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

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

**Nineteenth session**

**Asunción, Republic of Paraguay**

**2 to 7 December 2024**

**Item 4 of the provisional agenda:**

**Adoption of the summary records
of the eighteenth session of the Committee**

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| **Decision required:** paragraph 6 |

1. This document contains the summary records of the eighteenth session of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage held in Kasane, Republic of Botswana, from 5 to 8 December 2023.
2. 904 delegates registered for the session, including delegations from 24 States Parties Members of the Committee, 100 States Parties not Members of the Committee, one organization of the United Nations (UN) system, one intergovernmental organization (other than UN), 127 accredited non-governmental organizations, five category 2 centres under the auspices of UNESCO, and 43 press/media entities.
3. The session was conducted in three languages: English and French (the two working languages of the Committee), as well as Spanish.
4. The Living Heritage Entity of UNESCO provided the Secretariat for the meeting.
5. The elected Members of the Bureau of the eighteenth session of the Committee were:

 Chairperson: H.E. Mr Mustaq Moorad (Botswana)

 Vice-Chairpersons: Switzerland, Slovakia, Peru, Bangladesh and Morocco

 Rapporteur: Ms Eva Kuminková (Czechia)

1. The Committee may wish to adopt the following decision:

**DRAFT DECISION 19.COM 4**

The Committee,

1. Having examined document LHE/24/19.COM/4,
2. Adopts the summary records of the Committee’s eighteenth session contained in this document.

*The summary records have been drafted based on the transcript of the statements made by the participants during the eighteenth session of the Committee. The text of this document does not imply the expression of any position whatsoever on the part of the Secretariat of UNESCO concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries.*

**SUMMARY RECORDS OF THE EIGHTEENTH SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE**

*[Tuesday, 5 December 2023, morning session]*

**ITEM 1 OF THE AGENDA**

**OPENING**

1. The **Chairperson** of the eighteenth session of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage, H.E. Mr Mustaq Moorad, warmly welcomed the participants to Kasane, Botswana. He was honoured for the trust bestowed on Botswana, and for his election as Chairperson of this eighteenth session of the Committee. He officially declared the session open. Before the start of business, he invited the fire marshal to go through a set of practical safety and security measures.
2. The **Assistant Director-General for Culture of UNESCO, Mr Ernesto Ottone R.** (hereinafter ‘the Assistant Director-General’), welcomed all the delegates to this session, remarking on the 904 registered participants representing 124 different countries. On behalf of the Secretariat, he thanked the Republic of Botswana for hosting this session. For the past months, UNESCO and Botswana had worked together tirelessly and in a very good understanding to make the meeting possible.
3. **Ms Fumiko Ohinata of the Secretariat** presented some practical informationthat could be found in the General Information [document](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/Secretariat%27s_presentation.pdf) available on the [webpage](https://ich.unesco.org/en/18com) of the Convention dedicated to this session, as well as in the live webcast. Interpretation was provided in English, French and Spanish. UNESCO thanked the Kingdom of Spain for providing Spanish interpretation throughout the session. As in previous years, the session was a paperless meeting.

**ITEM 2 OF THE AGENDA**

**ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA**

Documents: [*LHE/23/18.COM/2*](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-23-18.COM-2__EN.docx)[*LHE/23/18.COM/INF.2.1 Rev.5*](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-23-18.COM-INF.2.1_EN_Rev.5.docx)[*LHE/23/18.COM/INF.2.2 Rev.4*](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-23-18.COM-INF.2.2_EN_Rev.4.docx)

