CONVENTION FOR THE SAFEGUARDING OF THE
INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE

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

**Eighteenth session**

**Kasane, Republic of Botswana**

**4 to 9 December 2023**

**Item 15 of the provisional agenda:**

**Report of the non-governmental organizations forum**

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| **Summary**The present document brings the attention of the Committee to the report by the ICH NGO Forum on its activities in 2022 and 2023.**Decision required:** paragraph 4 |

1. Since 2020, the Committee has examined each year a ‘Report of the Non-Governmental Organizations Forum’ as a stand-alone agenda item, following the request by the Committee at its fourteenth session in 2019 (Decision [14.COM 15](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/14.COM/15)).
2. Pursuant to Decision [17.COM 9](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/17.COM/9) adopted by the seventeenth session of the Committee, the present Committee is requested, once again and for the fourth time, to examine such a report. This report, submitted by the ICH NGO Forum, is contained in the annex to the present document.
3. The mapping of domains of competence of 65 (out of 217) accredited non-governmental organizations (NGOs) has been completed and the result is being made available through the [webpage](https://ich.unesco.org/en/accredited-ngos-00331) of the Convention dedicated to accredited NGOs. This initiative was undertaken in cooperation with the ICH NGO Forum between 2021 and 2023. The Committee may wish to encourage the Secretariat to continue its collaboration with the ICH NGO Forum to ensure that the mapping exercise continues to cover accredited non-governmental organizations which were not addressed during the first round of this exercise.
4. The Committee may wish to adopt the following decision:

DRAFT DECISION 18.COM 15

The Committee,

1. Having examined document LHE/23/18.COM/15 and its annex,
2. Recalling Decisions [14.COM 15](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/14.COM/15) and [17.COM 9](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/17.COM/9),
3. Takes note of the activities undertaken by the ICH NGO Forum in 2022 and 2023, notably those that have the potential to strengthen the advisory role of accredited non-governmental organizations to the Committee;
4. Commends the ICH NGO Forum for the activities aimed at increasing the number of non-governmental organizations based in underrepresented regions and encourages the Forum to pursue its efforts in this regard;
5. Appreciates the readiness demonstrated by the ICH NGO Forum to actively pursue the development of the Convention and in support to its governing bodies, notably as regards the thematic initiatives of the Convention, synergies between the protection and safeguarding of tangible and intangible cultural heritage, as well as the reflection on a broader implementation of Article 18;
6. Welcomes the completion of the first round of the mapping of the domains of competence of accredited non-governmental organizations as well as their visualization through the webpage of the Convention, and requests the Secretariat to continue its collaboration with the ICH NGO Forum to ensure that the mapping exercise covers the remaining accredited non-governmental organizations;
7. Decides to include a separate item on the ‘Report of the non-governmental organizations forum’ on the provisional agenda of its nineteenth session.

### ANNEX

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**REPORT OF THE ICH NGO FORUM (2023)**

**Executive Summary**

The current report describes the Forum’s ongoing activities and new initiatives between October 2022 and October 2023 while also looking prospectively at how it can expand its contributions to the UNESCO 2003 Convention, in accordance with its mandate for providing advisory services to the Committee as stated in Article 9 of the Operational Directives.

As the representative of 217 accredited NGOs (ANGOs) working in every UNESCO region, the ICH NGO Forum serves as the primary voice of civil society for the 2003 Convention. Its membership includes NGOs representing community-based practitioners as well as organizations operating on regional and international levels. They are driving forces for implementing the Convention through collaborating with an ever-expanding number of communities, groups and individuals, sharing expertise in all types of safeguarding practices and advancing public policies attuned to the mission of the Convention.

In 2022-23 the Forum launched new initiatives to diversify its membership and expand its reach. It is devoting substantial efforts to increasing the number of NGOs from underrepresented regions and forging new partnerships within and beyond UNESCO. The collective expertise of its membership, which encompasses an extraordinarily wide range of safeguarding practices, is being harnessed to contribute to the Article 18 reflection through drawing from its membership’s grass roots experiences and professional expertise. The Forum continues to expand and improve its communication platforms. It is addressing key matters of ICH practice and policy while achieving more inclusive involvement of its entire membership through the creation of new working groups. And it continues to provide programming offering fresh perspectives on ICH alongside the Intergovernmental Committee meetings. Drawing upon past and present experiences, this report describes the Forum’s ongoing activities and new initiatives between October 2022 and October 2023 whilst it looks prospectively at how it can expand its contributions to the Convention, in accordance with its mandate for providing advisory services to the Committee stated in Article 9.

