**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 5.a of the Provisional Agenda:**

**Report by the Committee to the General Assembly  
on its activities (January 2016 to December 2017)**

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| **Summary**  Article 30.1 of the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage states that ‘on the basis of its activities [...] the Committee shall submit a report to the General Assembly at each of its sessions.’ This document contains a draft report on the Committee’s activities from January 2016 to December 2017 that the Committee may wish to present to the seventh session of the General Assembly.  **Decision required:** paragraph 4 |

1. Article 30.1 of the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage states that ‘on the basis of its activities [...] the Committee shall submit a report to the General Assembly at each of its sessions.’ Article 30.2 continues that ‘The report shall be brought to the attention of the General Conference of UNESCO.’ A draft report is presented below in the annex to the draft decision.
2. By Resolution 6.GA 5, the General Assembly requested that the Committee ‘report on its activities for the period between January 2016 and December 2017 for examination by the General Assembly at its seventh session, and […] use a biennium calendar year for future reports thereafter.’ This report will need to be updated with additional information about the results of the twelfth session of the Committee.
3. This report should be read in conjunction with the reports of States Parties on the implementation of the Convention and on the current status of elements inscribed on the Representative List (document [ITH/17/12.COM/8.b](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/ITH-17-12.COM-8.b-EN.docx)), the reports of States Parties on the current status of elements inscribed on the Urgent Safeguarding List (document [ITH/17/12.COM/8.c](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/ITH-17-12.COM-8.c-EN.docx)), the Report of the Secretariat on its activities (document [ITH/17/12.COM/5.b](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/ITH-17-12.COM-5.b-EN.docx)), the financial report of the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund (as an annex to the document [ITH/17/12.COM/7](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/ITH-17-12.COM-7-EN.docx)) and the follow‑up on the recommendations of the External Auditor’s Report (document [ITH/17/12.COM/16](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/ITH-17-12.COM-16-EN.docx)).
4. The Committee may wish to adopt the following decision:

DRAFT DECISION 12.COM 5.a

The Committee,

1. Having examined document ITH/17/12.COM/5.a,
2. Recalling Article 30 of the Convention,
3. Welcomes the eleven States that have ratified the Convention since January 2016;
4. Adopts the report on its activities in 2016 and 2017.

