratitude to the government of Zimbabwe who shared this information about accreditation, which was keenly taken up, and he was happy that these efforts had yielded a positive outcome. The NGO was committed to supporting fellow NGOs in the Zimbabwean context in particular, and in the subregion in general. He concurred with Senegal that efforts should be deployed to have more equitable representation of Africa-based NGOs, and he was committed to supporting the region in this regard.
36. The **Vice-Chairperson** thanked all the accredited NGOs for their commitment and ongoing support of the Convention, with special thanks to the NGO Amagugu International Heritage Centre for taking the floor as one of only two Africa-based NGOs accredited in 2018. The Vice-Chair invited Russia, who had wished to speak earlier on the previous item.
37. The delegation of the **Russian Federation (Observer)**, although a non-State Party to the Convention, observed carefully and attentively the work carried out under the Convention. It was very impressed by the competence of the Secretariat, and despite the fact that it only held the status of Observer, it nevertheless had elements on the Representative List. The delegation believed that the move to regional periodic reports and the idea of capacity building, exchanging experience and good practices at the regional level was a wonderful opportunity for dialogue, and it hoped to participate in regional consultations as active Observers and thus learn more about drafting these reports.
38. The **Vice-Chairperson** reminded the Assembly that the Bureau meeting would be held the following morning and that it was open to Observers.
39. The **Secretary** informed the Assembly that the audiovisual exhibition would continue with youth videos, and delegations were invited to record their own personal, living heritage stories. Also, the facilitators of the capacity-building programme were invited the following morning for a meeting with the Secretariat.
40. The **Vice-Chairperson** adjourned the day’s session.
41. The **Secretary** wished to remind the Assembly that the morning session would begin with agenda item 14 and the election of the Members of Committee, as approved in the timetable.

*[Wednesday 6 June, morning session]*

**ITEM 14 OF THE AGENDA:**

**ELECTION OF THE MEMBERS OF THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL COMMITTEE FOR THE SAFEGUARDING OF THE INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE**

**Document:** [*ITH/18/7.GA/14*](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/ITH-18-7.GA-14-EN.docx)

**Document:** [*ITH/18/7.GA/INF.14.Rev.9*](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/ITH-18-7.GA-INF.14_Rev.9-EN.docx)

**Resolution:** [*7.GA 14*](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Resolutions/7.GA/14)

*[The Chairperson reprised her role]*

1. The **Chairperson** began by thanking the Vice-Chair from Serbia who had chaired the previous session so effectively during her absence in the examination of items 10 and 11. The morning session would begin with the election of the members of the Committee under agenda item 14. Following the election and pending the vote count, the Bureau had decided to continue the Assembly’s work by examining agenda items 12 and 13, after which the results of the election would be made known before continuing with the remaining items on the agenda. The Chairperson invited the Secretariat to present the election of the members of the Committee.
2. The **Secretariat, Ms Fumiko Ohinata**,recalled that in conformity with Article 6 of the Convention, every two years the General Assembly shall renew half of the States Members of the Committee. In accordance with Article 14.1 of the Rules of Procedure of the General Assembly, the Secretariat requested that all States Parties indicate three months before the opening of the session of the Assembly whether they intended to stand for election to the Committee. The Secretariat then published the provisional list of candidate States Parties four weeks before the opening of the Assembly, as contained in [Information Document 14](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/ITH-18-7.GA-INF.14_Rev.9-EN.docx). The latest version was issued that morning. The Secretariat also provided information in Information Document 14 on all the compulsory and voluntary contributions made by each of the candidates to the ICH Fund. These revisions were necessary because some States withdrew their candidacies, or the state of compulsory and voluntary contributions of candidate States had to be updated. The Secretariat confirmed that all the candidates for election had satisfied their obligations to the Fund, as required by Article 26.5 of the Convention and Rule 14.2 of the Rules of Procedure of the General Assembly, and were thus eligible to stand for election. This was also the case for all Committee members whose time of office would end in 2020.
3. The **Chairperson** understood that for Electoral Groups I, III, V(a) and V(b), the number of vacant seats corresponded to the exact number of candidate States Parties for election, which meant that the candidates automatically became members of the Committee without election. For the two remaining Electoral Groups II and IV, the number of candidates exceeded the seats. The Assembly therefore had to elect the candidates for each seat by secret ballot. The Chairperson sought volunteers to serve as tellers for the election.
4. The delegation of **Jordan** proposed Morocco to serve as a teller.
5. The **Chairperson** noted that Zambia had volunteered to serve as a teller on behalf of Group V(a). She sought the name of the teller from Morocco.
6. The delegation of **Morocco** apologized, but the delegate was not in attendance.
7. The delegation of **Palestine** proposed Mr Husameddin Alkhatib from the Palestine delegation.
8. The **Secretariat** presented Information Document 14, which contained the names of the candidates for election. Electoral Group I – the Netherlands for one vacant seat (clean slate). Group II – Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (seven candidates for two vacant seats). Group III – Jamaica for one vacant seat (clean slate). Group IV – Bangladesh, China, Japan, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Sri Lanka and Thailand (seven candidates for four vacant seats). Group V(a) – Cameroon, Djibouti and Togo for three vacant seats (clean slate). Group V(b) – Kuwait for one vacant seat (clean slate).
9. The **Chairperson** explained that the Secretariat would distribute to each State Party two ballot papers for each of Groups II and IV, and one envelope. Each State Party had to vote for all electoral groups, not only for the group of which it was a member. The candidates obtaining the largest number of votes shall be elected, up to the number of seats to be filled in each electoral group. Each ballot shall bear the names of the candidate States Parties for the election for the group in question, together with an indication of the number of seats to be filled. States Parties were invited to circle the names of the States for which they wished to vote. The Rules of Procedure required that the name of the State Party be circled, with the tellers invalidating any bulletin that was incorrectly marked. States Parties should not circle more names than the number of vacant seats per electoral group or the ballot would be considered to be void. Ballots should be placed in the envelope and sealed. The absence of a ballot in the envelope would be considered as an abstention.