1. **Equitable Geographical Representation Initiatives**

Recognizing the severe geographical imbalance among ANGOs, the Forum is acting on multiple fronts to achieve more equitable representation and increase engagement of NGOs from under-represented regions. The imperative of achieving more balanced geographical representation has been identified in the Forum’s reports to the Committee and pointed out by the General Assembly, the Committee and Secretariat. The Forum’s equitable geographical representation initiatives resulted in a substantial increase in applications for accreditation from underrepresented regions. We fully expect that within several years far less than the more than the current 54% of ANGOs will be situated in Electoral Group (EG) I.

During the four months preceding the accreditation deadline of April 30th the Forum produced online workshops and information sessions in underrepresented regions which introduced the Convention and Forum, outlined the benefits of accreditation and presented step by step instructions about how to fill out accreditation forms. These events took place in in EG III (Latin America and the Caribbean), EG IV (Asia and the Pacific), EG Va (Africa) and EG II (Eastern Europe). Attendance at these events has been robust, with as many as 31 ANGOs participating. The workshops in EG II and III were produced in association with Category II centers.

The Forum’s Working Group (WG) on A More Balanced Geographical Representation of NGOs, composed of members from different electoral groups is implementing an action plan developed over the past two years which began to be operationalized in late 2022 and will continue on an ongoing basis. It recognizes that creating more equitable geographic balance in ANGO representation must remain a top priority for the Forum moving forward.

The Forum’s action plan for more equitable geographic representation includes the following:

* Continuation and expansion of the number and geographical distribution of online workshops and information sessions for non-accredited NGOs, concentrated in the four months prior to the April 2025 accreditation deadline.
* Creation of a data base of non-accredited NGOs in underrepresented regions with ongoing additions requested of the Forum’s membership, State Parties and NATCOMS. The data base provides contact information for NGOs to be invited to workshops and information sessions and contacted for other outreach efforts.
* WG members from under-represented regions are tasked with conducting awareness raising campaigns and recruit from 1 to 5 NGOs.
* Identification and establishment of focal points from each region providing first contact with newly located NGOs.
* National delegations contacted to see if they can inform the Forum of NGOs potentially interested in accreditation.
* Outreach to and encouragement of applications to NGOs substantially engaged but not primarily specialized in ICH, such as libraries, archives, cultural organizations.
* Collaboration with States Parties in underrepresented regions to generate applications for accreditation from non-accredited NGOs.
* Development of a sample toolkit containing short videos and paper flyers aimed at awareness raising and recruitment.
* Recommendation of user-friendly revisions to accreditation forms designed to make the accreditation application process more accessible to applicants.
* Greater selectivity in encouraging applications for accreditation from Region I in order to diminish the number of applications from this region relative to other regions.

Within the Forum multiple measures are undertaken to inclusively involve members from underrepresented regions. The Executive Board is currently made up of one elected member from each of the six electoral regions and one international NGO representative. The international seat, historically occupied by organizations from Region I, will be discontinued following the end of the term of its current representative. Electoral Board members are selected in order to represent every electoral group that is not represented in the current electoral slate (election slates alternate between regions every other year). The Executive Board strongly encourages ANGOs from all regions to join working groups. Every year online orientation sessions in French and English are presented for new ANGOs to learn about the Convention, the agenda, rules and procedures of the meetings, and how they can participate most effectively at their first meeting and in ongoing Forum activities.