**Decision:** [*18.COM 2*](https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions/18.COM/2)

1. The **Chairperson** invited the Assistant Director-General to present agenda item 2.
2. The **Assistant Director-General** informed the delegates that the provisional agenda included twenty-three items and had been prepared in accordance with Rule 9 of the Committee’s Rules of Procedure. The working documents had been drafted in English and French, and published on the Convention [website](https://ich.unesco.org/en/18com) by the statutory deadline of 6 November 2023, four weeks before the opening of the session in accordance with Rule 42 of the Committee’s Rules of Procedure. The exceptions were documents 14 and INF.14 on the use of resources of the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund, which were published on 8 November.This eighteenth session of the Committee would last five days. The timetable was adopted by the Bureau at its meeting on 2 October at UNESCO Headquarters and adjusted on 4 December in Kasane. The Committee will meet each day from 9.30 to 12.30 p.m. and from 14.30 to 17.30 p.m., including one night session. The timetable would be adjusted by the Bureau, which would meet daily from 9.00 to 9.30 am, for the smooth organization of the Committee’s work. A series of side events had been organized, including exhibitions, performances, seminars and roundtables. The list was available on the meeting’s [webpage](https://ich.unesco.org/en/calendar-of-events-01328). A press conference was held at 12.45 p.m.
3. The **Chairperson** explained how he would structure the debate given the large number of agenda items. Committee Members were asked to limit their speaking time to two minutes and discouraged from speaking more than twice on an item, if possible. Amendments to the draft decisions could be submitted by email using the dedicated form. Only Committee members were entitled to speak during debates on draft decisions. With regard to agenda item 8, the inscription of the proposed nominations, the Secretariat had dedicated sufficient time for the Evaluation Body Report, in particular, items 8.a, 8.b, 8.c and 8.d. In all, the Committee would examine fifty-six files, starting on the afternoon of Tuesday, 5 December, continuing all day on Wednesday, 6 December, and finishing on the morning of Thursday, 7 December, allowing about ten minutes per file. The floor would then be opened to the submitting State or States. Finally, in Other Business, under agenda item 21, Namibia had asked the Committee to examine a change of name to one of its elements inscribed in 2020 on the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding (hereinafter ‘the Urgent Safeguarding List’).
4. With no comments or objections to the working methods, the **Chairperson declared Decision** [**18.COM 2**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions/18.COM/2) **adopted.**

**ITEM 3 OF THE AGENDA**

**OBSERVERS**

**Document:** [*LHE/23/18.COM/3*](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-23-18.COM-3_EN.docx)

**Decision**: [*18.COM 3*](https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions/18.COM/3)

1. The **Assistant Director-General** recalled Rule 8 of the Committee’s Rules of Procedure that provides the criteria for the attendance of Observers to Committee sessions. Regarding the present session, the Committee did not receive any requests. For future sessions, the Committee was asked to authorize the participation of the International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM), as an Observer in the nineteenth, twentieth, twenty-first, and twenty-second sessions of the Committee, following a written request received in August 2023. Accredited non-governmental organizations (hereinafter ‘NGOs’) that provide advisory services to the Committee are automatically admitted as Observers at sessions of the Committee, in conformity with Rule 6 of the Rules of Procedure.
2. **The** **Chairperson declared Decision** [**18.COM 3**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions/18.COM/3) **adopted.**

