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

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

**Twelfth session**

**Jeju Island, Republic of Korea**

**4 to 9 December 2017**

**Item 10 of the Provisional Agenda:**

**Draft amendments to the Operational Directives on periodic reporting**

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| **Summary**The 2017 open-ended intergovernmental working group, which met in Chengdu, China, highlighted the need to reform the periodic reporting mechanism by moving towards a regional cycle of national reporting. This document presents some necessary considerations in this regard, together with draft amendments to the Operational Directives that the Committee may recommend to the General Assembly for approval.**Decision required:** paragraph 17 |

1. As per Article 29 of the Convention and Chapter V of the current Operational Directives, States Parties submit their periodic reports: (i) on the implementation of the Convention at the national level and on the status of elements inscribed on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity (hereafter, the Representative List), and separately; (ii) on the status of elements inscribed on the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding (hereafter, the Urgent Safeguarding List). For the former, States Parties are asked to use Form ICH-10 to submit reports by 15 December of the sixth year following the year of ratification and every sixth year thereafter. As for the latter report, Form ICH-11 is used for submitting reports by 15 December of the fourth year following the year of inscription and every fourth year thereafter.
2. The open-ended intergovernmental working group for the development of an overall results framework for the Convention, held in Chengdu, China, from 11 to 13 June 2017, had the opportunity to debate how the process of adopting an overall results framework provided a unique opportunity to review the periodic reporting mechanism so that it gains in quality, usefulness and timeliness (document [ITH/17/12.COM WG/5](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/ITH-17-12.COM_WG-5-EN.doc)). It convincingly highlighted the need to reform the periodic reporting process to make it more useful for States Parties and for the Convention as a whole and made a recommendation in this sense to the Committee, which is included in its report (Document [ITH/17/12.COM WG/7](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/ITH-17-12.COM_WG-7-EN.doc)). For this reason, it is important to read this document in parallel with document [ITH/17/12.COM/9](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/ITH-17-12.COM-9-EN.docx) and in light of the general debate on the adoption of the overall results framework for the Convention.
3. Periodic reporting is meant, first and foremost, to assist States Parties by providing them with an important learning opportunity to regularly take stock of their achievements and challenges, and to define or redefine their national priorities for safeguarding intangible cultural heritage. It should also serve as an operational tool, making it possible to monitor the effectiveness of the Convention as a whole so as to identify the impact of safeguarding measures and resulting trends. The existing mechanism, however, has faced a number of challenges, calling for due attention by the Committee and has not demonstrated its full potential, despite the wealth of information gathered through its cycles since 2011.
4. First of all, the low rate of submission and the tardiness with which many reports are submitted has hindered the Committee from understanding the impact of the Convention at the national and global level. For instance, this year the Committee was able to receive only eleven reports out of the fifty-two expected and the forty-one still missing are one to six years overdue. The Committee has also highlighted this tendency with regret during its previous sessions, when States with overdue reports were repeatedly encouraged to submit them at the earliest convenience and to fulfil their reporting requirements before submitting new nominations (i.e. [Decision 11.COM 9.a](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/11.COM/9.a) and [Decision 10.COM 6.a](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/10.COM/6.a)).
5. Having just entered the seventh cycle of reporting and since States are requested to report every sixth year after ratification, the Committee in 2017 received reports from States Parties that ratified the Convention in 2004 (their second report) and 2010 (their first report). This will increase not only the number of reports expected every year, but also the uncertainty linked to overdue reports. For example, for the first time this year, the Committee is confronted with the case in which a State Party has been reminded every year for the past six cycles and will theoretically have to report next year for the second time without ever having submitted its first report.
6. Regarding the content of the information collected, the evaluation of the standard-setting work of UNESCO’s Culture Sector,[[1]](#footnote-1) conducted in 2013 by the Internal Oversight Service (IOS), identified a tendency for reports to focus overly on activities without paying sufficient attention to their results and impacts. The IOS considered that this was partly due to the current Form ICH-10, which follows the structure of the relevant Operational Directives and is not sufficiently user-friendly for many States Parties. A further analysis of the challenges faced under the current periodic reporting mechanism was presented, more recently, during the aforementioned open-ended intergovernmental working group (document [ITH/17/12.COM WG/5](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/ITH-17-12.COM_WG-5-EN.doc)), which considered that periodic reporting could be crucial for supporting the implementation of the overall results framework.
7. Following the suggestions made by the open-ended intergovernmental working group, the Secretariat intends to update Form ICH-10. The revision of this form would make it easier to report on the impact of the 2003 Convention and the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage against clear indicators and benchmarks. In this way, submitting States could concentrate on reporting on pertinent safeguarding processes and their effectiveness rather than just describing activities undertaken.
