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

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATES PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION**

**Ninth session**

**UNESCO Headquarters, Room I**

**5 to 7 July 2022**

**Item 13 of the provisional agenda:**

**Proposal for the celebration of**

**the twentieth anniversary of the Convention in 2023**

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| **Summary**  The year 2023 will mark the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of the 2003 Convention. The present document aims to provide elements that may be useful for the Assembly to initiate the preparation of the anniversary year and to propose a framework in which the celebration may take place.  **Decision required:** paragraph 9 |

**Introduction**

1. The year 2023 will mark the twentieth anniversary of the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, adopted by the thirty-second session of the General Conference of UNESCO on 17 October 2003.
2. The main achievements of the Convention so far may be summarized as follows:

* With 180 States Parties to date, the Convention has firmly established the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage at the international level and has become a key reference for its States Parties in designing the necessary public policies and laws, recognizing the central role of the communities, groups and individuals concerned.
* Most significantly, as a direct follow up to the rapid and quasi universal ratification of the 2003 Convention, States Parties in all regions of the world have established and implemented projects, programmes and policies, as well as institutional frameworks to support them, aimed at safeguarding the intangible cultural heritage present in their territories. This is in stark contrast to the situation some twenty years ago when only a handful of States had institutional and policy frameworks specifically aimed at safeguarding living heritage.
* At the same time awareness of living heritage at the international level has been significantly raised, in particular through the inscription of elements on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. This has laid the ground for a significant expansion of the concept of cultural heritage both in terms of professional practice as well as among the public at large.
* The impact of the Convention is being monitored at various levels through the reformed Periodic Reporting mechanism which is proving its effectiveness through the broad participation of States Parties and its results-based focus in alignment with the overall results framework of the 2003 Convention adopted by the General Assembly at its seventh session in 2018.

1. Celebrating the twentieth anniversary will provide an important opportunity for the stakeholders of the 2003 Convention to take stock of the achievements made so far and to reflect on the directions that the Convention should follow for the upcoming decades. It will also be an opportunity to further raise awareness of the significance of living heritage on a broad scale. The present document aims to provide elements that may help the Assembly initiate the preparation of the anniversary year.

**Main activity at the international level**

1. A global campaign is planned throughout the year 2023 to celebrate the anniversary with a series of activities to showcase the diversity and richness of living heritage and to raise awareness of the importance of living heritage safeguarding amongst the public at large.
2. It is also proposed that anniversary celebrations concentrate on the changes that the implementation of the 2003 Convention has brought about for the safeguarding of living heritage at the local, national and international levels. Celebratory events and communication initiatives will highlight the human dynamics of our living heritage with the participation of a wide array of actors, namely the living heritage bearers, indigenous communities and youth, to demonstrate how safeguarding living heritage is relevant in present times and for the future development of society. Young people in particular will be mobilized to raise awareness of the importance of safeguarding intangible cultural heritage through social media platforms.
3. Needless to say, the plan is dependent on the timely availability of extrabudgetary support to complement resources from the Regular Programme budget and Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund (‘other functions’). States Parties as well as other key stakeholders are encouraged to provide financial support for the anniversary celebrations with the modality of their choice.

**Framework for anniversary celebrations at the national level**

1. Apart from the above-mentioned campaign that the Secretariat will implement, the General Assembly may wish to encourage States Parties to organize national and community-level events and activities to promote the objectives of the 2003 Convention, taking stock of past achievements and exploring future directions for the stakeholders of the Convention. The Secretariat proposes to publish a list of such events and activities on the website of the Living Heritage Entity.
2. The celebrations may be organized with the following objectives as guidelines.

Objective 1: Bringing communities’ voices to the forefront

Insofar as intangible cultural heritage is created, maintained and transmitted by communities, groups and individuals around the world, the Convention’s achievements are directly related to the safeguarding commitments and transmission practices of the custodians, practitioners and bearers, although their stories are not always heard. Anniversary activities could be planned to highlight experiences and enhance understanding of the crucial role played by community representatives, practitioners and other tradition bearers in the implementation of the Convention.

Objective 2: Consolidating safeguarding networks and partnerships

Awareness about living heritage could not have been raised without the engagement and support of the Convention’s key stakeholders at the international, regional and national levels, including States Parties as well as category 2 centres and accredited NGOs, heritage professionals, living heritage practitioners and community members. The anniversary year is an occasion to strengthen safeguarding networks and partnerships as well as to mobilize resources in cooperation with these stakeholders. Efforts may also be made to involve stakeholders that are crucial for effective intangible cultural heritage safeguarding and that so far have not been optimally engaged under the Convention, such as youth, indigenous peoples, minorities and urban communities and groups.

Objective 3: Sparking creativity

If living heritage is best safeguarded through transmission and the creativity of those concerned, the power of creativity should be emphasized in the further development of the Convention. The anniversary year might provide occasions to start initiatives in that direction, such as by bringing together people from different backgrounds and professional profiles. Such encounters might spark interdisciplinary, innovative and creative dialogues in order to reflect on how to further unlock the potential of our intangible cultural heritage for the future.

1. The General Assembly may wish to adopt the following resolution:

DRAFT RESOLUTION 9.GA 13

The General Assembly,

1. Having examined document LHE/22/9.GA/13,
2. Welcomes the initiative to celebrate the twentieth anniversary of the Convention in 2023 and takes note of the main themes proposed for the campaign to celebrate the twentieth anniversary;
3. Invites States Parties and other stakeholders of the Convention to provide financial support for the anniversary celebrations with the modality of their choice;
4. Encourages States Parties and other stakeholders to join the celebration by organizing national events and activities to promote the objectives of the Convention, take stock of past achievements and explore the Convention’s further development;
5. Requests that the Secretariat report on the outcomes of the celebration of the twentieth anniversary of the Convention for examination by the tenth session of the General Assembly in 2024.