*[The session was suspended for 5 minutes for the vote]*

1. The **Chairperson** invited the Secretariat to proceed with the roll call to collect the ballots from each delegation carried out in the French alphabetical order of States. On hearing their names, delegations would be invited to the podium to deposit the sealed envelope in the ballot box.
2. The **Secretariat** invited the States Parties to vote. The following **States Parties voted**:Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Argentina, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bolivia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Cameroon, Chile, China, Cook Islands, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d’Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czechia, Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan. Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kirghizstan, Kiribati, Kuwait, Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mali, Mauritius, Mauritania, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Netherlands, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Palau, Palestine, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Rwanda, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Seychelles, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Sudan, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Surinam, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia and Zimbabwe.
3. The following **States Parties were absent**: Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Bhutan, Central African Republic, Chad, Dominica, Guinea-Bissau, Malawi, Malta, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Nauru, Nepal, Papua-New-Guinea, Sao Tome and Principe, Swaziland, Timor-Leste, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Tuvalu and Vanuatu.
4. Thanking the tellers, the **Chairperson** announced that all the envelopes had been collected and the votes would be counted. The session was duly suspended. The Assembly continued its examination of agenda items 12 and 13.

**ITEM 12 OF THE AGENDA:**

**FOLLOW-UP ON IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RELEVANT RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE OPEN-ENDED WORKING GROUP ON THE GOVERNANCE, PROCEDURES AND WORKING METHODS OF THE GOVERNING BODIES OF UNESCO (RESOLUTION 39 C/87)**