**ITEM 4 OF THE AGENDA**

**ADOPTION OF THE SUMMARY RECORDS OF THE SEVENTEENTH SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE**

**Document:** *[LHE/23/18.COM/4](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-23-18.COM-4_EN.docx)*

**Decision**: [*18.COM 4*](https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions/18.COM/4)

1. The **Assistant Director-General** presented agenda item 4 and the summary records of the Committee’s seventeenth session, in application of Rule 45 of the Rules of Procedure. It was hoped that the report provided a faithful summary of the interventions made by Members of the Committee and Observers during the last session. Recordings of the discussions of the seventeenth session are available on the Convention [webpage](https://ich.unesco.org/en/17com).
2. **The** **Chairperson declared Decision** [**18.COM 4**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions/18.COM/4) **adopted.**
3. The **Chairperson** took the opportunity to present the outcomes of the Bureau meetings held since the last Committee session. As decided by the Committee, the Bureau of the eighteenth session was composed of Vice-Chairs (Switzerland, Slovakia, Peru, Bangladesh and Morocco), the Rapporteur, Ms Eva Kuminková (Czechia), and himself as Chairperson. He thanked the members of the Committee for his election and his colleagues of the Bureau for their active participation, hard work and spirit of cooperation throughout the year. As a result, a number of important issues had been decided. According to the Rules of Procedure of the Committee and the Operational Directives of the Convention, the Committee entrusts its Bureau with significant tasks and responsibilities. Three Bureau meetings had taken place on 22 March, 5 June and 2 October 2023. The Bureau had examined thirteen International Assistance requests up to US$ 100,000, all of which were granted individually to the Bahamas, Botswana, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Mali, Mauritania, Nicaragua, Peru, Rwanda, South Sudan, Togo, Uganda and Uzbekistan, for a total amount of US$1,292,756from the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund. The projects aim at safeguarding specific living heritage practices, developing community-based inventories, strengthening heritage policies, and building national or local capacities for implementing the 2003 Convention. Furthermore, the Bureau examined four Emergency Assistance requests, all of which were granted individually to Ethiopia, Romania, Slovakia and Haiti, for a total amount of US$629,892.Finally, the Bureau examined one Preparatory Assistance request for a proposal to the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices, granted to Mongolia for a total amount of US$8,340.
4. The **Chairperson** was particularly encouraged as there had been many first-time applicants among the States Parties, with nine new benefitting States. In addition, eleven projects were granted to African countries and two to Small Island Developing States (SIDS), in line with UNESCO’s Global Priorities. He congratulated the States that had been granted financial assistance. The Bureau coordinated the venue for this session. Based on consultation with the Committee members, the venue was changed from Gaborone to Kasane. He reminded the Committee that new Bureau members would be elected for 2024 at the end of this session, encouraging members to start consultations among their respective Electoral Groups. The Chairperson underlined the importance of transparency as a key guiding principle for the organization of Bureau meetings. Thus, in accordance with recommendation 69 of the Open-Ended Working Group on Governance, and as had been the case in the past two years, the Secretariat asked Bureau members to communicate the date and venue of each Bureau meeting within their respective Electoral Groups. Furthermore, the agenda, documents and decisions of each Bureau meeting of the Committee were published [online](https://ich.unesco.org/en/18com-bureau) for consultation.

