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# Intangible Cultural Heritage

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**UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC  
AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION**

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

**First Session**  
**Algiers, Algeria, 18-19 November 2006**

**Item 6 of the Provisional Agenda: Advisory assistance to the Committee**

**Decision required:** paragraph 8

1. Unlike the World Heritage Convention, the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (“the Convention”) does not mention specific advisory bodies that are to assist the Committee. According to Article 9 of the Convention, the Committee has to *propose to the General Assembly the accreditation of non-governmental organizations with recognized competence in the field of the intangible cultural heritage to act in an advisory capacity to the Committee, and shall also propose to the General Assembly the criteria for and modalities of such accreditation.*
2. In the framework of the Proclamation of Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity, UNESCO established relations with several non-governmental organizations that assisted the Proclamation Jury. For the purpose of the Proclamation of Masterpieces a system was set up that made it possible to identify, analyse and safeguard intangible cultural heritage (“ICH”) elements, as a rule in cooperation or consultation with the groups or communities concerned. The NGOs that were involved in the Proclamation programme were invited to attend as observers at the first session of the Convention’s General Assembly (June 2006).
3. In order to elaborate an efficient and transparent mechanism of assistance, the Committee may wish to take into account experiences from both the Proclamation programme and the World Heritage Committee. The experience with the Masterpieces Proclamation showed that the field of ICH is too complex to be covered by just two or three international NGOs, but also that coordination is to be ensured between various advisors and advisory as well as consultative organizations to reach efficiency.
4. Taking into account the above, the Committee might discuss the desirability of the establishment of an umbrella advisory body, composed of representatives of accredited NGOs and of a limited number of private persons with widely recognized competence in the field of ICH. Such a body might organise its work through an executive bureau, which may be assisted by the UNESCO Secretariat whenever needed.
5. The function of such an advisory body might be to assist the Committee in:
  - a. monitoring the implementation of the Convention (Article 7 (a));
  - b. making recommendations on measures for safeguarding (Article 7 (b));
  - c. examining reports submitted by States Parties (Article 7 (f));
  - d. reviewing and recommending nominations for inscription on the lists mentioned under Articles 16 and 17 and in selecting proposals as mentioned under Article 18;
  - e. any other task the Committee may entrust to it.
6. The Committee may also wish to discuss ways of consulting groups and communities, since the Convention explicitly insists, in various articles, on the involvement of communities, groups and – where appropriate – individuals in the identification and definition of their ICH, as well as in safeguarding activities and their management (Articles 2.1, 11 (b), 13 (d)(ii), 14, 15 and 21(b)). Since past experiences have shown that the views of experts from within and outside communities may be complementary, the Committee may discuss whether for the purpose of consulting communities it wishes that a separate body be created, composed of practitioners and tradition bearers, which would, inter alia, give its comments on the evaluations and recommendations made by an advisory body as mentioned above. Instead of having a separate body, the Committee

may also wish to envisage that a number of rotating representatives of communities be included in the proposed umbrella advisory body.

7. In the near future, the General Assembly will have to discuss and approve a proposal by the Committee concerning the criteria and modalities for the accreditation of advisory organizations. Until then, the Committee may wish to invite a limited number of experts for consultation on a temporary basis. For this purpose, the Committee might invite to its meetings, in order to consult them on specific matters, representatives from NGOs that have advised the Masterpieces Jury as well as some private persons with recognized competence in the various fields of the intangible cultural heritage. The NGOs in question are the International Council for Traditional Music, the International Council of Museums, the International Council for Philosophy and Humanistic Studies, the International Social Science Council and the International Theatre Institute.
8. The Committee may wish to adopt the following draft Decision:

**DRAFT DECISION 1.COM 6**

The Committee,

1. Having examined document ITH/06/1.COM/CONF.204/6;
2. Recalling articles 8 and 9 of the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage;
3. Considering that it wishes to be assisted by non-governmental organizations that assume functions such as presented in paragraph 5 of the document mentioned above;
4. Welcomes that an umbrella advisory body be established as referred to in paragraph 4 of aforementioned document;
5. Requests the Director-General to submit a proposal on the criteria that would determine the accreditation of non-governmental organizations with recognized competence in the field of the intangible cultural heritage, at its second session;
6. Invites, in the mean time, to its meetings, on a temporary basis, one representative of each of the following non-governmental organizations: [...].