

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATES PARTIES TO THE
CONVENTION FOR THE SAFEGUARDING OF THE INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE**

**Extraordinary session
Paris, UNESCO Headquarters
9 November 2006**

ORAL REPORT

**Presented by Mr O. Faruk LOĞOĞLU
Ambassador, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Turkey,
Vice-President of the National Commission for UNESCO
Paris, 9 November 2006**

Mr President of the General Assembly,
Ms Françoise Rivière, Assistant Director-General for Culture,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen

I would like to thank all States Parties to the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage for having trusted me again as Rapporteur of this extraordinary session of the General Assembly. I will try to reflect as faithfully and as objectively as possible our deliberations of this short but fruitful extraordinary session. I would highly appreciate your indulgence for any insufficiencies or omissions that may occur in my report.

I will concentrate on the main thrust of our debate and will not mention the names of each delegation who took the floor. Furthermore, allow me to indicate that all resolutions that have been adopted will be attached as an annex to the Draft Summary Records of this extraordinary session of our General Assembly.

While we regret the absence of H.E. Mr Mohammed Bedjaoui, the patience and wisdom of H.E. Mr Luiz Filipe de Macedo Soares during this day of our session created a constructive working ambiance that allowed us, within the proposed time schedule, to address our issues and to accomplish our task. However, I would also like to thank all delegations who, endowed with a deep sense of responsibility, succeeded in finding a solution to the most difficult issue on our

agenda: the distribution of seats on the Intergovernmental Committee on the basis of the principle of equitable geographical distribution.

Before summarising the debates, I would like once again to mention thankfully the open spirit and wish for mutual understanding of all Delegations. I would also like to congratulate the Director-General for the quality of the documents prepared and to reiterate our high appreciation for the Secretariat and the team of our Secretary for their steady devotion to their work in favour of the intangible cultural heritage. Special thanks go to the interpreters.

Allow me now to present my report:

Item 1: Opening of the session

This extraordinary session of the General Assembly of the States Parties to the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage took place on Thursday 9 November with an official opening presided over by the Director-General.

Ms Rivière, the Assistant Director-General for Culture, recalled that the Bureau of the General Assembly will remain unchanged until the next session of the General Assembly in June 2008. As, due to his heavy charges, Mr Bedjaoui could not personally attend, Ms Rivière invited the General Assembly to designate one of the Vice-Presidents as President ad interim. Five States Parties took the floor to propose that the representative of Brazil assume the role of President.

H. E. Mr Macedo Soares was chosen, by acclamation, as President ad interim of the extraordinary session of the General Assembly.

Item 2: Adoption of the Agenda and Timetable

The agenda was adopted without modification.

Item 3: Distribution of seats among electoral groups in the Intergovernmental Committee

Introducing item 3 of the agenda, the President recalled that, at the session of the General Assembly in June 2006, the Rules of Procedure were adopted but, concerning Rule 13.2, the possibility to fix an upper limit for the number of seats per electoral group in the Intergovernmental Committee was referred for further examination by the General Assembly at

its next session. The President reviewed the distribution of seats among electoral groups in the 18-member Committee that was elected on 29 June last. Item 3 led to intensive debate: some delegations were in favour of fixing an upper limit of seats at this extraordinary session; other delegations were not in favour of this option; again others preferred to postpone the discussion of this item to the next ordinary session of the General Assembly. As no consensus was emerging, the Delegate of Gabon, speaking on behalf of the African Group, declared that Group V(a) was willing to cede one seat to Group I, on an exceptional basis and on the understanding that this proposal was linked to the decision not to establishment an upper limit of seats at this meeting. This proposal was greeted by acclamation and Draft resolution 1.EXT.GA 3 option 1 was amended accordingly and adopted with a new paragraph 3 and 4, expressing appreciation to the African Group for its proposal and deciding to postpone the examination of this issue to the next ordinary session of the General Assembly.

Item 4: Election of six additional States Members of the Intergovernmental Committee

The president recalled that, in conformity with article 5 of the Convention, the number of States Members of the Committee shall increase to 24 once the number of the States Parties to the Convention reaches 50.

The Assembly decided to proceed with the election of the six additional Committee members taking into account the generous proposal of Group V(a).

Since for Group III and Vb the number of candidates was identical to the number of seats to be filled, and since for Group IV there was no seat to be filled, the General Assembly proceeded with the election of additional Members for the Committee for electoral groups I, II, and V(a).

After a recall of rule 15 of the Rules of Procedure and under the careful supervision of the tellers, the representatives from India and Peru, the following States Parties were elected as Members of the Committee:

Group I: France
Group II: Belarus
Group III: Bolivia
Group V(a): Central African Republic, Mali
Group V(b): Syria

I would like to inform the General Assembly that one ballot was invalid and there was one abstention.

The Intergovernmental Committee consequently is composed of the following 24 members :

- Group I : Belgium, France, Turkey;
- Group II : Belarus, Bulgaria, Estonia, Hungary, Romania;
- Group III : Bolivia, Brazil, Mexico, Peru;
- Group IV : China, India, Japan, Viet Nam;
- Group Va : Central African Republic, Gabon, Mali, Nigeria, Senegal;
- Group Vb : Algeria, Syrian Arab Republic, United Arab Emirates.

During the lunch break, the Permanent Delegation of Algeria to UNESCO organised an information session on the first meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. This meeting will take place next week, at the invitation of the Algerian authorities, on 18 and 19 November 2006 in Algiers.

Item 5: Selection by lot of twelve States Members of the Intergovernmental Committee whose term of office will be limited to two years

After having introduced item 5 of the agenda, the President gave the floor to several Delegations wishing to express their opinion on the two options proposed in the draft resolution. All Delegations agreed in their support for Option B, which proposes to take into account geographical distribution. Therefore, draft resolution 1. EXT. GA 5 option B was adopted.

The General Assembly selected by lot twelve States Members of the Intergovernmental Committee, whose term of office will be limited to two years. These twelve States Members are the following :

- Group I : Belgium, France;
- Group II : Bulgaria, Romania;
- Group III : Bolivia, Brazil;
- Group IV : China, Japan;
- Group V(a) : Nigeria, Senegal;
- Group V(b) : Algeria, Syrian Arab Republic.

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I hope that I have managed to convey to you the richness of the discussions and the complexity of the issues that have been dealt with during this General Assembly. I am pleased to state that our respective points of view have come to an equitable compromise on all issues.

Thank you for your attention.