1. **Bridging the Tangible and Intangible Heritage: The World Heritage Center, the ICH-NGO Forum and ICH Tourism Partnership Initiatives**

Projects that bring together entities involved in tangible and intangible heritage are all too rare. The Forum was delighted to be approached by the World Heritage Center (WHC) in December to write an online publication on ICH, crafts and sustainable tourism in and around World Heritage Sites which would include recommendations for collaborations involving entities involved in ICH and tangible heritage. Impressed by the symposium on tourism and ICH in November 2022 which launched the Forum’s Intangible Cultural Heritage and Tourism web dossier, the World Heritage Center vied the Forum as a highly suitable partner in commissioning this publication, Safeguarding Living Heritage at World Heritage Sites: Case Studies on Crafts and Sustainable Tourism. Production of this publication is within the framework of ‘Promoting sustainable tourism and private sector engagement for inclusive community development in response to the COVID-19 crisis’ project of the World Heritage Center, supported by the German government.

The ten case studies in this publication were commissioned from NGOs in Asia, the Americas, Africa and Europe. They describe a wide variety of ICH that can be experienced by tourists and available for purchase. These traditions included, among others, Indonesian batik in the “Virtuous Corridor” linking Borobudor and the Pambranan Temple Compounds, Cambodian stone carving practiced near Angkor Wat, glass blowing in Bruges, Belgium and woodworking in Lamu Old Town in Kenya. The case studies provide contexts of historical and contemporary practice and discuss how they are presented to tourists in a culturally appropriate manner, their economic viability, partnerships among governmental, NGO and private sector entities, relationship to economic development objectives, associated traditional knowledge, venues for sales and crafts demonstrations, hands-on activities for tourists, transmission of skills and training of artisans, certification programs designed to protect intellectual property, educational dimensions of interpretation and sustainability challenges. They demonstrate how ICH can enrich the experience of tourists, who spend more time at destinations and engage directly with living practitioners, complementing their visits to physical structures and environments recognized for their historical significance.

This online publication includes recommendations for cross-sectoral initiatives and activities that bring together multiple types of stakeholders to advance sustainable ICH tourism associated with World Heritage as well as other historic sites and monuments. These include establishment of a task force and working groups to share information and design collaborations, production of videos and podcasts showcasing relevant living heritage initiatives, technical assistance and peer-to-peer mentoring for the professional development of tourist industry personnel and ICH stakeholders, workshops, panels and roundtable discussions at professional meetings, a dedicated website on ICH, tangible heritage and tourism; and funding for future field studies and related research to be included in additional case studies.

The Forum is looking forward to future partnerships with the WHC that would include implementation of these recommendations. Preliminary discussion has already begun to plan a publication in Spanish consisting of case studies from Latin America. The Forum is highly energized by the prospect of joining with the WHC in leadership initiatives that conjoin their major sectors of the heritage field. Future contracts with the WHC could also create a valuable source of ongoing revenue for the Forum. The World Heritage Center provided funding for the Forum’s contract for this project, with Executive Board members involved in the project donating their services.

As anyone involved with ICH knows, when an ICH element is listed tourism usually increases. ICH frequently becomes a primary draw for a tourism destination. The traditions of the impacted community often undergo change, transformation and adaptation for the tourism market. These consequences may serve to damage the social functions and significance of their ICH, with tourism generating excessive stylization and transformation and/or gentrification of traditional practices, loss of identity and environmental degradation. Or, as the Forum’s tourism web dossier and the WHC online publication demonstrates, sustainable ICH tourism can give new life to ICH no longer widely practiced, provide substantial local economic benefits to bearers and their communities, and enhance the understanding of another culture.

Prior to the Forum’s initiatives the Convention paid too little attention to tourism. It lacked adequate recognition of both the benefits and hazards of tourism and did not provide specific guidance to stakeholders encountering the rapid expansion of ICH tourism. The Forum will continue to play a leadership role in ICH tourism following from the web dossier and initial WHC collaboration. The web dossier was recently translated into French, with translations in other languages forthcoming. It was the topic of a workshop in October at the Sorbonne and informed discussions at an expert meeting on commercialization organized by the Living Heritage Entity. The Forum will be associated with the ICH and Tourism project, ICH Journeys, supported by the European Union. The World Tourism Organization has expressed interest in potential collaborations with the Forum, which along with future WHC collaborations are paving the way for substantial Forum engagement with multiple UNESCO entities.