**ANNEX**

**Draft report by the Committee to the General Assembly on its activities**

1. The functions of the Committee are set out in the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, in particular in Article 7. This report follows the order of functions set out in Article 7 of the Convention.
2. In 2016, the General Assembly renewed half of the twenty-four members of the Committee, by electing twelve States Parties to serve a term of four years. The twenty-four members of the Committee, during the period June 2016 to June 2018, were: Afghanistan, Algeria, Armenia, Austria, Bulgaria, Colombia, Congo, Côte d’Ivoire, Cuba, Cyprus, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Hungary, India, Lebanon, Mauritius, Mongolia, Palestine, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Saint Lucia, Senegal, Turkey and Zambia.
3. During the reporting period, the Committee has met twice: in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, from 28 November to 4 December 2016 for its eleventh session (11.COM), and in Jeju Island, Republic of Korea, from 4 to 9 December 2017 for its twelfth session (12.COM).
4. The Bureau of the eleventh session of the Committee was elected by the tenth session in December 2015 in Windhoek, Namibia, and was composed of: Mr Yonas Desta Tsegaye (Ethiopia) as Chairperson; Turkey, Bulgaria, Saint Lucia, Republic of Korea and Algeria as Vice-Chairs; and Mr Murat Soğangöz (Turkey) as Rapporteur.
5. The Bureau of the twelfth session of the Committee was elected by the eleventh session in December 2016 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, and was composed of: H.E. Mr Byong-hyun Lee (Republic of Korea) as Chairperson; Turkey, Bulgaria, Colombia, Côte d’Ivoire and Palestine as Vice-Chairs; and Mr Gábor Soós (Hungary) as Rapporteur.
6. The Bureau of the thirteenth session of the Committee was elected at the end of the twelfth session in December 2017 in Jeju Island, Republic of Korea, and is composed of…  
   *[to be updated]*
7. The Bureau met daily during the sessions of the Committee. During the reporting period, it has also met four times at UNESCO Headquarters: on 2 June 2016 (11.COM 2.BUR), 20 October 2016 (11.COM 3.BUR), 24 May 2017 (12.COM 2.BUR) and 3 October 2017 (12.COM 4.BUR). In addition, electronic consultations were held in April 2016 (11.COM 1.BUR), June 2016 (11.COM 2.BUR), February to March 2017 (12.COM 1.BUR), May to June 2017 (12.COM 2.BUR) and August to September 2017 (12.COM 3.BUR)*. [to be updated]*
8. During the reporting period, the Committee and its Bureau examined a total of forty-six items inscribed on their agendas, which were accompanied by forty-three working documents or information documents and XXX nominations, requests for International Assistance, reports submitted by States Parties or requests for the accreditation of non-governmental organizations. *[to be updated]*
9. **Promoting the objectives of the Convention, encouraging and monitoring its implementation, and providing guidance on safeguarding measures and good practices** (Article 7[a] and 7[b])
10. **Ratification**
11. Eleven States – Cabo Verde, Cook Islands, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Malta, Saint Kitts and Nevis, South Sudan, Suriname, Thailand, Timor-Leste and Tuvalu – ratified the Convention between January 2016 and December 2017. At the end of 2017, 175 States were party to the Convention. *[to be updated]*
12. **Sound governance facilitated by enhanced knowledge management services**
13. The Committee remains committed to the sound governance of the Convention and to possible improvements to that end. In line with the overall efforts to improve the governance of UNESCO and its dependant funds, programmes and entities, and in response to the invitation of the General Conference (38 C/Resolution 101), at its eleventh session the Intergovernmental Committee examined an item regarding the follow-up to the recommendations of the relevant External Auditor’s report contained in document 38 C/23 of the General Conference. In particular, the Committee examined the actions already taken and those foreseen to improve the governance of the Convention. According to its [Decision 11.COM 7](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/11.COM/7), the Committee transmitted to the Chairperson of the open-ended working group on governance a report on the status of foreseen or ongoing reforms and actions already taken (included in the annexes of documents [ITH/16/11.COM/7](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/ITH-16-11.COM-7-EN.docx) and [ITH/16/11.COM/5](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/ITH-16-11.COM-5-EN.docx)).
14. The Convention’s knowledge management system is an indispensable tool for facilitating the sound and improved governance of the Convention. It provides a unique repository of information accessible to all interested parties as well as a fundamental working tool for both its governing and advisory bodies and its Secretariat. However, in order to adapt to the constantly changing reality of the Convention and to meet the evolving demands of a wide range of stakeholders, the knowledge management system needs to be steadily improved.
15. In its Resolution 6.GA 9, the General Assembly approved a Plan for the use of the resources of the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund [hereafter the Fund] for the period 1 January 2016 to 31 December 2017, which devoted 20 per cent of the budget (US$1,590,746) to the ‘other functions of the Committee’. By its [Decision 10.COM 8](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/10.COM/8), the Committee delegated to its Bureau the authority to decide upon the utilization of the funds allocated under this line of the Plan, based on specific proposals to be prepared by the Secretariat. Recognizing the importance of the knowledge management system, the Bureau approved an amount of US$386,900 for the period January 2016 to December 2017[[1]](#footnote-1) for activities aimed at improving the system’s accessibility, usability and functionalities. Detailed information on the results of these activities up to June 2017 is included in the report of the Secretariat to the Committee (document [ITH/17/12.COM/5.b](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/ITH-17-12.COM-5.b-EN.docx)).
16. **Strengthening the capacity-building programme and guidance on safeguarding measures and good practices**