8. In its report to the Committee, 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, as discussed during the present meeting, and prepare draft revisions of the Operational Directives necessary to that end’ (document [ITH/17/12.COM WG/7](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/ITH-17-12.COM_WG-7-EN.doc)). This change will also allow for greater effectiveness in the organization of capacity-building activities, with the development of specific modules dedicated to periodic reports and to the organization of targeted training sessions at the regional level. It is also expected that this proposal will make it easier for States Parties in a given region to benefit from collaboration at the regional or sub-regional levels and the capacity-building activities will represent an opportunity to foster dialogue and exchange regarding national experiences.
9. Operationally, the move towards the regional cycle of national reporting on the implementation of the Convention and on the status of elements inscribed on the Representative List requires several steps before the new calendar can be fully put into place. It is proposed that during the thirteen session of the Committee in 2018 the reports to be submitted by the deadline of 15 December 2017 be examined for the last time under the existing procedure. After the seventh session of the General Assembly in June 2018, once the latter has approved the final version of the overall results framework, the Secretariat will be able to start revising the periodic reporting Form ICH-10 in order to align it to the framework and begin drafting the capacity-building materials. This transition period would start in the second half of 2018 and last for all of 2019, which means that the submission of periodic reports on the implementation of the Convention will be suspended for the deadline of 15 December 2018 and 2019, including for overdue reports. The updated Form ICH-10 as well as the new capacity-building materials would then be presented to the Committee at its fourteenth session in 2019. By early 2020, the Secretariat would be ready to start the new procedures for periodic reporting on the implementation of the Convention in the first region.
10. This transition will be partially assisted thanks to the generous voluntary supplementary contribution of the Republic of Korea to the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund, in the amount of US$300,000, which was approved by the Committee at its eleventh session ([Decision 11.COM 6](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/11.COM/6)). The activities foreseen under this contribution include the alignment of the periodic reporting mechanism with the overall results framework of the 2003 Convention, the implementation of the new reporting system and the establishment of an online reporting tool.
11. The regional cycle of national reporting could be for six years, with one year dedicated to each electoral group of UNESCO. The order of examination by electoral groups for each six-year regional cycle could be established by the Committee through a decision to be taken at the beginning of such cycle, which could be envisaged as follows. The cycle would start with actions undertaken in 2020 in the first region. Progress in that region would be presented to the Committee at its fifteenth session at the end of that year. The reports from States Parties in the first region would then be due by 15 December 2020 for examination by the Committee at its sixteenth session in 2021. At the same time, States Parties in the second region would start preparing their periodic reports in 2021 for their submission by 15 December 2021. A similar process would be repeated for the rest of the regions until the Committee has finished examining the reports from all regions in 2026. The second cycle could then start in 2027. For States newly ratifying the Convention in the course of a regional cycle, consideration will have to be given to the amount of time between ratification and their first due report. The calendar for the first regional cycle of national reporting could be established by the Committee already at its thirteenth session in 2018 after the adoption of the new Operational Directives by the General Assembly.
12. For the time being, the proposal is not to change the procedure for reporting on the status of elements inscribed on the Urgent Safeguarding List. This is mainly because of the reflections that the Committee has started on the future of the Lists and some important mechanisms related to the Lists, such as the transfer and removal of inscribed elements. Once these reflections have advanced, the Committee will be in a better position to decide whether to harmonize the reporting mechanism related to the Urgent Safeguarding List with the regional calendar or keep it as a separate system as it currently stands, on a quadrennial and inscription year-based schedule.
13. Moreover, no revision is proposed for the procedure for States non party to the Convention reporting on elements inscribed on the Representative List, which currently concerns only one State (the Russian Federation). This will remain a sexennial reporting process, based on the year of incorporation of Masterpieces on the Representative List.
14. The new approach to periodic reporting as proposed in this document would require amendments to be made to the Operational Directives, as presented in its Annex, which the Committee may decide to recommend to the General Assembly for approval.
15. In addition to the above-mentioned revisions to move towards a regional cycle of national reporting, the Secretariat proposes revising the Operational Directives (paragraphs 152, 161 and 169) to take into account the fact that periodic reports would be submitted online from 2018 onwards. Thanks to the generous contribution of the Republic of Korea, as mentioned above, the Secretariat has been able to develop an online tool for States to complete their reports online. This new possibility will simplify data entry, allow for a timely follow-up by the Secretariat on the reporting progress and improve the dissemination of the data contained in periodic reports. The plan is for this tool to be made available, on an experimental and voluntary basis, in time for the submission deadline of reports on elements inscribed on the Urgent Safeguarding List, which is 15 December 2017. The experience gained with Form ICH-11 will form the basis for fine-tuning, in 2018, the online tool for periodic reports on the implementation of the Convention (Form ICH-10).
16. Finally, the text of paragraph 166 is revised to conform to the existing practice for the publication of reports and their overview. It is also proposed that paragraph 167 be deleted since its second half would now be better placed under paragraph 166. It is also proposed that paragraph 162, on reports on the Urgent Safeguarding List, be revised in order 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 ([Decision 10.COM 6.b](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/10.COM/6.b)).
17. The Committee may wish to adopt the following decision:

DRAFT DECISION 12.COM 10

The Committee,

1. Having examined document ITH/17/12.COM/10,
2. Recalling Articles 7(f), 29 and 30 of the Convention,
3. Taking note of the discussion of the open-ended intergovernmental working group on the development of an overall results framework for the Convention, as reflected in document [ITH/17/12.COM/9](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/ITH-17-12.COM-9-EN.docx),
4. Decides to reform the periodic reporting process with the aim of enhancing its quality, usefulness and timeliness, and ensuring that it is clearly in line with the overarching goals of implementing the 2003 Convention and allowing for more effective monitoring with a view to achieving these goals;
5. Also decides to amend the periodicity of the submission of national reports under Article 29 of the Convention in order for States Parties to submit their report every six years on the basis of a regional rotation;
6. Takes note that the calendar for the first regional cycle of national reporting will be established by the Committee at its thirteenth session in 2018, and that a transition period necessary for reforming the periodic reporting mechanism will be followed by the submission of national reports from the first region on 15 December 2020 for examination by the Committee at its sixteenth session in 2021;
7. Requests that the Secretariat inform the Committee on the transition towards a reform of the periodic reporting mechanism at its thirteenth session;
8. Recommends that the General Assembly approve the amendments to the Operational Directives for the Implementation of the Convention, as annexed to this decision;
9. Further decides to examine, at its thirteen session in 2018, the periodic reports on the implementation of the Convention to be submitted by the deadline of 15 December 2017 as the last batch under the system that has existed so far.