1. **Engagement in the Broader Implementation of Article 18**

ANGOs possess an extraordinarily large store of knowledge about good safeguarding practices. Their expertise is based upon every day, on the ground experiences with communities and culture bearers, engagement with a broad variety of safeguarding modalities and ongoing sharing of their expertise about good practices on local, national, regional and global levels. They are contributing substantially to the reflections on the broader implementation of Article 18 and look forward to collaborating with the Living Heritage Entity in implementing the web platform of good safeguarding practices as well as other outcomes of the reflections.

The Forum’s President and a number of States Parties designated representatives who are also active NGO members participated in the Article 18 reflections at the Category VI Meeting of Experts in Stockholm, Sweden. The report produced by this meeting recommended involvement of individual NGOs in the selection of good safeguarding practices to be included in the broader implementation and representation of the Forum in a proposed advisory group for the implementation of Article 18. The Executive Board and other NGO representatives participated in the Open-ended Intergovernmental Working Group in the framework of the reflection on a broader implementation of Article 18 of the 2003 Convention held in Paris in July. The Forum was greatly heartened by revisions to the draft recommendations proposed and adopted by the Intergovernmental Working Group, which underscored multiple ways that the Forum would be involved in the broader implementation of Article 18. The final recommendations included representation of the Forum on the advisory group as well as Forum involvement in the selection of good safeguarding practices and the exchange of information.

The Forum is poised to draw from its large data base of good safeguarding practices to extensively contribute an extensive number and variety of types of practices for the broader implementation of Article 18. The mapping project commissioned by the Living Heritage Entity in 2021 entailed a survey of all 194 NGOs accredited at the time and peer-to-peer interviews with 65 ANGOs, which yielded a rich trove of safeguarding practices, the vast majority of which are from outside of Western Europe and North America. Since the completion of the mapping project in 2022 the Forum has continued to gather and assess good safeguarding practices while also considering methods for sharing expertise about these practices, which could be used in for initiatives designed to implement Article 18.

Good safeguarding practices identified by the Forum since the inception of the mapping project include:

* Inventorying and documentation carried out with community members trained in the use of documentation equipment using digital technologies. Through the process of inventorying and documentation communities achieve heightened awareness of their ICH and safeguarding needs while creating documentation that serves as a record of the ICH.
* Formal and non-formal educational programs across the life cycle that foster transmission and incorporate ICH in primary, secondary and tertiary educational curricula.
* Organizational development, financial management training and the creation of innovative and sustainable business models that enable NGOs to carry out their core safeguarding functions.
* Production practices for videos, podcasts, radio and television programs amplifying ICH to wide audiences, thus stimulating safeguarding.
* Utilization of archives, training in archival practices and repatriation of ICH collected from outside of source communities. Archives create an enduring record of ICH utilized for contemporary bearers as well as future generations. ICH held in archives is increasingly available online through digitization and streaming.
* Repatriation of ICH recordings to archives of source communities, carried out in projects that stimulate renewed practice of traditions and involve creation of educational materials.
* Multiple modes of presenting ICH including museum public programs, festivals, lecture/demonstrations and concerts that spread awareness of ICH to new audiences while also providing opportunities for bearers to safeguard ICH through expanded opportunities for practice.
* Sustainable ICH tourism initiatives that involve programming of ICH produced by bearer communities who determine how their traditions are represented and whether access by outsiders should be controlled or restricted.
* Crafts training and marketing that enables bearers to make a living from their ICH and stimulate others to learn.
* Utilizing ICH for socially ameliorative purposes and in integration with other social and cultural objectives, such as mediation of conflict and tackling domestic violence.
* ICH employed in emergency situations including natural disasters, periods of armed conflict and pandemics, utilizing innovative approaches that include psychological support.
* Safeguarding practices for cultural practices less frequently recognized as ICH, such as midwifery, blacksmithing and other metallurgy practices, martial dance, traditional graphic arts, ethnoarchaeology, oral history, place names, pilgrimages, weather lore and animal husbandry.
* Programs connecting environmental sustainability and ICH.
* Programs linking ICH and tangible heritage.

The Forum is exceptionally well equipped to share expertise and foster professional development about good safeguarding practices that extend beyond the web portal planned as a result of the Article 18 reflections. They are presented at the Forum’s symposium and other sessions held alongside the Committee meetings and included in its website and newsletter. It could develop both short- and long-term technical assistance and professional development programs involving peer-to peer mentoring both virtually and in person, within and among regions. Videos and podcasts featuring best practices could be produced by the Forum in multiple languages.