**Document:** [*ITH/18/7.GA/12*](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/ITH-18-7.GA-12-EN.docx)

**Resolution:** [*7.GA 12*](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Resolutions/7.GA/12)

1. The **Chairperson** turned to next agenda items 12 on governance and 13 on the revision of the Rules of Procedure of the General Assembly. Agenda item 12 was the follow-up on the implementation of the relevant recommendations of the Open-Ended Working Group on Governance, Procedures and Working Methods of the Governing Bodies of UNESCO under Resolution 39 C/87, which was supported by Working Document 12. This item was related to the UNESCO-wide exercise on governance. This item would also be addressed in conjunction with agenda item 13 that was also related to the issue of governance.
2. The **Secretary** would first present the background behind agenda item 13 because it was chronologically older than agenda item 12. At its 38th session in 2015, the General Conference had invited all intergovernmental programmes, committees and organs of the Conventions to discuss the follow-up to the recommendations of the External Auditor’s report to improve governance through concrete measures. Consequently, at its sixth session, the General Assembly of the 2003 Convention discussed the Auditor’s report. The General Assembly noted, in particular, the disparity of the Rules of Procedure of the different organs of the UNESCO culture Conventions. It therefore invited States Parties to propose modifications to its Rules of Procedure and requested that the Secretariat prepare a working document reflecting the proposals received for examination at the present Assembly. Thus, following a letter from the Secretariat on 15 September 2016, proposals from Chile, Czechia, Ecuador, Mexico, Niger and Palestine were received, as reflected in the Annex of working [Document 13](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/ITH-18-7.GA-13-EN.docx). The Secretariat considered that this agenda item could not be discussed in isolation because a separate but parallel process had also been initiated between the sixth and seventh sessions of the General Assembly to look at the governance issue at UNESCO. Thus, at the same time as dealing with the report of the External Auditor, the 38th Session of the General Conference had established an Open-Ended Working Group on Governance, Procedures and Working Methods of the governing bodies of UNESCO with the objective of pursuing greater synergy, harmonization, efficiency and impact. This Working Group established two subgroups.[[9]](#footnote-9) The work of Sub-Group 2 was relevant to the 2003 Convention as it was responsible for examining the structure, composition and methods of work of UNESCO’s international and intergovernmental bodies.
3. The **Secretary** reminded the Assembly that this was not the first time a governing body of the Convention had been asked to examine issues related to governance. In fact, governance was the topic of discussion by the Committee at its eighth, ninth, tenth, eleventh and twelfth sessions, and by the General Assembly at its fifth and sixth sessions. The recommendations of the UNESCO-wide Open-Ended Working Group had been discussed at the twelfth session of the Committee in 2017 with a view to presenting them at this session. However, the discussion was limited to Recommendation 107, which specifically addressed the 2003 Convention. It was recalled that Recommendation 107 of the Document 39 C/70 in Annex 2 stated the need to strengthen the decision-making procedures and credibility of the Committee, taking due note of the ad hoc working group established to address these issues. The General Assembly was now asked to look more broadly at the recommendations of the Open-Ended Working Group. The Annex of Document 12 contained twenty-six recommendations considered to have direct relevance to the 2003 Convention together with the indication of their status. These recommendations were analysed in terms of four categories: closed, ongoing, action proposed and action required by States Parties. Thus, the Assembly was called upon to adopt a coordinated approach between these two agenda items, as items 12 and 13 represented two parallel processes. In addition, some of the recommendations of the Open-Ended Working Group on Governance, Procedures and Working Methods of the governing bodies of UNESCO addressed under agenda 12 called for harmonization of the rule and procedures of the international and intergovernmental bodies of UNESCO, the subject of agenda item 13. The Secretariat therefore proposed that the amendment of the Rules of Procedure to the General Assembly be considered within the framework of the recommendations of the Open-Ended Working Group so as to produce one set of proposed amendments. This meant that more time was needed and the draft resolution requested that the Secretariat consult States Parties and propose draft amendments to the Rules of Procedure on the General Assembly at its eighth session. The Secretary also recalled that the informal ad hoc working group of the Convention had met on 26 April 2018 and discussed the follow-up of the recommendations of the Working Group on Governance.
4. The **Chairperson** thanked the Secretary for this detailed information, noting that two parallel processes were indeed underway and that more time would be needed to act in a coordinated manner. She suggested holding a general debate under agenda item 12 on the recommendations of the Open-Ended Working Group, as well as the analysis prepared by the Secretariat on the recommendations concerning the 2003 Convention. The Chairperson then proposed suspending consideration of the draft resolution on agenda item 12 in order to proceed to the consideration of agenda item 13, a point closely related to item 12. She would note States wishing to make general statements regarding the revision of the Rules of Procedure, but felt it was too early to consider every proposal presented. However, the debate would certainly allow future directions for addressing this issue to be set. Thus, the Assembly would first proceed to the adoption of the draft resolution under item 13 before returning to item 12, and she invited the Assembly to conclude the debate and consider the draft resolution. With no objections, the Chairperson turned to the debate on agenda item 12.
5. The delegation of **Ecuador** thanked the Secretariat for presenting this very important item, not only for the Convention and this Assembly but also for UNESCO as a whole. It thanked the Secretary for the detailed report presented with all the recommendations that had been made, and it was pleased to note that the Committee and the Assembly had fulfilled many of the recommendations, not only with regard to the Convention but in view of all the culture Conventions. The delegation agreed with the Chairperson that the proposals should be further reviewed because the response of States Parties had not been as widespread as expected with regard to these recommendations. Hence the need to push forward with this work. Nonetheless, the delegation expressed the need for tangible, concrete results to be made ready for the 40th General Conference. The next Assembly of the States Parties would be in 2020 after the General Conference, so it wished to propose that these documents and all the amendments be adopted by this Assembly, at least those that had been suggested, so that this could be presented to the next General Conference. The delegation noted the important and precise work of the Committee, as well as the Secretariat’s support in having clear recommendations to integrate into the statutes and the Rules of Procedure of the Committee. The delegation believed that certain recommendations should be implemented as they had already been practised, for example on the issue of membership periods, not least because the Assembly would not meet again until 2020. Moreover, some amendments were linked to other agencies and it was thus important to link the recommendations that were not going to be adopted right now to the work of the ad hoc working group. In this way, the working group would be informed of the themes so that its work could be presented at the next Committee meeting so as to have something to present to the General Conference in November 2019 with regard to improving its procedures and statutes.
