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

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

**Fourteenth session**

**Bogotá, Republic of Colombia**

**9 to 14 December 2019**

**Item 8 of the Provisional Agenda:**

**Reform of the periodic reporting mechanism**

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| **Summary**  Since 2017, a major reform of the periodic reporting mechanism has been underway to enhance its quality, align it to the overall results framework for the 2003 Convention and improve the effectiveness of monitoring the implementation of the Convention. The present document provides the latest updates on the reform, in particular on the transition period that is nearing completion, in view of the first regional reporting cycle, which will take place in 2020 in Latin America and the Caribbean.  **Decision required:** paragraph 12 |

* + - * 1. **Background**

1. At its twelfth session in December 2017, the Committee decided to reform the periodic reporting mechanism with the aim of enhancing its quality, usefulness and timeliness, as well as to address the low submission rate experienced in the first reporting cycles. The reform was also intended to ensure that the process was clearly aligned with the overarching goals of implementing the 2003 Convention and to allow for more effective monitoring with a view to achieving these goals ([Decision 12.COM 10](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/12.COM/10)). On that same occasion, the Committee also decided to amend the periodicity of the submission of reports on the implementation of the Convention under Article 29, such that States Parties would submit their reports every six years on the basis of a system of regional rotation. To facilitate the reform, the Committee took the decision to examine periodic reports on the implementation of the Convention and on elements inscribed on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity submitted by the deadline of 15 December 2017 as the last batch under the original system. The Committee also indicated that the reformed mechanism would resume with the submission of reports from the first region by 15 December 2020, for examination by the Committee at its sixteenth session in 2021.
2. At its seventh session in June 2018, the General Assembly made some important decisions regarding this reform. On the one hand, it approved the overall results framework for the 2003 Convention ([Resolution 7.GA 9](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Resolutions/7.GA/9)) and requested that the Secretariat revise periodic reporting Form ICH-10 in order to align it to the framework. On the other hand, it adopted some amendments to the Operational Directives on periodic reporting, endorsing the Committee’s decision to move towards a regional cycle of reporting ([Resolution 7.GA 10](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Resolutions/7.GA/10)). The General Assembly also provided the Secretariat with detailed guidance on how to continue with the reform of the periodic reporting mechanism under the 2003 Convention. Efforts needed to be focused on the revision of Form ICH-10, the preparation of guidance notes for each of the core indicators included in the overall results framework and the development of a comprehensive capacity-building approach.
3. During its thirteenth session in November 2018, the Committee welcomed the progress made with the reform ([document 13.COM 8](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/ITH-18-13.COM-8-EN.docx)) and requested that the Secretariat provide an update on its status at its current session ([Decision 13.COM 8](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/13.COM/8)). At the same time, the Committee took a further step in the reform process by adopting the calendar for the first regional cycle of reporting under the 2003 Convention. According to the calendar, States Parties from Latin America and the Caribbean will be the first to submit their periodic reports by 15 December 2020 for examination by the Committee at its sixteenth session in 2021. After that, the order will be as follows: Europe (2021); Arab States (2022); Africa (2023) and Asia and the Pacific (2024). The first cycle will end with a reflection year in 2025.
   * + - 1. **Main points of reform**
4. A transition period to allow the reform of the periodic reporting mechanism started immediately after the seventh session of the General Assembly in July 2018, and is now nearing completion. In response to the guidance provided by the General Assembly and the Committee through their debates and decisions, the Secretariat took actions along the following three main axes:
   * + - 1. The **revision of Form ICH-10**, which is now aligned to the overall results framework for the 2003 Convention, has been completed and the form will be available online in early December; it reflects the structure of this framework through core indicators, and the assessment factors were used as a basis for formulating questions that trigger results-based reporting. Correspondingly, the online version of Form ICH-10 has been redesigned based on the online tool already developed for reporting on elements inscribed on the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding, and now features a more user-friendly interface.
         2. A **set of Guidance Notes** has been prepared, with one note for each of the twenty-six core indicators, two of which will be monitored and reported at the global level by the Secretariat. These Guidance Notes are intended to provide a common understanding of essential terminology, particularly the terminology used in the overall results framework. This will allow the diverse stakeholders involved in the long-term monitoring and evaluation of the 2003 Convention to interpret the indicators and subsequently provide answers in their reports in a comparable way. The Guidance Notes are structured around two main parts. The first part sets out the larger context by including the formal statement of the indicator (and its related assessment factors), together with its relation with the Sustainable Development Goals and other indicators, the rationale underlying the indicator itself, and a reference to relevant key terms. The second part provides specific guidance on monitoring, which is mainly but not exclusively relevant for the reporting exercise. In particular, in this part States will find information on the benefits of monitoring a specific indicator, the possible sources of information and methodologies for collecting data, as well as the scoring system for determining the degree to which the answers provided satisfy a particular indicator.
         3. A **capacity-building approach** and related materials have been developed to assist States with the reporting exercise. The aim is to build institutional and professional capacities for the preparation of periodic reports and to strengthen monitoring processes under the 2003 Convention in line with the overall results framework. This approach mainly consists of a three-day capacity-building workshop directed at focal points responsible for completing the reports for their respective countries. It explains the key concepts of the overall results framework and of the periodic reporting mechanism, and includes a practical session on data sources, participatory methodologies and how to fill out the online version of Form ICH-10.
5. The decision not to revise at this stage the reporting mechanism on the status of elements inscribed on the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding (see document [LHE/19/14.COM/9.a](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-19-14.COM-9.a-EN.docx)), has been applied also to the reporting on elements inscribed on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. Section C in the revised Form ICH-10 remained the same as in its previous version and remains structured around paragraphs 162 and 163 of the Operational Directives. The ongoing reflection on the listing mechanisms and on related procedures, as well as the debates on the follow-up of inscribed elements (see document [LHE/19/14.COM/12](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-19-14.COM-12-EN.docx)), will possibly guide the revision of the reporting mechanism for elements inscribed on the Representative List.
6. The completion of the periodic reporting reform, in particular the revisions to Form ICH‑10, has been made possible largely thanks to the generous financial support of the Republic of Korea to the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund ([Decision 11.COM 6](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/11.COM/6)).
7. **Explanatory notes on the rationale for the reform and tools developed**
8. The new reporting system was devised in response to the main concerns raised by the Internal Oversight Service (IOS) of UNESCO which, in its 2013 evaluation of the standard-setting work of UNESCO’s Culture Sector, highlighted that the information provided by States in their first reports did not support the monitoring of the implementation of the 2003 Convention effectively enough. The revised Form ICH-10 provides States Parties with a useful tool for determining the appropriateness of specific implementing measures and approaches, as well as evidence of good practices where they exist. It also provides States Parties with a useful basis for developing their own monitoring systems.
9. The indicators included in the framework and the questions in the reports will not all be equally applicable to the situations of different States, and the level of satisfaction is expected to vary from indicator to indicator and from one State to another. This was the fundamental, overarching principle of the overall results framework from the outset, and subsequently of the new reporting mechanism. For each indicator, the framework presents several factors against which the indicator will be assessed; the same structure is used in the new reporting form with several questions per indicator. Each State monitors and reports on the existence (or absence) of these factors. For most indicators, States will need to respond to two or more questions inspired by the related assessment factors; the responses provided will be used to assess the indicator; on that basis, it will be possible to see whether, for a given State Party, an indicator is satisfied either fully or to a lesser degree.
10. In most cases, the factors and related questions were drawn directly from the various provisions of the Convention and its Operational Directives, according to which States Parties are obliged or encouraged to ensure that specific conditions are met. The questions set out in the new reporting form are by no means intended to include all the responsibilities of a State Party, which is why they are often optional, but instead to select those that are deemed to provide a solid basis for assessing whether the indicators are satisfied and to what extent.
11. The scoring system and the possibility of establishing targets based on the baselines determined through the reporting exercise will also allow States Parties to create their own benchmarks against which progress (or in some cases regression) can be measured in future reporting. They will also have possibilities to clearly identify both the positive and negative impacts of certain safeguarding measures and implementation approaches at the national level. The new reporting mechanism will also allow for more effective and coherent monitoring by the Committee and the General Assembly thanks to the use of certain standards for information which is gathered over time through monitoring systems at the national level and included in the periodic reports. The move to a regional cycle of reporting is also expected to help improving the low submission rate experienced in the past reporting cycles.
12. Without imposing additional reporting burdens on States Parties, this new reporting system is fully in line with the provisions of the Operational Directives on periodic reporting. It is hoped that, year after year and region after region, it will result in improved visibility for periodic reports and a different perception by States Parties of the reporting exercise, which will serve as a useful tool and methodology for monitoring their own achievements and ultimately revising their policies and safeguarding approaches, if necessary. Similarly, after the first regional cycle, the reporting system will be subject to a year of reflection in 2025. This will provide an important opportunity to fully review its functioning and address potential shortcomings based on the concrete experiences of reporting States and of the examination sessions by the Committee and the General Assembly.
13. The Committee may wish to adopt the following decision:

