



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization



Intangible  
Cultural  
Heritage

## 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage

*Keep it lively,  
pass it on!*



# 13<sup>th</sup> session of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage

26 November – 1 December 2018, Port Louis, Republic of Mauritius


## Press kit




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This press kit is prepared by the Secretariat of the 2003 Convention. The information that it contains is accurate at the time of preparation. For more and up-to-date information, please visit the website of the Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage:

<https://ich.unesco.org>

**Version 19 November 2018**

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# Practical information

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## DATE

Monday, 26 November –  
Saturday, 1 December 2018

Preceded by an opening ceremony  
at 6 p.m., Sunday, 25 November 2018

## VENUE

Swami Vivekananda International  
Convention Centre (SVICC), Port Louis,  
Republic of Mauritius

Address: Les Pailles 11  
Port Louis, Republic of Mauritius

Contact telephone: Tel.: (+230) 2060500  
Website: <http://www.svicc.mu>

## AGENDA

The agenda of the meeting can be found  
from the [page dedicated to the Committee](#).  
An online [calendar of events](#) is also  
available.

## PRESS

UNESCO contact:  
Ms Lucia Iglesias  
[l.iglesias@unesco.org](mailto:l.iglesias@unesco.org)

The thirteenth session of the  
Intergovernmental Committee is open to  
all press. Accreditation is mandatory to  
participate in the event and can be obtained  
by [registering online](#).

**A press conference** will be held at 12.30  
p.m. on Monday, 26 november 2018 at  
SVICC, Port Louis.

**A press room** will be provided for the  
press to cover the thirteenth session of the  
Intergovernmental Committee at SVICC,  
Port Louis.

**Press resources** can be found on  
[the dedicated page](#).

Request concerning the use of photos and  
videos related to nominations files can be  
sent to the following address:  
[m.tukaj@unesco.org](mailto:m.tukaj@unesco.org)

**A live webcast** will be available in English,  
French, and Arabic.

The webcast link may be found [here](#).

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# Overview of the thirteenth session of the Committee

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**The thirteenth session of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage will take place in Port Louis, Republic of Mauritius, from Monday, 26 November to Saturday, 1 December 2018.**

Over the six days, the twenty-four States Members of the Committee, elected by the General Assembly of the 2003 Convention, are to discuss a number of issues that are important for the safeguarding of living heritage around the world.

As every year, the international cooperation mechanisms established under the 2003 Convention such as inscriptions on the Lists, Register of Good Safeguarding Practices and requests for International Assistance together with the examination of national reports are inscribed on the agenda of the meeting. On this occasion, the Committee will also examine the reform of the periodic reporting mechanism, further discuss the roles of accredited NGOs, reflect on how to follow up on issues related to elements already inscribed, as well as continue its deliberations on the complex role that communities play in safeguarding their living heritage at risk in emergencies.

## MEMBERS OF THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL COMMITTEE

- Group I:** Austria, Cyprus, Netherlands  
**Group II:** Armenia, Azerbaijan, Poland  
**Group III:** Colombia, Cuba, Guatemala, Jamaica  
**Group IV:** China, Japan, Kazakhstan, Philippines, Sri Lanka  
**Group V(a):** Cameroon, Djibouti, Mauritius, Senegal, Togo, Zambia  
**Group V(b):** Kuwait, Lebanon, Palestine

## BUREAU OF THE THIRTEENTH SESSION OF THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL COMMITTEE

- Chairperson:** H.E. Mr Prithvirajsing Roopun (Republic of Mauritius)  
**Vice-Chairs:** Cyprus, Armenia, Guatemala, Philippines and Lebanon  
**Rapporteur:** Ms Gabriele Detschmann (Austria)

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# Intangible cultural heritage and the Convention explained

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## INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE

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Living heritage that provides a sense of identity and continuity

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Cultural heritage does not end at monuments and collections of objects. It also includes a wealth of knowledge, skills and expressions transmitted from generation to generation. This is intangible cultural heritage, a living form of heritage. It evolves as we adapt our practices and traditions in response to our environments and contributes to giving us a sense of identity and continuity, providing a link from our past, through the present, and into our future.

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Intangible cultural heritage is community-based and inclusive.

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Intangible cultural heritage can only be heritage when it is recognized as such by the communities, groups or individuals that create, maintain and transmit it. It is inclusive and should be first and foremost relevant and meaningful for the communities. It also contributes to social cohesion, encouraging a sense of identity and responsibility which helps individuals to feel part of one or different communities and of society at large.