6. The delegation of the **Philippines** thanked the Secretariat for the very good report, especially the Annex, which it believed other Committees and governing bodies could use as a template of good practice when examining the follow-up and implementation of the recommendations of the Working Group on Governance adopted by the General Conference. This methodology and progress could be presented to the Working Group on Governance when it reconvened in 2019 for the decision of the General Conference on the implementation of the recommendations across all relevant bodies under the UNESCO framework. As recognized by the Working Group on Governance, the 2003 Convention is a source of other good practices such as the overall results framework, adopted the previous day, and for achieving a high number of ratifications in a short space of time, as well as the very good focus on International Assistance and capacity building. Regarding some of the recommendations in the Annex, the delegation spoke of Recommendation 60 [on politicization] and how dialogue could be an essential tool to help reduce and manage politicization. On Recommendation 61 [on enhancing visibility], it was felt that this work was a continuous effort and could be further improved in view of the communications plan being prepared. The delegation agreed with the assessment for Recommendations 65, 66, 67 and 73. On Recommendation 68 [on the intergovernmental nature of the Bureau], as discussed in the ad hoc working group, the Secretariat could be requested to distribute guidelines on the responsibilities of Bureau members contained as an appendix to the document adopted by the General Conference. Likewise, in Recommendation 71 [on transparency and open Bureau meetings], States Parties could be informed of the time and date of Bureau meetings as they were open to Observers. In Recommendation 76 [on orientation sessions for new members], there was a suggestion in the ad hoc working group to look at the possibility of holding an additional orientation session a few months before the actual Committee for new members elected to the Committee, perhaps on the side-lines of the information meeting for the Committee session. In Recommendation 96 on the harmonization of amendments to the Rules of Procedure of the General Assembly and other culture Conventions, the delegation noted that this would be addressed under item 13. In response to Ecuador’s concern, the ad hoc working group had taken up this issue and continued to do so, and it had identified certain elements and areas where further action could be recommended for States Parties and the Committee to consider, the outcomes of which would of course be presented to the Working Group [on Governance] in 2019 and then to the General Conference in 2019.
7. The delegation of **Turkey** thanked the Secretariat for its comprehensively prepared follow-up report on the implementation of the relevant recommendations of the Open-Ended Working Group on Governance, and it thanked the Philippines for its eloquent remarks. The delegation commended the Secretariat’s categorization of the recommendations in line with the required action and was pleased to note that eleven of the twenty-six recommendations had already been implemented. Having said that, the remaining recommendations still required attention. These included the issues pertaining to the harmonization of the Bureau [Recommendations 66–71], while enhancing synergies among culture Conventions required preferred actions [Recommendations 96, 97 and 100]. Accordingly, the Assembly should be able to discuss amending its Rules of Procedure at its next session with a holistic approach, especially on limiting terms, defining its role, revising its composition, and making working methods more transparent. The culture Conventions needed ways of exploring how to make the Chairpersons of the relevant Committees more interactive. These subjects could also be raised at the meetings of the informal ad hoc working group. Bearing in mind their responsibilities, States Parties should maintain their cooperative stance, interacting and taking decisions, examining nominations, providing additional resources and finalizing procedural amendments in order to work efficiently within the framework of the Convention.
8. The delegation of **Iceland** strongly supported efforts to build a more relevant, focused and effective UNESCO, and hence it placed priority on the implementation of the recommendation of the Open-Ended Working Group on Governance. It was therefore very pleased to see this item on the agenda and it thanked the Secretariat for this comprehensive and useful work, listing the relevant recommendations and the status of their implementation. Moreover, replicating the good practices of the other governing bodies of UNESCO was also highly relevant in this context, and it was therefore of the opinion that the Secretariat could include Recommendation 80 in its follow-up table. The delegation encouraged the Secretariat to continue its work in an open and transparent manner.
9. The delegation of **Morocco** had a couple of comments on the recommendations, especially Recommendation 60 [on politicization], adding that there was a distinction between nominations, which were the responsibility of States Parties, and the decisions that fell within the purview of the Committee. The question of politicization was therefore different in both cases. The issue singled out here concerned the work of the Committee when making decisions to inscribe, refer or not inscribe an element on one of the two Lists, to select or not a programme or project on the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices, or to grant or not a request for International Assistance. Consequently, any action taken now was the responsibility of the General Assembly, as the Committee had already undertaken this reflection, as specified in the actions outlined. In Recommendation 97 [on meetings of the Chairpersons of the Committees of the culture Conventions], the delegation suggested that the Chairpersons report to the General Assembly and the Committee on the issues discussed at these meetings so as to move towards synergistic actions in favour of heritage preservation and the promotion of creativity.
10. The **Secretary** wished to address the points raised by Ecuador, adding that the Secretariat was aware of these concerns, and indeed the issue related to schedules in terms of how they were dealt with in the past. The Secretariat had received a draft amendment supported by a number of countries, which may help to address this, but the issue of harmonization had to happen across all six Conventions because a Convention could not be harmonized without the others. Therefore, there was a risk of starting in one Convention and not necessarily getting the same results in the different General Assemblies, which was why it was proposing a slight delay so that there was a clear understanding about what the agreements were among the different Conventions, as harmonization meant that they would all have to come together. The Secretary believed that the proposed amendment would go some way to remedying this situation. It was understood that the question related to item 12, as item 13 already entered steps to propose harmonization procedures, but had yet to be consulted with other Committees and Conventions, which was why they were not yet proposed for adoption. However, under item 12, the Assembly was examining the recommendations and the Secretary proposed adopting the Annex under item 12.
11. The delegation of **Palestine** thanked the Secretariat for its high-quality report and expressed its gratitude to Ecuador, Morocco and the Philippines for their interventions. It fully agreed with the delegations regarding the harmonization of the Rules of Procedure of the various Conventions. As stated by the Secretariat, this would have an impact on decisions under item 13. With regard to the remarks made on politicization, the delegation regretted that it was often associated with Palestine, even though it was not true. The delegation referred to the election of members of the Committee and in theory the Committee elected technical experts, in the same way as members were elected for the World Heritage Committee. However, it was the permanent delegations who voted, which was not based on the CVs of the experts of the candidate countries, but rather on arrangements and relationships forged between States. Palestine did not absolve itself from this rule, as unfortunately everyone followed it. Thus, in future reflections, the Assembly might consider the CVs and profiles of the experts of the candidate countries so that elections would be based on the technical expertise of candidates and not on political considerations or arrangements. Politicization was not just in the decisions of the Committee but was found everywhere, given that UNESCO is an intergovernmental organization. The Secretariat could therefore perhaps reflect on a standard form of CV that could contribute to the selection of the right candidate.