DRAFT DECISION 14.COM 8

The Committee,

1. Having examined document LHE/19/14.COM/8,
2. Recalling Articles 7(f), 29 and 30 of the Convention, as well as Chapter V of the Operational Directives,
3. Further recalling [Decision 12.COM 10](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/12.COM/10) and [Decision 13.COM 8](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/13.COM/8), as well as [Resolution 7.GA 10](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Resolutions/7.GA/10),
4. Welcomes the reform of the periodic reporting mechanism which encompasses the revised Form ICH-10 and the Guidance Notes, and acknowledges that the new reporting system will be implemented starting from the first regional cycle of reporting in 2020;
5. Commends the government of the Republic of Korea for its generous and continued support to the reform of the periodic reporting mechanism;
6. Requests that the Secretariat inform all the States Parties from Latin America and the Caribbean of the deadline of 15 December 2020 for the submission of their periodic reports on the implementation of the 2003 Convention and on the status of elements inscribed on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity for examination by the Committee at its sixteenth session in 2021;
7. Encourages States Parties to use the online tool to submit their reports in order to facilitate the gathering of information and the analysis of the status of the implementation of the Convention at the national level and of elements inscribed on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity;
8. Invites the Secretariat to plan and implement appropriate capacity-building activities in Latin America and the Caribbean to facilitate the periodic reporting exercise for States from that region in the context of the existing global capacity-building programme and subject to the availability of voluntary supplementary contributions;
9. Further encourages States Parties to provide voluntary supplementary contributions to the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund to support the implementation of the above-mentioned capacity-building activities or to express their interest in financing and implementing them through other funding modalities;
10. Requests that the Secretariat report to the Committee on the roll-out of the reformed periodic reporting mechanism, including the capacity-building activities conducted in Latin America and the Caribbean, for examination at its fifteenth session in 2020.