**ITEM 5 OF THE AGENDA**

**REPORT OF THE SECRETARIAT ON ITS ACTIVITIES (JANUARY 2022 TO JUNE 2023)**

**Document:** *[LHE/23/18.COM/5](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-23-18.COM-5_EN.docx)*

**Decision:** [*18.COM 5*](https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions/18.COM/5)

1. The **Assistant Director-General** shared the activities of the Secretariat during the eighteen-month period from January 2022 to June 2023, which also coincided with the time before the Secretary of the Convention, Mr Tim Curtis, left to take up his new position as Director of the UNESCO New Delhi Office. The Assistant Director-General thanked Mr Curtis, recognizing his hard work and dedication to the Convention. During his tenure, the Secretariat had made progress in many important areas, including: (a) the support to decision-making processes of the governing bodies of the Convention; (b) the administration of international cooperation mechanisms; (c) the expansion of capacity-building activities; (d) responses to emergency situations; and (e) the development of thematic initiatives, among others.
2. The **Assistant Director-General** was pleased to report on the conclusion of the global reflection on the listing mechanisms of the Convention (2018–2022), which established new procedures, including: (a) the transfer of inscribed elements between the Lists; (b) the inscription of elements on an extended or reduced basis; (c) the removal of elements; (d) the establishment of an enhanced follow-up mechanism for inscribed elements; and (e) as the measures to fast-track and streamline aspects of the International Assistance mechanism. To operationalize these procedures, the Secretariat revised existing forms and created new simplified ones in time for the 2024 cycle, which were now available online.[[1]](#footnote-1) The existing training materials on the preparation of nomination files were revised to align with the results of this global reflection, and an online sub-regional capacity-building course was carried out with the new training materials for the benefit of over seventy participants from sixteen Caribbean SIDS and territories, generously supported by the Netherlands. The outcomes of this reflection constitute a major landmark for the Convention, although the full effect of these changes will take one or two cycles to be fully felt and assessed. The global reflection also explored the full potential of Article 18 of the Convention, beyond the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices (discussed under agenda item 11). The International Assistance mechanism accelerated during the reporting period, and activities were undertaken to increase the visibility of International Assistance, including the organization of a series of global webinars in 2023 (discussed under agenda item 10).
3. The **Assistant Director-General** presented the promising developments of the periodic reporting exercise. The Secretariat administered reports on the current status of elements inscribed on the Urgent Safeguarding List (examined under agenda item 7.a). It also carried out capacity-building activities for country focal points for periodic reporting in the Arab States (the analysis was examined under agenda item 7.b). An update on the support given to States Parties in Africa and Asia and the Pacific was presented under agenda item 7.c.The Secretariat undertook recent activities to advance the three thematic initiatives on living heritage and sustainable development, namely the economic dimensions of safeguarding intangible cultural heritage, living heritage and climate change, and the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage in urban contexts (an update on these initiatives was presented under agenda item 12). The Secretariat continued to work on intangible cultural heritage in emergencies, and the newly created capacity-building materials on the safeguarding of ICH in situations of conflict and forced displacement were piloted in a refugee camp in Cameroon (supported by Azerbaijan through the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund). In addition, a project to safeguard living heritage during emergencies in SIDS in the Pacific and the Caribbean (funded by Japan) was further implemented in five States Parties: Belize, The Bahamas, Fiji, Tonga and Vanuatu.
4. To safeguard living heritage in Ukraine, the **Assistant Director-General** explained that the Secretariat continued to cooperate with other entities in the Culture Sector. In particular, an existing resource kit for teachers was adapted to the Ukrainian context and was implemented in fifteen primary and secondary schools, including some from the UNESCO Associated Schools’ Network in Ukraine, in a project funded by UNESCO’s Heritage Emergency Fund. In addition, following a community-based needs identification in five neighbouring countries (Hungary, Moldova, Poland, Romania and Slovakia), two International Assistance requests were approved by the Bureau in 2023 to address the safeguarding needs of Ukrainian populations temporarily displaced in Romania and Slovakia. The Secretariat also took part in the joint initiative by UNESCO and the Ministry of Culture and Information Policy of Ukraine for the development of the Action Plan for the Protection of Culture in Ukraine, which includes a thematic focus on ‘Strengthening resilience through culture’, covering initiatives related to living heritage safeguarding. The Secretariat provided capacity-building and technical support to 114 Member States, within the scope of the first funding priority ‘‘Strengthening capacities to safeguard intangible cultural heritage using multi-modal approaches and contribute to sustainable development’ approved by the Committee at its sixteenth session (Decision [16.COM 12](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/16.COM/12)). In particular, the Secretariat continued its work of reorienting the capacity-building programme for multimodal delivery, and it had completed the design of the Learning Management System (LMS) as a key tool to achieve this. In response to a Recommendation of the 2021 IOS Evaluation, 95 new experts (60 per cent of whom are women) were selected to join the [global network](https://ich.unesco.org/en/facilitator) of facilitators, balancing the regional representation of network members. Four global orientation webinars were organized for the newly joined facilitators in December 2022, which marked the launch of a new strategy for regional, contextualized trainings in all regions in 2023 and 2024.