**ITEM 13 OF THE AGENDA:**

**REVISION OF THE RULES OF PROCEDURE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

**Document:** [*ITH/18/7.GA/13*](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/ITH-18-7.GA-13-EN.docx)

**Resolution:** [*7.GA 13*](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Resolutions/7.GA/13)

1. The **Chairperson** suggested suspending agenda item 12 so as to consider agenda item 13 because the draft resolution on item 12 referred to issues related to the revision of the Rules of Procedure of the General Assembly. Agenda item 12 was declared suspended. The Chairperson noted that agenda item 13 had already been introduced by the Secretary, and she opened the floor for comments.
2. The delegation of the **Philippines** noted that requests for amendments had been made at the last General Assembly before the creation of the Working Group on Governance, as explained by the Secretary. The interesting amendments submitted by a number of States Parties deserved to be studied and discussed so that other States Parties could understand the rationale and their implications. It was also noted that some of the recommendations did not specifically address all the recommendations of the Working Group on Governance. Nevertheless, a holistic approach was preferred so as to examine the recommendations of the Working Group on Governance together with a view to getting the right amendments prepared so that all States Parties could agree, moving forward. For the recommendations for harmonization across the six culture Conventions, inputs and guidance from the Culture Sector on a cross-cutting manner were sought, as a General Assembly of one Convention could not tell other Conventions what to do. Hence, the discussion should take place at a higher level, and the delegation reiterated the important role of the Working Group on Governance in this regard as it could provide this bird’s-eye view of harmonization when it reconvened in 2019. The delegation concluded by saying that it had worked together with a number of States Parties to develop draft amendments that tried to move forward in a very constructive way, but without losing the urgency and timelines.
3. The delegation of **Cuba** concurred with the statements made by the Philippines and believed that this revision of the Rules of Procedure of the General Assembly was in line with the recommendations of the Open-Ended Working Group. However, the delegation had some comments regarding the revision of the Rules of Procedure, firstly about the Bureau, secondly about the languages, and thirdly, but more importantly, about the work of the Committee. Regarding the Bureau, the delegation welcomed the amendment put forward by Palestine, which was also the fruit of the Open-Ended Working Group. It was of the opinion that the Bureau was there to organize the work of the Assembly and to fix the dates and order of items on the agenda for the meetings, hence its restricted size. Regarding the working languages and, in particular, Article 11.2, the delegation believed that all the languages of the Assembly should be retained and not just English and French. It understood the financial concerns, but it also believed that there were no major budgetary issues with respect to the ICH Fund. Thirdly, the delegation believed that the intergovernmental nature of the Committee needed to be preserved, noting that Czechia had made an amendment regarding the composition of the Committee, and the Convention was very clear in Article 5 that the Committee was an intergovernmental body in favour of safeguarding intangible heritage.
4. The delegation of **Palestine** remarked on the excellent summary by the Philippines that explained the rationale behind these amendments, and noted that, following consultations, many delegations had been consulted and supported the amendments. It also fully agreed with Cuba, but stressed that all these were details that would be discussed anyway, because the problems relating to the working language, the Bureau, or the delivery of documents also existed for the different Assemblies and Conventions. For this reason, it was necessary to have a global view of the Rules of Procedure of all the organs of the culture Conventions. Thus, at this stage, the Assembly was not ready to debate the content when the idea was simply to have a global view of the recommendations, and thus harmonization could be dealt with at the next meeting. The delegation thus proposed going straight to the draft resolution.
5. The delegation of **Turkey** fully agreed with the previous interventions of the Philippines and Cuba and thanked the Members States for having submitted their amendments to the Rules of Procedure. The delegation found the amendments proposed by Chile, Ecuador and Palestine to be good starting points for ongoing reflections. The deliberations on the Rules of Procedure should continue so as to recognize: i) the harmonization and efficiency of the Bureau; ii) the revision of the deadlines for submitting proposals; iii) the consideration of procedural matters in line with recommendations of the Working Group on Governance; and iv) the Secretariat’s related follow-up report. While achieving these goals, concerns about the participatory transparency of the sessions of the General Assembly should also be addressed and it supported the draft amendments submitted by the delegations.
6. The delegation of **Ecuador** endorsed the remarks by the previous delegations, particularly that of Cuba regarding the intergovernmental character of the Committee, which needed to be maintained, as indicated in Recommendation 68 [on the need to reaffirm the intergovernmental nature of the Bureaus]. Indeed, the idea of a certain level of expertise should also be reaffirmed, and the delegation believed that any amendments that went against this recommendation made by the General Conference would not be appropriate. With regard to the comments by Palestine, the delegation conceded that there were amendments put forward by certain countries while other countries perhaps did not have the time to do so. However, the delegations and the Secretariat had clarified that all these amendments needed to be reviewed and be seen by the working groups before the next General Conference, and perhaps they could be adopted at the next meeting of the General Assembly.
7. The delegation of **Portugal** thanked the Secretariat for the presentations on both agenda items 12 and 13. It concurred with the many interventions that the Assembly should proceed in parallel, while keeping in mind that every governing body was sovereign, as was this General Assembly, but that an effort nonetheless had to be made to address the commonalities within the different culture Conventions in the Rules of Procedure, where appropriate. However, the Assembly should recall that it had already attempted to create synergies among the six different culture Conventions and there were already structures to promote synergies, which was a good starting point. With the help of States Parties, the delegation did not think it would be difficult to try to harmonize the Rules of Procedure of the different culture Conventions in the work ahead. The delegation supported the amendments presented.
8. The delegation of **Saint Vincent and the Grenadines** echoed the sentiments regarding the amendments and thanked the countries that had presented these amendments. The delegation understood that they would be adopted in 2020 at the next General Assembly, as the General Assembly should decide on the amendments *after* the harmonization of the Rules of Procedure. The delegation remarked that the English and French versions presented were not the same, especially the amendments presented by Palestine.
9. The **Chairperson** proceeded with draft resolution 13 on a paragraph-by-paragraph basis: Paragraph 1, citing the document examined and its annex; Paragraph 2, recalling previous resolutions and decisions; Paragraph 3, recalling 39C/Resolution 87 of the General Conference of UNESCO; Paragraph 4, noting the proposal submitted by States Parties; and Paragraph 5, also noting document ITH/18 /7.GA/12, and in particular the recommendations of the Open-Ended Working Group on Governance. With no objections, paragraphs 1–5 were duly adopted. Paragraph 6 requested that the Secretariat revise the amendments to the Rules of Procedure submitted by States Parties and the relevant recommendations of the Working Group on Governance, and in consultation with States parties submit a consolidated set of draft amendments for examination at the eighth session of the General Assembly.
10. The delegation of **Palestine** noted that the French text did not correspond.
11. Thanking Palestine for the observation, the **Chairperson** turned to paragraph 6, which read, ‘Requests the Secretariat to review the amendments to the Rules of Procedure submitted by the States Parties in view of the relevant recommendations of the General Conference on the Governance, Procedures and Working Methods of the Governing Bodies of UNESCO, especially those on harmonization of the Rules of Procedure of the six cultural Conventions, as appropriate, and in consultation with States Parties submit a consolidated set of draft amendments for examination by the eighth session of the General Assembly’.
12. The delegation of **Portugal** noted that the amendments proposed by the group of countries captured the essential of the debate and it therefore wished to co-sponsor the amendments.
13. The delegation of **Iceland** fully supported the amendments in paragraph 6, as well as in the new paragraph 7.
14. The delegation of **Czechia** also supported the amendments proposed by the group, and, having worked together on paragraphs 6 and 7, wished to be added to the list of co-sponsors.
15. The delegation of **Turkey** found that the draft amendments fully reflected the common position on this agenda item. It thus supported the amendments in paragraphs 6 and 7.
16. The delegations of **Venezuela**, **Morocco**, **Cyprus**, **Ecuador**, **Cuba**, **Viet Nam**, **Norway**, **Jordan**, **Côte d’Ivoire**, and **Slovakia** also supported the amendments in paragraph 6 and 7, and wished to add their names to the list of co-sponsors.
17. The delegation of **Saint Vincent and the Grenadines** supported the amendments and drew attention to the fact that [in paragraph 6] the review of the amendments would be carried out by the Secretariat, as requested in the first sentence, but in consultation with Member States, as per the latter part of the paragraph.
18. The delegation of **Portugal** was very satisfied that all the delegations had agreed with these two paragraphs. It also joined the consensus in paragraph 7.
19. The **Chairperson** noted that there were delegations wishing to speak, but unless there were objections they would be added to the list of co-sponsors. They included Senegal, Denmark, Togo, El Salvador, Montenegro and Grenada.
20. The delegation of **El** **Salvador** also supported the amendments, but believed that the floor should be given to Member States who opposed the amendments.
21. The delegation of **Grenada** supported both amendments, but suggested that in the French text *‘intégré’*be replaced with *‘consolidé’*.
22. The **Chairperson** noted that there was no objection to the change in the French version, and paragraph 6 was duly adopted. She then proceeded to paragraph 7, which read, ‘Recognizes the need to harmonize the Rules of Procedure of the governing bodies of the six cultural Conventions and highlights the crucial role of the Culture Sector […]’, and it was duly adopted. Turning to the adoption of the draft resolution as a whole, the **Chairperson declared Resolution 7.GA 13 adopted**.