**ANNEX**

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|  | **Operational Directives** |  | **Proposed amendments** |
| **V.1** | **Reports by States Parties on the implementation of the Convention** | **V.1** | No change. |
| 151. | Each State Party to the Convention periodically submits to the Committee reports on the legislative, regulatory and other measures taken for the implementation of the Convention. States Parties are encouraged to complement the data gathered on the implementation of the Convention with information provided by relevant non-governmental organizations. | 151. | No change. |
| 152. | The State Party submits its periodic report to the Committee by 15 December of the sixth year following the year in which it deposited its instrument of ratification, acceptance or approval, and every sixth year thereafter. Form ICH-10 is used for such reports, available at [www.unesco.org/culture/ich](http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich) or on request from the Secretariat. The reports shall include only the information requested in the form. | 152. | ~~The State Party submits its periodic report~~ **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.** ~~of the sixth year following the year in which it deposited its instrument of ratification, acceptance or approval, and every sixth year thereafter~~.**States Parties use the periodic reporting process to enhance active regional exchange and cooperation.**Form ICH-10~~is used for such reports, available at~~ [~~www.unesco.org/culture/ich~~](http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich) ~~or on request from the Secretariat. The reports shall include only the information requested in the form.~~ **has to be completed online by each State Party (**[**https://ich.unesco.org/**](https://ich.unesco.org/)**) and is revised at appropriate intervals by the Secretariat.** |
| 153. | The State Party reports on the legislative, regulatory and other measures taken for implementation of the Convention at the national level, including:1. drawing up of inventories of the intangible cultural heritage present in its territory, as described in Articles 11 and 12 of the Convention;
2. other safeguarding measures as referred to in Articles 11 and 13 of the Convention, including:
3. adopting a general policy aimed at promoting the function of intangible cultural heritage in society and integrating its safeguarding into planning programmes;
4. fostering scientific, technical and artistic studies with a view to effective safeguarding;
5. facilitating, to the extent possible, access to information relating to intangible cultural heritage while respecting customary practices governing access to specific aspects of it.
 | 153. | No change. |
| 154. | The State Party reports on the legislative, regulatory and other measures taken at the national level to strengthen institutional capacities for safeguarding intangible cultural heritage, as described in Article 13 of the Convention, including:1. designating or establishing one or more competent bodies for safeguarding its intangible cultural heritage;
2. strengthening institutions for training in intangible cultural heritage management and transmission of this heritage;
3. establishing documentation institutions for intangible cultural heritage and, to the extent possible, facilitating access to them.
 | 154. | No change. |
| 155. | The State Party reports on the legislative, regulatory and other measures taken at the national level to ensure greater recognition of, respect for and enhancement of intangible cultural heritage, in particular those referred to in Article 14 of the Convention:1. educational, awareness-raising and information programmes;
2. educational and training programmes within the communities and groups concerned;
3. capacity-building activities for the safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage;
4. non-formal means of transmitting knowledge;
5. education for the protection of natural spaces and places of memory.
 | 155. | No change. |
| 156. | The State Party reports on the measures taken by it at the bilateral, subregional, regional and international levels for the implementation of the Convention, including measures of international cooperation such as the exchange of information and experience, and other joint initiatives, as referred to in Article 19 of the Convention. | 156. | No change. |
| 157. | The State Party reports on the current status of all elements of intangible cultural heritage present in its territory that have been inscribed on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. The State Party shall pay special attention to the role of gender and shall endeavour to ensure the widest possible participation of the communities, groups, and, where applicable, individuals concerned as well as relevant non-governmental organizations during the process of preparation of such reports, which shall address, for each element concerned:1. the element’s social and cultural functions;
2. an assessment of its viability and the current risks it faces, if any;
3. its contribution to the goals of the List;
4. the efforts to promote or reinforce the element, particularly the implementation of any measures that might have been necessary as a consequence of its inscription;
5. the participation of communities, groups and individuals as well as relevant non-governmental organizations in safeguarding the element and their continued commitment to its further safeguarding.
 | 157. | No change. |
| 158. | The State Party reports on the institutional context for the element inscribed on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, including:1. the competent body(ies) involved in its management and/or safeguarding;
2. the organization(s) of the community or group concerned with the element and its safeguarding.
 | 158. | No change. |
| 159. | States Parties shall respond, in a timely manner, to specific requests addressed to them by the Committee for additional information, if needed between the deadlines set out in paragraph 152 above. | 159. | States Parties shall respond, in a timely manner, to specific requests addressed to them by the Committee for additional information, if needed **and independently of the regional cycle set out by the Committee,** ~~between the deadlines~~ **in compliance with** paragraph 152 above. |
| **V.2** | **Reports by States Parties on elements inscribed on the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding** | **V.2** | No change. |
| 160. | Each State Party shall submit to the Committee reports on the status of elements of intangible cultural heritage present in its territory that have been inscribed on the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding at its request or, in cases of extreme urgency, after consultation with it. The State Party shall endeavour to involve as broadly as possible the communities, groups and, where applicable, individuals concerned as well as relevant non-governmental organizations during the process of preparation of such reports. | 160. | No change. |