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Intangible cultural heritage contributes to diversity, dialogue, and development.

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Safeguarding intangible cultural heritage is crucial for protecting cultural diversity in today's world. Being aware of the intangible cultural heritage of different communities helps intercultural dialogue, and can encourage mutual respect. It can also be instrumental in ensuring sustainable development, as intangible cultural heritage has an important impact on food security, health, education, the sustainable use of natural resources and the prevention of natural disasters. Traditional knowledge and practice concerning nature and the universe, for example, can contribute to environmental sustainability and the protection of biodiversity through the sustainable safeguarding of natural resources.

[Read more](#)

## INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE DOMAINS

The Convention proposes five broad 'domains' in which intangible cultural heritage is manifested. This list of domains is intended to be inclusive rather than exclusive; it is not necessarily meant to be 'complete'.

oral traditions and expressions, including language as a vehicle of intangible cultural heritage

performing arts

social practices, rituals and festive events

knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe

traditional craftsmanship

## COMMUNITIES AT THE CORE OF SAFEGUARDING

Safeguarding does not mean protection or conservation in the usual sense, as this may cause intangible cultural heritage to become fixed or frozen. 'Safeguarding' means ensuring the viability of intangible cultural heritage. It is about ensuring its continuous recreation and evolution for the transmission of knowledge, skills and meaning from one generation to another.

The communities which bear and practise intangible cultural heritage are the people best placed to identify and safeguard it. That is why safeguarding measures must always be developed and implemented by communities themselves. Moreover, safeguarding measures should respect the customary practices governing access to specific aspects of such heritage, for example sacred intangible cultural heritage manifestations or those that are considered secret.

## THE CONVENTION

The General Conference of UNESCO adopted the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage at its 32nd session in 2003. The Convention is the international community's first binding multilateral instrument intended to safeguard and raise awareness of intangible cultural heritage. It became a milestone in the evolution of international policies for promoting cultural diversity as it was the first time the international community had recognized a need to support this kind of cultural manifestations and expressions that, until then, had not benefited from such a large legal and programmatic framework.

The main goal of the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage is to encourage and support countries in '[taking] the necessary measures to ensure the safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage present in [their] territory' (Article 11 of the Convention).

*Read the text of the Convention at: <https://ich.unesco.org/en/convention>*

## Highlight: some facts and figures about the Convention

### Ratification of the Convention

As of November 2018, **178** out of 195 Member States of UNESCO have ratified the 2003 Convention.

For more information, please refer to the [‘States parties webpage’](#).

### New States Parties to the Convention in 2018

Kiribati, Singapore,  
Solomon Islands

### International Assistance

**62** projects from **36** countries have been provided with financial assistance from the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund since 2008, in the total amount of **US\$5.7 million**.

For more information on the projects: <https://ich.unesco.org/en/project>.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

You will find information related to the questions below on [the dedicated FAQ page](#).

- What are the responsibilities of States that ratify the Convention?
- What is the difference between the 1972 World Heritage Convention, the 2003 Convention for Intangible Cultural Heritage ?
- What is the impact of inscription for communities and States?
- Once elements are included on the Lists, what steps does UNESCO take to safeguard them?
- What are the risks and threats of inscription on the Lists?
- If an element is on the Representative List, does it mean that it is the best in comparison to other similar elements?
- Are languages in danger or religions eligible for inscription?
- What happens in the case of controversial cultural practices, contrary to universal human rights?

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More Q and A, [interview](#) featuring Secretary of the 2003 Convention, Tim Curtis.

Tune in to the [podcast](#) that talks about living heritage and UNESCO's efforts to safeguard it for the future.



## THE GLOBAL CAPACITY-BUILDING PROGRAMME OF THE CONVENTION

One of UNESCO's top priorities for implementing the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage is its global capacity-building programme. It intends to strengthen countries' capacities to safeguard intangible cultural heritage (ICH) and to harness its potential for sustainable development, while promoting broad public knowledge and support for the Convention's concepts and objectives.

The Programme has so far focused on addressing the most urgent needs identified for the implementation of the Convention, such as the:

- strengthening of competent bodies and institutions and consultative mechanisms to cater for the specific needs of ICH;
- revision of policies and strategies for safeguarding in relevant policy areas (culture, education, environment, etc.);
- development of community-based inventorying and safeguarding methodologies; and
- effective participation of States in the international cooperation mechanisms of the Convention.