**ITEM 12 OF THE AGENDA (CONT.):**

**FOLLOW-UP ON IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RELEVANT RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE OPEN-ENDED WORKING GROUP ON THE GOVERNANCE, PROCEDURES AND WORKING METHODS OF THE GOVERNING BODIES OF UNESCO (RESOLUTION 39 C/87)**

1. The **Chairperson** proceeded to the examination of the draft resolution on a paragraph-by-paragraph basis, adding that the previous debate under agenda item 12 would help reach a decision. Paragraphs 1 and 2, citing the two documents and its Annex, were duly adopted. Paragraph 3, recalling previous Decisions and Resolutions, was duly adopted.
2. The delegation of **Palestine** noticed some disparities in paragraph 5 between the English and French versions, and wondered about the draft’s original language.
3. The **Chairperson** noted that paragraph 4 was under examination, which was duly adopted.
4. The **Secretary** clarified that the original draft was in English.
5. The **Chairperson** noted that the French text would be revised based on the English version.
6. The delegation of **Ecuador** remarked that paragraph 5 had to be updated in line with the decision under agenda item 13 so that it recognized the recommendations of the General Conference and not just of the Working Group, as the General Conference had adopted these recommendations. Thus, the paragraph would read, ‘Recognizes the recommendations of the General Conference on Governance […]’, noting that this sentence had been drafted before the General Conference had actually adopted these recommendations.
7. The **Chairperson** agreed with the explanation and paragraph 5 was revised accordingly and duly adopted. Paragraph 6, asking the Secretariat to propose ways to promote the implementation of the recommendations, was duly adopted. Paragraph 7, further requesting the Secretariat to ensure gender-neutral language in the Basic Texts, was duly adopted.
8. The delegation of **Ecuador** sought to amend paragraph 8 in the same way as paragraph 5, which would read, ‘Invites the General Assembly, the Committee and their Bureaus to conduct their work in accordance with the recommendations of the General Conference […]’, i.e., it should not refer to the Open-Ended Working Group on Governance.
9. The **Chairperson** concurred with the correction.
10. The delegation of the **Philippines** supported Ecuador’s proposed amendments.
11. The **Chairperson** pronounced paragraph 8 adopted, and a new paragraph 9 was introduced, deciding to inscribe this item on the agenda of the next session.
12. The delegation of **Iceland** supported the new amendment to the resolution.
13. The **Chairperson** pronounced paragraph 9 adopted. Turning to the adoption of the resolution as a whole, the **Chairperson declared Resolution 7.GA 12 adopted**.

*[The session was suspended for 40 minutes for the vote count]*

**ITEM 14 OF THE AGENDA (CONT.):**

**ELECTION OF THE MEMBERS OF THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL COMMITTEE FOR THE SAFEGUARDING OF THE INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE**

1. The **Chairperson** announced that the count was complete. A total of 156 Member States had voted and 21 were absent. The results for Electoral Group II were as follows. The number of seats: 2. The candidate States Parties: Azerbaijan received 90 votes; Belarus received 18 votes; Georgia received 51 votes; Poland received 52 votes; Romania received 47 votes; Slovakia received 45 votes; the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia received 3 votes. **Azerbaijan** and **Poland** were elected. The results for Electoral Group IV were as follows. The number of seats: 4. The candidate States Parties: Bangladesh received 64 votes; China received 123 votes; Japan received 107 votes; Kazakhstan received 98 votes; Malaysia received 58 votes; Sri Lanka received 122 votes; Thailand received 41 votes. **China**, **Japan**, **Kazakhstan** and **Sri Lanka** were elected. The Chairperson was pleased to inform the Assembly that the following 12 candidates were elected to the Committee for a four-year term. Group I: **Netherlands**; Group II: **Azerbaijan** and **Poland**; Group III: **Jamaica**; Group IV: **China**, **Japan**, **Kazakhstan** and **Sri Lanka**; Group V(a): **Cameroon**, **Djibouti** and **Togo**; Group V(b): **Kuwait**. Turning to the adoption of the draft resolution, and with no comments or objections, the **Chairperson declared** **Resolution 7.GA 14** **adopted**. The Chairperson congratulated the new Members of the Committee. It was noted that there was no agenda item 15 under ‘other business’ and she turned to item 16 and the close of the session.