1. **Activities Organized at 17Com**

During the peak pandemic years, the Forum maintained its programming alongside the Committee meetings through extensive use of Zoom. Returning to in-person convening at 17COM, the Forum also maintained a robust online presence through presenting all of its sessions on Zoom, with opportunities provided for both virtual and online participation for the 134 ANGOs registered at 17 COM.

The keynote event of the Forum’s programming at 17Com was a symposium, Living Heritage, Climate Change and the Environment. The symposium was attended by 111 participants. It included presentations by ANGO members from 13 different countries in Africa, Asia, Europe and the Americas. Speakers dealt with multiple issues and dramatically illustrated both the damage wrought to cultural practices by climate change by both new and emerging environmental conditions as well as the resilient power of ICH for adapting to these challenges. The topics of the presentations included traditional agricultural practices and climate change in rural Mali, post-earthquake housing recovery with traditional building practices, adaptations to the environment of the technique used to make art from the resin of the Mopa-Mopa tree in the Andean-Amazonian foothills of Colombia and climate migration and the relocation of heritage in rural Bangladesh. A publication is expected to result from this symposium.

As part of its efforts to welcome and integrate recently accredited NGOs a session featuring overviews of the work of eight of these NGOs took place on the first day of the Forum’s meetings. 17Com was the first time that the Forum organized such a session, which will be an annual practice.

Online elections of new members of the Executive Board are held annually over two days during the week of the Committee meetings. A call for candidates was sent out in October by the Electoral Board, which is composed of members of the electoral groups which do not have representatives standing for election (elections are held in alternate years for each of several electoral groups, which ensures continuity in ongoing membership of the Electoral Board). The 2022 Electoral Board included: Adel Moussa (Arab States), Diana Teresa Gutiérrez (Latin America and Caribbean) and Sandrine Moughola, ADACO (Africa). For 2022, two new members were elected: Cholponai Usubalieva-Grishuk (Kyrgystan) representing Asia and Matti Hakämaki (Finland) representing North America/Western Europe. Robert Baron was elected for a second term as the international organization representative. They joined continuing members Ms. Tamara Nikolić Đerić, Eastern Europe; Mr. Martín Andrade-Pérez, Latin America and Caribbean; Mr. Sekou Berte, Africa; and Mr. Mohamed Lemine Beidieu, Arab States. The following were elected for the executive positions of the Executive Board for 2022-2023: Sekou Berte (President), Tamara Nikolić Đerić (Vice-President), Robert Baron (Secretary) and Martin Andrade Perez (Treasurer).

The Forum’s meetings throughout the week are designed to inform all members of ongoing and future work as well as inclusively engage them in Forum activities. Its General Assembly included presentation of the annual financial statement, reports of the activities that occurred during the past year and planned for 2023 and announcement of the new members of the Executive Board. The recipient of the Albert Van der Zeijden Prize for outstanding article in the online publication #HeritageAlive by an author under 35 years of age was announced, with Laura Lopez of CIOFF the winner. Outgoing members of the Executive Board, President Laurier Turgeon and Vice President Janet Blake were warmly thanked for their outstanding service and commitment.

The Executive Board met with the working groups to discuss how they can enhance and expand their activities, expand their networking, develop their governance structures and collaborate more closely with the Executive Board and the Forum as a whole. Working group meetings during 17Com were, as always, open to both current members and anyone interested in joining. Region-specific meetings provided opportunities to discuss networking and future region-wide activities. The #HeritageAlive meeting featured several authors of articles in its 2022 issue on traditional musical instruments and included a call for contributions for the 2023 issue on Storytelling, which will be launched at 18COM. Executive Board members presented a session reporting on key findings of the mapping project. Anticipating the initiation of the Article 18 Reflection good safeguarding practices identified in the course of the mapping project were emphasized.