Some achievements in recent years:

**3200+** people trained with skills and knowledge related to intangible cultural heritage safeguarding

**240+** training workshops provided to **102** countries

**130+** UNESCO-trained facilitators supporting countries to build their safeguarding capacities

**50+** thematic training units developed and available on-line

The present Programme aims to extend the reach of the capacity-building strategy to about twenty additional countries, taking into account countries that have not yet benefitted from the Programme, as well as those that have completed a project cycle, but whose needs have only partially been met. Many countries furthermore request capacity building in one of the more recent Programme areas, such as the preparation of safeguarding plans, safeguarding and sustainable development, ethics in safeguarding and preparing International Assistance requests. The Programme also takes into account countries that wish to focus on developing national networks of trainers to conduct and sustain capacity building at the country level.

In line with UNESCO's Medium-Term Strategy for 2014-2021, the Secretariat will consider country requests from Africa in particular, which is, along with Gender Equality, a global priority of UNESCO. It will also ensure that careful consideration is given to requests from the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and Small Island Developing States (SIDS), as they remain particularly vulnerable to crises.

*For more information on the capacity-building programme, please visit [the dedicated webpage](#).*

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# Mechanisms of the Convention for international cooperation

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## FOUR MECHANISMS

Only States Parties to the Convention can submit nominations to the two Lists, proposals of Good Safeguarding Practices and International Assistance requests. States are encouraged to cooperate among one another to propose multinational nominations.

### **List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding**

The List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding is composed of intangible heritage elements that communities and States Parties concerned consider require urgent measures to keep them alive. Inscriptions on this List require a safeguarding plan prepared by the State Party with the participation and involvement of the communities.

[\*Read more on the criteria\*](#)

### **Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity**

The Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity presents intangible heritage elements that help demonstrate the diversity of such heritage and raise awareness about the importance of safeguarding intangible cultural heritage in general, rather than specific elements themselves.

[\*Read more on the criteria\*](#)

### **Register of Good Safeguarding Practices**

The Register of Good Safeguarding Practices highlights programmes, projects and activities that best reflect the principles and objectives of the Convention and aims to stimulate exchanges and international cooperation concerning programmes that have had positive effects and that constitute a source of inspiration for States and communities interested in the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage.

[\*Read more on the criteria\*](#)

## International Assistance

In the spirit of assisting State Parties' efforts to safeguard their intangible cultural heritage, International Assistance may be requested for the following purposes:

- (a) the safeguarding of heritage inscribed on the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding;
- (b) the preparation of inventories;
- (c) support for programmes, projects and activities carried out at the national, subregional and regional levels aimed at safeguarding intangible cultural heritage.

[Read more about International Assistance](#)

## SUBMISSION, EVALUATION AND EXAMINATION PROCESS

- Phase 1** Files have to be received by the Secretariat by 31 March at the latest, to be examined by the Committee twenty months later.
- Phase 2** The Secretariat checks the files and requests missing information from the submitting State; revised files must be completed and returned to the Secretariat by 30 September.
- Phase 3** The files will be evaluated by the Evaluation Body, which is composed of twelve members appointed by the Committee: six experts qualified in the various fields of intangible cultural heritage, representatives of States Parties non-Members of the Committee, and six accredited non-governmental organizations. The Evaluation Body evaluates the files in private sessions and issues evaluation reports. These evaluation reports are sent to the Committee and are made available online for public consultation four weeks before the annual session of the Committee.
- Phase 4** At its annual November/December session, in the following year of submission, the Intergovernmental Committee examines nominations to the Lists, proposals of Good Safeguarding Practices and International Assistance requests greater than US\$100,000 and makes decisions.

Consult the complete nomination/proposal/request files (forms, supporting documents, photos and videos) as submitted by the States at the following [link](#), or the summaries of nominations and contact information [here](#).

Elements inscribed and selected during previous Committee sessions can be viewed at: <https://ich.unesco.org/en/lists>.

Here are also some relevant facts and figures.

### **List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding**

**52** elements inscribed from **28** countries, of which one multinational

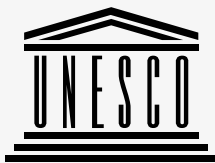
### **Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity**

**399** elements inscribed from **112** countries.

**32** multinational elements on the Representative List.

### **Register of Good Safeguarding Practices**

**19** elements selected from **15** countries, of which one multinational



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Living Heritage

Culture Sector

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