**ITEM 16 OF THE AGENDA:**

**CLOSURE**

1. The **Chairperson** turned to the close of the session after three days of intense and fruitful efforts during which the Assembly had made considerable achievements thanks in large part to the collaboration and active, constructive contributions by States Parties in a spirit of consensus and cooperation, which had characterized this Convention from the beginning. This Assembly had provided the opportunity to chart new and promising prospects for the Convention which, in these times of constant change, were more relevant than ever. First, the overall results framework had been endorsed, which was unquestionably a landmark event in the life of the Convention and the result of a long, participatory process. With this new results framework, the impacts of the Convention could be monitored and evaluated in a meaningful way. At the same time, this was closely linked to the reform of the periodic reporting mechanism. The Assembly had given the green light to align this mechanism with the overall results framework through the revision of the Operational Directives. This important decision would move towards a regional cycle of national reporting that would undoubtedly increase the quality of periodic reporting and provide a new platform for sharing experiences. In addition, 29 NGOs had been accredited, which would now allow the Committee to solicit the expertise of a total of 179 NGOs for advice on various issues. The Committee had also initiated a process of reflection to better define the participation of NGOs in the work of the 2003 Convention. The Chairperson congratulated the newly accredited NGOs, thanking them for their commitment to the spirit of the Convention. The Assembly also endorsed the ICH Fund resource plan, which would be used, inter alia, to support States Parties’ safeguarding efforts over the next two years. Many delegations had expressed satisfaction with the capacity-building programme, but recognized that there were persistent needs in developing and developed countries. The Committee also welcomed the new funding priority on the transmission of intangible cultural heritage through education. The Chairperson once again called upon States Parties to continue to support this key programme. This Assembly had also made an important and strategic decision to support the operationalization of the International Assistance mechanism by approving the creation of three extra-budgetary fixed-term posts under the ICH Fund. The Chairperson hoped that these posts would be filled as soon as possible so that a dedicated team could ensure that efforts by States Parties to safeguard living heritage could be supported and strengthened. Finally, the Assembly had elected twelve new members of the Committee. Consequently, the mandate of twelve members had come to an end with this Assembly. The Chairperson took the opportunity to thank all the outgoing members of the Committee for their excellent work and wished the new members every success in the face of the challenges ahead. She opened the floor for comments.
2. The delegation of **Palestine** had wished to make a couple of remarks under item 15. Firstly, it was noted that the distribution in the room at the General Assembly was always in alphabetical order beginning with A, which meant that the same delegations would either be seated at the back or at the front. The delegation suggested that this could be reviewed for the next session, noting a nod of agreement from the Secretariat. Secondly, the proceedings were conducted very efficiently with good results, but the delegation proposed that a small coffee break be foreseen next time, as this would allow States Parties to get acquainted and perhaps lobby on some important issues. It thanked the Culture Sector, the Assistant Director-General for Culture and the Chairperson, adding that it was pleased to note the growing interest in the protection of intangible heritage in emergency situations and that there was broad and clear consensus on this subject. The delegation concluded by thanking the Secretariat. It was also pleased with the decision to strengthen the capacities of the Secretariat with three posts, asking that the Secretary kindly introduce all his team who were all so kind and efficient, and really deserved all the support. Finally, it congratulated all the States Parties elected and thanked all the outgoing members of the Committee.
3. The delegation of **Jamaica** offered its sincere thanks for the tremendous support it had received and it was heartened by the show of camaraderie, particularly among States Parties in Electoral Group III, in electing Jamaica as a member of the Committee. The delegation would not take this level of support for granted and it signalled its commitment as a SIDS to undertaking the work of the Convention and the Committee in protecting intangible cultural heritage for present and future generations. It encouraged States Parties to promote capacity building among local communities in an effort to support sustainable development through the utilization of their inscriptions. The delegation also encouraged greater collaboration among States in the implementation of the Convention and to focus on the synergies that other culture Conventions could provide. It took note of the increase in the number of programmes, even amid the shrinking budget. Despite this challenge, the delegation believed that a lot was possible with the tools in hand. It considered intangible cultural heritage to be of extreme significance in the country’s identity, and Jamaica was proud that the musical heritage of the Maroons had been recognized through its inscription [on the Representative List] in 2008. It also looked forward to future inscriptions of reggae music and the new religion of Rastafari, which Jamaica had given the world. The delegation encouraged all States to work towards the recognition of their elements through inscription, and it reiterated its deepest appreciation for the overwhelming support.
4. The delegation of **Saint Kitts and Nevis** congratulated the newly elected States Parties and thanked the outgoing members of the Committee for their excellent observations and contributions to the further development of the Convention. In welcoming Jamaica to the Committee, the assembly recognized the importance of Caribbean SIDS in the pivotal role they play in representing the region. Jamaica would thus be well placed to address the challenges that SIDS face in developing an intangible cultural policy framework in terms of limited institutional capacity and the effects of devastating natural hazards as a result of climate change, but also in leading the way for the entire Caribbean region in terms of best practices and expertise. The delegation concluded by thanking the Secretariat for providing a very thorough and transparent session, which it fully appreciated, thanking the delegations for their insights.
5. The delegation of **Cyprus** congratulated the Chairperson and thanked the Secretariat for its excellent work. Considering that there would be a Bureau meeting the next day, it wondered whether it could be tabled for the afternoon session instead, which was declined.
6. The delegation of **Cameroon** congratulated the Chairperson and the Bureau members for their election and excellent conduct of the work of this important meeting. It thanked all the members on their election to the Committee, and it welcomed the spirit of dialogue and understanding that prevailed in Group V(a). Cameroon was committed to investing actively during its mandate to contribute to the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage for the promotion of peace in the world.
7. The delegation of **Djibouti** congratulated the Chairperson on her chairing of the session that led to the relevance and quality of the debates. It thanked the Secretariat for its outstanding work. Djibouti was delighted to be elected to the Committee for a four-year term. The delegation was aware of the responsibilities that weigh on its commitment to actively participate in the promotion and implementation of the Convention, as well as the formulation of new directions to ensure greater efficiency and impact. It warmly thanked all the countries that had lent their support to Djibouti, particularly the African Group.
8. The delegation of **India** thanked the Chairperson for her excellent chairing of the Committee, and the Secretariat for its hard work and for the quality of its documents that was evident in the preparation of this session. As an outgoing member of the Committee, the States Parties could count on India’s support as an Observer State and a State Party to the Convention. It thanked the Member States for their support in its idea to have representation of developing countries in the Culture Sector, which would allow developing countries, such as India, to take greater advantage of the opportunities offered under the Convention.
9. The delegation of **Sri Lanka** thanked all the States Parties that supported its successful candidature to the Committee and it congratulated all the newly elected members. Sri Lanka reiterated its commitment to constructively contribute towards the implementation of the Convention through the Committee. It concluded with thanks to the Chairperson, the Secretariat and the Assembly for the work accomplished over the past three days.
10. The **Chairperson** concluded by welcoming the Minister of Arts and Culture of Mauritius, the next Chairperson of the thirteenth session of the Committee who wished to say a few words.
11. The **Minister of Arts and Culture of Mauritius**, H.E. Mr Prithvirajsing Roopun, congratulated the Chairperson for the very able way in which she presided over this session and he commended the Secretary and the Secretariat for their excellent work, as highlighted in the report on the activities presented earlier in the week. Notwithstanding the challenges faced by the Secretariat, and with the support of States Parties, remarkable progress had been made in raising awareness on the promotion and safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage. However, considerable efforts must be targeted towards the most vulnerable countries, such as SIDS, to protect their living intangible cultural heritage through capacity building, financial assistance and expert support. The Minister was convinced that with the right impetus the Convention would soon achieve universality. It was therefore fitting that Mauritius would have the privilege of hosting the next session of the Committee in November 2018. Mauritius was honoured to collaborate towards the organization of this major event, as it is a land of diverse cultural ethnicity and rich intangible cultural elements. The Government, together with local NGOs and local communities, devoted considerable efforts to safeguarding and preserving this unique melting pot of cultural wealth. The country valued this cultural diversity and unity, using it as a source of strength to maintain and consolidate social cohesion, mutual understanding, and respect for the cultures and traditions of others. Mauritius had inscribed the Traditional Sega [in 2014], the Geet-Gawai [2016], and recently the Sega tambour [in 2017], which were inscribed on the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. On behalf of the government of Mauritius, the Minister spoke of his distinct pleasure in inviting and welcoming all States Parties to the Convention, Member States of UNESCO, NGOs, academics and all relevant stakeholders to Mauritius in November 2018 for the thirteenth session of the Intergovernmental Committee. The Minister hoped that the delegations would experience the wealth of Mauritian intangible cultural heritage in person during their stay.
12. Thanking the Minister, the **Chairperson** spoke of her pleasure in welcoming him to this session of the General Assembly, adding that everyone looked forward to the meeting in Mauritius. She invited the Assistant Director-General for Culture to conclude the session.
13. The **Assistant Director-General for Culture** spoke ofhaving been impressed by the interest and commitment of States Parties, non-States Parties, NGOs, observers and individual experts for the Convention, thanking them for their enthusiasm. He thanked the Chairperson for her efficient work that had managed to shorten the session by half a day. This seventh session marked a turning point in the life of the Convention with the adoption of the overall results framework, which would become a very important tool both to measure the impacts of the Convention and to guide States Parties in the way forward in its implementation. As asserted by the younger generation at the Youth Forum, intangible cultural heritage makes us who we are, reminds us of where we come, and gives us the keys to open ourselves up to others. It was essential for building a sense of belonging, and creating and sharing the values of peace. Hence, it was a central element of development policies now more than ever. In this regard, the Convention was a valuable tool for achieving the development goals by 2030. The Assistant Director-General had participated in thetwo dialogue sessions held in parallel to the debates and which highlighted the impact of safeguarding projects, as well as the need to invest in links between education and intangible cultural heritage for the sake of safeguarding in the long term and so that education became more relevant and effective. The transmission of intangible cultural heritage was at the heart of the Convention and part of the common duty towards future generations who in turn would keep this heritage alive as it drives their personal fulfilment. This year, the Secretariat sought to innovate and highlight the living and festive character of intangible cultural heritage by dedicating spaces to the communication and exchange of intangible heritage as it happens on the ground, as well as highlighting the actions of civil society, which was so important. He hoped that the delegations had enjoyed sharing information and their experiences on these platforms and it was hoped that this experience would be repeated. The Assistant Director-Generalremarked thatthe three weeks of celebration of intangible cultural heritage, following Africa week and Latin America and the Caribbean week, were drawing to a close, but they had sent a beautiful message to the world from UNESCO’s Member States. Culture is our future.
14. The **Chairperson** thanked the Assistant Director-Generalfor his intervention and congratulated the members of the Bureau. She spoke of the great privilege of having chaired the Assembly and she was honoured by the trust and support shown in her. She expressed profound thanks to the Secretary and his entire team for their efficient work in the preparation of this Assembly and for their assistance throughout the session. A large part of the success of the Convention lay in their dedication and hard work. She thanked the interpreters, the room clerks and the technicians on whom the Assembly depended for the smooth progress of work. The Chairperson concluded by declaring the seventh session of the General Assembly of States Parties closed.