17. The Committee continues to consider capacity building as a priority, convinced that effective implementation of the Convention depends on a thorough knowledge and understanding of the Convention and its concepts, measures and mechanisms. Therefore, the Bureau of the Committee allocated a total of US$817,346, – or 51 per cent of the line ‘other functions of the Committee’ – for the period January 2016 to December 2017. Activities proposed under this line aimed at supporting a number of cross-cutting needs, in particular: (i) strengthening the network of expert facilitators, (ii) developing adequate content, formats and materials, (iii) monitoring, evaluating and adapting the strategy, (iv) developing alternate, lighter ways of sharing safeguarding experiences than exclusively the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices and (v) developing guidelines on inventories.
18. The funds dedicated to ‘other functions of the Committee’ are instrumental for developing and maintaining global functions for the effective delivery of the programme, while actual implementation at the country level is made possible through earmarked contributions to the Fund and Funds-in-Trust arrangements. Detailed information on the results of the activities approved by the Bureau concerning these issues is included in the report of the Secretariat to the Committee (document [ITH/17/12.COM/5.b](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/ITH-17-12.COM-5.b-EN.docx)), which also looks at the situation regarding the implementation of capacity-building programmes at the country level.
19. **Overall results framework**
20. The Committee reaffirmed its commitment to improving the implementation and monitoring of the Convention by continuing the process of developing an overall results framework. This was intended to follow up on the recommendations of UNESCO’s Internal Oversight Service on UNESCO’s standard-setting work of the Culture Sector, which was undertaken in 2013. At its eleventh session, the Committee welcomed the results of a preliminary expert meeting on this subject, which was held in Beijing, China, in September 2016 (see document [ITH/16/11.COM/14](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/ITH-16-11.COM-14-EN.docx)). Building on the outcomes of this expert meeting, an open-ended intergovernmental working group met in Chengdu, China, in June 2017. The Committee examined a draft proposal for a results framework at its twelfth session (document [ITH/17/12.COM/9](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/ITH-17-12.COM-9-EN.docx)) and forwarded it to the General Assembly for its consideration/with a recommendation for its adoption at its seventh session. *[to be updated]*
21. The generous support of the Government of the People’s Republic of China (Decisions [10.COM 9](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/10.COM/9) and [11.COM 6](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/11.COM/6)), of a total of US$150,000, enabled the organization of both the preliminary expert meeting and the open-ended intergovernmental working group.
22. **Raising awareness and outreach**
23. Raising awareness of the importance of intangible cultural heritage and ensuring mutual appreciation thereof is one of the purposes of the Convention. To this end, the Bureau allocated US$336,500 for the period January 2016 to December 2017. Activities approved include, in particular: (i) the design of a communication and outreach strategy with a view to promoting the objectives of the Convention, (ii) support for the integration of intangible cultural heritage into university courses in fields such as heritage studies, cultural policy, development studies and others, (iii) consultation on how to integrate intangible cultural heritage into training programmes for teachers and educators. Furthermore, by its [Decision 11.COM 5](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/11.COM/5), the Committee invited the Secretariat to expand the outreach and visibility of its activities. Detailed information on the results of these activities up to June 2017 is included in the report of the Secretariat to the Committee (document [ITH/17/12.COM/5.b](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/ITH-17-12.COM-5.b-EN.docx)).
24. **Preparation of a draft plan for the use of the resources of the Fund and increasing the Fund’s resources** (Articles 7[c] and 7[d])
25. The Committee shall submit to the seventh session of the General Assembly a plan for the use of the resources of the Fund for the period 1 January 2018 to 31 December 2019 and for the first six months of 2020. This plan proposes a new approach compared to the plan proposed and adopted for the period 2016‑17 and the plans adopted before that. In particular, the new plan proposes measures to increase the utilization of the Fund. The biggest percentage continues to be dedicated to International Assistance. The plan can be found in the relevant working document of the Committee: document [ITH/17/12.COM/7](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/ITH-17-12.COM-7-EN.docx). *[to be updated]*
26. During the reporting period, the Fund received supplementary voluntary contributions of US$510,375 from the People’s Republic of China, the Republic of Korea and the Government of Netherlands in support of three different earmarked projects. The Sub-Fund of the Fund, devoted exclusively to enhancing the human capacities of the Secretariat, has also received contributions of US$120,286 during the reporting period. *[to be updated]*
27. Document [ITH/17/12.COM/7](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/ITH-17-12.COM-7-EN.docx) includes, in Annex II (a), a list of such contributions for the period 1 January 2016 to 30 June 2017 as well as a statement of income and expenditures in Annex II. Document [ITH/17/12.COM/6](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/ITH-17-12.COM-6-EN.docx) includes, in Annex I, a list of voluntary contributions received in the Fund and the Sub-Funds since the eleventh session of the Committee, for the period October 2016 to October 2017. To inform donors of the funding gap for reaching the targets of the Convention, including those of the global capacity-building programme at the country level, the Secretariat identified two main funding priorities for the 2003 Convention for the period 2018 to 2021. These priorities were approved by the Committee at its twelfth session in December 2017 (Decision 12.COM 6) as the framework within which it can accept voluntary supplementary contributions without express approval. [*to be updated*]
28. **Preparation of the Operational Directives for the implementation of the Convention** (Article 7[e])
29. During the reporting period, the Committee recommended that the General Assembly approve new directives or amendments to the Operational Directives for the implementation of the Convention on the following questions:

* Periodic reporting mechanism to move towards a regional cycle of national reporting.

[*to be updated*]

1. **Examination of periodic reports** (Article 7[f])
2. The [Convention](https://ich.unesco.org/en/convention) provides, in Article 29, that States Parties shall submit to the Committee reports on legislative, regulatory and other measures taken for the implementation of the Convention, and in Article 30 that ‘On the basis of its activities and the reports by States Parties […] the Committee shall submit a report to the General Assembly.’ During the reporting period, the Committee examined seventeen reports by States Parties on the implementation of the Convention at the national level, ([six](https://ich.unesco.org/en/9a-periodic-reporting-00857) in 2016 and [eleven](https://ich.unesco.org/en/8b-periodic-reporting-00921) in 2017) and eighteen reports on the status of elements inscribed on the Urgent Safeguarding List ([six](https://ich.unesco.org/en/9b-periodic-reporting-usl-00858) in 2016 and [twelve](https://ich.unesco.org/en/8c-periodic-reporting-usl-00922) in 2017). *[to be annexed]*
3. The Committee continues to be confronted with a high number of States Parties whose reports are overdue; for example, for the 2017 cycles, forty-four out of sixty-seven expected reports were not submitted. A detailed overview and abstracts for each report have been prepared, which can be found in the related working documents of the Committee: documents [ITH/16/11.COM/9.a](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/ITH-16-11.COM-9.a-EN.docx), [ITH/16/11.COM/9.b](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/ITH-16-11.COM-9.b-EN.docx), [ITH/17/12.COM/8.b](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/ITH-17-12.COM-8.b-EN.docx) and [ITH/17/12.COM/8.c](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/ITH-17-12.COM-8.c-EN.docx).
4. **Inscriptions on the Lists of the Convention, selection of good safeguarding practices and granting of International Assistance** (Article 7[g])
5. During the reporting period, the Committee examined hundred files and inscribed a total of thirty-seven elements on the Lists of the Convention: four elements on the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding and thirty-three elements on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. During the reporting period, the Committee also selected five good safeguarding practices. 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 for an amount of US$238,970. Furthermore,during its twelfth session, the Committee reflected on and evaluated, for the first time, the removal of one element from the Urgent Safeguarding List and its transfer to the Representative List. *[To be updated]*
6. Since 2014, when the General Assembly approved the amendments to the Operational Directives for the creation of a single ‘Evaluation Body’ (numbering six experts representing States Parties to the Convention non-members of the Committee and six accredited non-governmental organizations), the Committee has continued to establish the Evaluation Body during its eleventh and twelfth sessions by renewing three seats every cycle.
7. Following the recommendation of the Committee by its [Decision 10.COM 15.c](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/10.COM/15.c), in June 2016 the General Assembly approved the amendments to the Operational Directives to increase requests for International Assistance that can be approved by the Bureau of the Committee from US$25,000 to US$100,000. Accordingly, the Committee (for requests greater than US$100,000) or the Bureau (for requests up to US$100,000 and emergency requests) approved a total of fifteen out of twenty-one requests for International Assistance for a total amount of US$1,206,565 during the reporting period (see also document [ITH/17/12.COM/8.a](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/ITH-17-12.COM-8.a-EN.docx) for the report on the use of International Assistance by States Parties). A total of twelve countries received financial assistance from the Fund during the period. *[To be updated]*
8. At the eleventh session of the Committee, a number of States members and not members of the Committee expressed their concern about decision making in relation to the inscription/selection process and in particular about the overwhelming number of reversals (71% - 17 out of 24) of the Evaluation Body‘s recommendations. In response to those concerns, the Committee established an informal ad hoc working group in order to ‘examine issues related to the consultation and dialogue between the Evaluation Body and the submitting States, the decision-making process of the Committee concerning nominations, proposals and requests’. Furthermore, the Secretariat was requested to ‘propose a procedure, to the next session of the Committee, which would include an intermediary step in the evaluation of files, thus allowing submitting States to respond to preliminary recommendations that the Evaluation Body would have addressed beforehand to the Secretariat’ ([Decision 11.COM 10](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/11.COM/10)). The Group has met five times during the reporting period: in three meetings with the States Members of the Committee and two open-ended meetings. A detailed overview of the results of the meeting and the proposal of the Secretariat can be found in related working documents [ITH/17/12.COM/13](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/ITH-17-12.COM-13-EN.docx) and [ITH/17/12.COM/12](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/ITH-17-12.COM-12-EN.docx), respectively.

1. . For further details on outputs and indicators, refer to document [ITH/16/11.COM 2.BUR/1](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/ITH-16-11.COM_2.BUR-1_EN.docx). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)