| 161. | Such reports shall normally be submitted to the Committee by 15 December of the fourth year following the year in which the element was inscribed, and every fourth year thereafter. Form ICH-11 is used for such reports, available at [www.unesco.org/culture/ich](http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich) or on request from the Secretariat. The reports shall include only the information requested in the form. At the time of inscription the Committee may on a case-by-case basis establish a specific timetable for reporting that will take precedence over the normal four-year cycle. | 161. | Such reports shall normally be submitted to the Committee by 15 December of the fourth year following the year in which the element was inscribed, and every fourth year thereafter. Form ICH-11 ~~is used for such reports, available at~~ [~~www.unesco.org/culture/ich~~](http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich) ~~or on request from the Secretariat. The reports shall include only the information requested in the form.~~ **must be completed online by each State Party (**[**https://ich.unesco.org/**](https://ich.unesco.org/)**) and is revised at appropriate intervals by the Secretariat.** At the time of inscription, the Committee may establish a specific timetable for reporting on a case-by-case basis, which will take precedence over the normal four-year cycle. |
| 162. | The State Party shall pay special attention to the role of gender and shall report on the current status of the element, including:1. its social and cultural functions;
2. an assessment of its viability and the current risks it faces;
3. the impacts of the efforts to safeguard the element, particularly the implementation of the safeguarding plan that was submitted at the time of nomination;
4. the participation of communities, groups and individuals as well as relevant non-governmental organizations in safeguarding the element and their continued commitment to its further safeguarding.
 | 162. | The State Party shall pay special attention to the role of gender and shall report on the current status of the element, including:1. its social and cultural functions;
2. an assessment of its viability and the current risks it faces;
3. the impacts of the efforts to safeguard the element, particularly the implementation of the safeguarding plan that was submitted at the time of nomination;
4. **an update of the safeguarding plan included in the nomination file or in the previous report;**
5. the participation of communities, groups and individuals as well as relevant non-governmental organizations in safeguarding the element and their continued commitment to its further safeguarding.
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| 163. | The State Party shall report on the institutional context for safeguarding the element inscribed on the List, including:1. the competent body(ies) involved in its safeguarding;
2. the organization(s) of the community or group concerned with the element and its safeguarding.
 | 163. | No change. |
| 164. | States Parties shall respond, in a timely manner, to specific requests addressed to them by the Committee for additional information, if needed between the deadlines set out in paragraph 161 above. | 164. | No change. |
| **V.3** | **Receipt and processing of reports** | **V.3** | No change. |
| 165. | Upon receipt of reports from States Parties, the Secretariat shall register them and acknowledge receipt. If a report is incomplete, the State Party will be advised how to complete it. | 165. | No change. |
| 166. | The Secretariat transmits to the Committee an overview of all reports received four weeks prior to its session. The overview and the reports are also made available on-line for consultation. | 166. | The Secretariat transmits to the Committee an overview of all reports received **as defined in paragraph 152** four weeks prior to its session. The overview **is** ~~and the reports are~~ also made available online for **public** consultation, **together with the reports in the language in which they were submitted by the States Parties, unless the Committee decides otherwise in exceptional cases**. |
| 167. | Following the session at which they are examined by the Committee, reports are made available to the public for information, unless decided otherwise by the Committee in exceptional cases. | ~~167.~~ | ~~Following the session at which they are examined by the Committee, reports are made available to the public for information, unless decided otherwise by the Committee in exceptional cases.~~ |
| **V.4** | **Reports by States non party to the Convention on elements inscribed on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity** | **V.4** | No change. |
| 168. | Paragraphs 157–159 and 165–167 of these directives shall apply fully to States non party to the Convention that have in their territories items proclaimed Masterpieces incorporated in the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, and that have consented to accept the rights and obligations attendant thereon. | ~~168~~ 167. | Paragraphs 157–159 and 165–16~~7~~**6** of these directives shall apply fully to States non party to the Convention that have in their territories items proclaimed as Masterpieces incorporated on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, and that have consented to accept the rights and obligations attendant thereon. |
| 169. | Such reports shall be submitted to the Committee by States non party by 15 December 2014, and every sixth year thereafter. Form ICH-10 is used for such reports, available at [www.unesco.org/culture/ich](http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich) or on request from the Secretariat. The reports shall include only the information requested in the form. | ~~169~~ 168. | Such reports shall be submitted to the Committee by States non party by 15 December 2014, and every sixth year thereafter. Form ICH-10 ~~is used for such reports, available at~~ [~~www.unesco.org/culture/ich~~](http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich) ~~or on request from the Secretariat. The reports shall include only the information requested in the form.~~ **must be completed online by each State Party (**[**https://ich.unesco.org/**](https://ich.unesco.org/)**) and is revised at appropriate intervals by the Secretariat.** |

1. . Evaluation of the standard-setting work of UNESCO’s Culture Sector prepared by UNESCO’s Internal Oversight Service (IOS), *Evaluation of UNESCO’s Standard‐setting Work of the Culture Sector: Part I – 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage*, available in [English](http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0022/002230/223095e.pdf)|[French](http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0022/002230/223095f.pdf)|[Spanish](http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0022/002230/223095s.pdf)|[Arabic](http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0022/002230/223095a.pdf). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)