*[Applause]*

1. . For more information on the Strategy: <https://en.unesco.org/heritage-at-risk/strategy-culture-armed-conflict> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. . For more information on the Warsaw Recommendation: <https://whc.unesco.org/en/news/1826/> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. . Side event: Intangible Cultural Heritage in National Laws - Presentation of the International Comparative Research ‘Osmose’. Read more about the event [here](https://ich.unesco.org/en/6-june-1345-intangible-cultural-heritage-in-national-laws-01003). [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Paragraph 4: ‘which will provide an important tool’ would thus become ‘with the aim to provide an important tool’. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. . For more information on the NGO Forum and #HeritageAlive: <http://www.ichngoforum.org/wg/heritagealive/> [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. . To download the book, go to: <http://www.ichngoforum.org/traditional-medicine/> [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. . Article 29 of the Convention on the Reports by the States Parties states, ‘The States Parties shall submit to the Committee, observing the forms and periodicity to be defined by the Committee, reports on the legislative, regulatory and other measures taken for the implementation of this Convention.’ [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. . For more information on the Nordic initiative: <https://www.nordicsafeguardingpractices.org/> [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. . *Sub-Group 1:* Structure, composition and methods of work of the Governing Bodies (General Conference and Executive Board). *Sub-Group 2:* Structure, composition and methods of work of UNESCO’s international and intergovernmental bodies. More information available [here](https://en.unesco.org/generalconference/workinggroupongovernance?language=fr). [↑](#footnote-ref-9)