1. **Commemorating the 20th Anniversary of the Convention – Past, Present and Future Partnerships with Multiple Stakeholders**

NGOs are active in commemorating the 20th anniversary of the Convention with a variety of events. The keystone event organized by the Forum at 18Com will be a symposium with associated poster presentations on the past, present and future of safeguarding collaborations involving multiple stakeholders. It is being presented in association with Mali’s Permanent Delegation to UNESCO reflecting the Forum’s increasing engagement with States Parties. The theme of the symposium underscores the Forum’s strong and growing commitment to collaborations with partners both within and outside of the Convention. Presenters will discuss collaborations with stakeholders which may include States Parties, ICH NGO Forum working groups, community-based ICH bearers and practitioners, researchers and cultural heritage program administrators. Presentations and posters will speak to the accomplishments and challenges of these collaborations.

Presentations in-person and on Zoom and posters will speak to aspects of collaborative safeguarding projects that include transmission of ICH, performances, formal and non-formal education, inventorying and documentation, legal and policy development, sustainable tourism, revitalization of traditions no longer widely practiced, ongoing collaborative ICH safeguarding projects addressing emergency situations of disasters and armed conflicts and the use of ICH to address social trauma and domestic violence in day-to-day and emergency contexts. They will consider the current and potential equity impact and explore future collaborative possibilities.

1. **Organizational Development, Capacity Building and Leadership Activities**

The Forum is an all-volunteer organization which is expanding its activities, improving its communication platforms and broadening opportunities for membership engagement despite the lack of ongoing funding sources. During 2022-23 it created a structure for fundraising and secured its first contract from an entity outside of the Convention. As the representative of civil society for the Convention, it maintains itself as **one of the indispensable voices of constituencies** which would otherwise be absent.

Working Groups (WG’s) and ad hoc committees are the primary vehicles for general membership engagement in the Forum. They address key ICH issues as well as the Forum’s policies, organizational structures and processes. All WG’s are required to follow requirements instituted in 2022, including bylaw requirements for electing officers, a mission statement, an acceptable governance structure, an annual report of activities and an agenda for the work to be undertaken during the coming year. They are eligible to receive financial support of $100 for translation and up to $300 for specific projects.

Three new working groups were formed in 2023. The WG on Legal and Policy Development is dedicated to addressing legal and policy issues concerning the functioning of the 2003 Convention. It will propose legal and policy documents which represent NGO specific views of these issues as well as provide legal expertise about policy and legal instruments within the Forum. Prior to the formation of this WG the ad hoc Committee on Regulatory Mechanisms proposed revisions to the Forum’s bylaws and electoral rules which remedied discrepancies between the electoral rules and the bylaws as well as between the English and the French versions of the bylaws, and updated them in response to new needs that have been identified. These changes were subsequently enacted by an extraordinary meeting of the General Assembly in October 2022. The new Working Group on Communities in Conflict and Affected by Natural Disasters focuses on the complexities of displacement and its impact on cultural traditions. Emphasizing the importance of culture in adaptation to relocation and reconstruction that follow war and natural disasters, this WG centers the voices and experiences of individuals impacted by displacement and migration and looks at ways to sustain, transmit and archive their cultural heritage. The newly formed Working Group on Living Heritage, Climate Change and the Environment is devoted to identifying and documenting the ways in which climate change and environmental shifts impact ICH and how ICH based knowledge can mitigate their negative effects. It will develop strategies and best practices for resilience through ICH, promote awareness and advocacy and foster cross-cultural dialogue among multiple types of stakeholders. Four existing Working Groups continue to serve the Forum: Global Results Framework, ICH NGOS and Ethics, ICH NGOS and Research and More Balanced Geographical Representation of NGOs.

The Communication Team of the Executive Board enhanced the Forum’s communication platforms. The website is updated more frequently and is being redesigned. It is used by many ANGOs to inform the membership about their upcoming activities and posts the Forum bylaws, WG information, minutes of the Executive Board meeting and publications including the tourism web dossier and #HeritageAlive. Executive Board minutes are also published by ICHNGO.NET, another important ICH communication vehicle. The newsletter, which provides detailed information about the events and activities of the Forum and ANGOs is published with greater frequency. E-blasts to the entire ANGO members are sent throughout the year, particularly in the months prior to the Intergovernmental Committee meetings. The bimonthly Virtual Coffee Chat, initiated this year, provides an opportunity for members of the Executive Board and the general membership to discuss the Forum’s activities and challenges. During these open-ended conversations ideas are generated for future Forum activities and programs. Forum members have been driving forces for the launching this year of Wiki Loves Living Heritage, which includes importing and linking ICH inventories via Wikimedia, contributions on ICH in Wikipedia and the uploading of ICH documentation on Wikicommons.

A fundraising committee consisting of members of the Executive Board and the general membership was established in 2023. Its responsibilities include fundraising for general operating expenses and special funding initiatives. It manages a fund for ANGOs in emergency situations, including those impacted by natural disasters, armed conflict and serious epidemics. Contracts with entities inside and outside of UNESCO are an important actual and potential source of earned revenue. The contract from WHC marked a promising start for contracts with other UNESCO entities.

The Executive Board serves as the representative of ANGOs at various meetings and committees associated with the Convention. It participates in the International Coordination Meeting for the Safeguarding of Cultural Heritage in Ukraine and looks forward to continued representation on advisory groups for the Broader Implementation of Article 18.

1. **Towards Deeper Engagement with the Convention**

As we can see from this report, the Forum and ANGOs have much to contribute to the Convention. They are on the front lines of safeguarding through on the ground engagement with communities, individuals and groups sustaining ICH. They possess expertise in all areas of ICH, grounded in their development and operationalization of good safeguarding practices of all kinds. The Forum includes organizations of ethnomusicologists, folklorists, ethnologists and anthropologists who carry out scholarship on methodology, theory and practice pertaining to every domain of ICH. The publications, convenings and working groups of the Forum address key dimensions of ICH, including tourism, the impact of climate change of the environment, ICH in situations of crisis, refugees, intellectual property, relationships between tangible and intangible heritage, ICH in urban areas and ethics. It has instituted strong governance practices through its bylaws, electoral procedures and code of conduct. Unfortunately, the Forum and ANGOs involvement in the core activities of the Convention are too limited. It should be able to participate more fully in IGC meetings, policy development, revisions of listing mechanisms and representation on communication platforms of the Convention. While it greatly appreciates ever more frequent calls from States Parties for greater agency for ANGOS, it remains limited with regard to the contributions it is enabled to make to the Convention.

The Forum’s role should be defined in specific and concrete terms and codified in the Operational Directives of the Convention beyond the highly general indication that allows for the accreditation of NGOs “to act in an advisory capacity to the Committee*”*,and as a “vehicle for representation”. During the IGC meetings the Forum is largely restricted to a report of its activities. Members of the Forum are not able to generally not permitted to participate in discussions or even answer questions that often follow the presentation of its report to the States Parties. The chairs for the IGC meetings could be reminded to elicit comments and reflections from NGOs on various matters.

NGOs sit on the Evaluation Body to evaluate applications for inscription of elements and requests for financial assistance. However, this is a restricted role entailing the application of criteria in a selection process. The Forum should have a more robust role with the listing mechanism, with implementation of the recommendations made during the meeting of the working group on the listing mechanisms in April 2022. These include providing information on the status and impacts of safeguarding on inscribed elements, conducting field visits and providing advisory services that could include follow-ups on listed elements, supporting the work of the Evaluation Body by providing additional information on applications for inscribed elements and mediating among governmental and intergovernmental actors, bearer communities and civil society organizations.

The Convention would benefit from a larger presence of ANGOs and the Forum on the website of the Convention. It is pleased that the infographics for over 60 ANGOs produced during the mapping project are to be linked to the Convention’s website, which could pave the way. Publications associated with the Forum such as the tourism web dossier and report produced by the Forum for the WHC could be featured and linked on the Convention’s website. And its symposium and side events at the IGC meetings could be included in the program on the UNESCO web pages for the IGC meetings, which would generate a greater States Parties presence at these activities.

For 2024 the Forum is greatly interested in continuing to expand its contributions to the Convention through a more substantial presence at the IGC meetings and the renewal of collaborations with the Secretariat. It is pleased that the LHE staff will have periodic meetings with the Forum’s Executive Board and looks forward to more frequent interactions with the LHE staff member delegated to liaison with the Forum and NGOs.