5. On the second funding priority, the **Assistant Director-General** reported that the Secretariat continued its work on ‘Safeguarding intangible cultural heritage in formal and non-formal education’ by continuing to collaborate closely with the Education Sector to maintain the momentum of the ‘Living Heritage and Education Programme’, notably through intersectoral dialogue to integrate living heritage into key international standard-setting instruments and frameworks. The work carried out will have visibility at the World Conference on Culture and Arts Education in Abu Dhabi between 13–15 February 2024[[2]](#footnote-2) and will undoubtably shed light on how we have managed to introduce the elements of intangible cultural heritage as a fundamental part of a framework that is being worked on for culture and arts education, thanks to the observations and recommendations of States Parties. Tools and content were provided to support this effective integration, such as updating the [Clearinghouse on living heritage and education](https://ich.unesco.org/en/clearinghouse-education) with new resources and projects, and developing a partnership with a university in Africa to design and test tools to assess the impact of learning with living heritage in formal education. To build on these promising initiatives, the Committee encouraged States Parties to provide support for this intersectoral collaboration with the Education Sector. The year 2023 was also an important year for the Convention, which celebrated its twentieth anniversary (discussed under agenda item 6). It presented an excellent occasion for the Secretariat to reflect on the past and prepare for the future.
6. The **Assistant Director-General** recalled some of the Secretariat’s most noteworthy achievements. In the last 18 months, it had provided capacity-building support to 114 Member States, including 32 in Africa and 25 SIDS. Of these, thirty-fourcountries (including eight in Africa and eleven SIDS)initiated new programmes, focusing on the core safeguarding measures and thematic areas under the Convention. Twenty-four statutory meetings had been organized. Support was provided to eighteen countries in the Arab States and forty-one countries in Africa for the periodic reporting exercise. Twenty-three new International Assistance requests were administered (including eight from Africa andfive from SIDS), as well as the implementation of 55 active projects in 51countries. In many cases, this was achieved with the support of UNESCO Field Offices, reflecting the decentralization of activities within the Culture Sector. The Secretariat treated 120 nomination files for the 2022 and 2023 cycles, including one file treated on an accelerated basis, and 70 nomination files for the 2024 cycle. It registered 141 nomination files, selected 95 new experts to join the global network of facilitators, and organized 3 regional training-of-trainer workshops for incoming network members from Europe, Africa, Arab States, and Asia and the Pacific. The Secretariat strengthened collaboration with the ICH NGO Forum, notably in the context of mapping the domain of activities of sixty-five accredited NGOs. It organized one sub-regional training workshop on nominations in cooperation with three Field Offices, training more than seventy participants from sixteen SIDS. The Secretariat also processed twelveproposals to establish or renew UNESCO Chairs in the field of intangible cultural heritage, including the first UNITWIN network on intangible cultural heritage.
7. The **Chairperson** thanked the Assistant Director-General and the Secretariat for its immense work, opening the floor for comments.
8. The delegation of **Switzerland** referred to the 2022 MONDIACULT Declaration and the 2023 Seoul Vision, and hoped that this eighteenth session would bring a new and necessary impetus to the celebration and a renewed and stronger recognition of living traditions within our societies and communities.
9. The delegation of **Czechia** congratulated the Chairperson for hosting this event and for the great hospitality and conduct of the work. The delegation delivered this [statement](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/64310-EN.docx) on behalf of thirty-five States Parties. The delegation expressed that despite repeated appeals to cease Russia’s illegal, unprovoked and unjustifiable war of aggression against Ukraine, the war continues to affect all areas of life in Ukraine. The delegation noted that as a result of its impact on the social fabric of Ukrainian society, the living heritage of communities in Ukraine, a fundamental part of its identity, resilience and continuity, is under threat. The co-signatories therefore appreciated UNESCO’s leadership in providing emergency assistance for Ukraine to cope with the adverse impact of Russia’s aggression. They noted that it had been instrumental in ensuring education, and in protecting cultural heritage – both tangible and intangible. The work organized by the Secretariat had led, among other things, to: (a) the development of a project supported by the UNESCO Heritage Emergency Fund aimed at integrating living heritage in education; (b) two international assistance requests, approved by the Bureau in 2023, to address the safeguarding needs of Ukrainian populations temporarily displaced in Romania and Slovakia; and (c) a joint initiative by UNESCO and the Ministry of Culture and Information Policy of Ukraine for the development of the Action Plan for the Protection of Culture in Ukraine. The co-signatories commended the Committee for its contribution to safeguarding Ukrainian intangible heritage by inscribing ‘Culture of Ukrainian borscht cooking’ on the Urgent Safeguarding List. They also highly acknowledged the five neighbouring countries of Hungary, Moldova, Poland, Romania and Slovakia for their engagement in the framework of the project initiated in April 2022 by the UNESCO Secretariat, aimed at identifying living heritage safeguarding among the displaced Ukrainian communities[[3]](#footnote-3) and at implementing follow-up projects resulting from this exercise. Finally, the co-signatories reiterated their demand on the Russian Federation to end its war of aggression against Ukraine and to immediately, completely and unconditionally withdraw all of its troops and military equipment from the entire territory of Ukraine, per its internationally recognized borders, and to cease destruction of tangible and intangible Ukrainian cultural heritage.
10. The delegation of **Czechia** turned to its national statement, thanking the Chairperson once again, for his successful guidance and the Secretariat for its excellent report and for the results achieved during this period. The Committee was celebrating the twentieth anniversary of the Convention in 2023 and the Secretariat was overflowing with energy. Without its dedication, the implementation of the Convention would be a lot more difficult. The delegation particularly highlighted the Secretariat’s work in revising the nomination forms and its reflection on sharing best practices, responding to emergencies, and expanding capacity-building activities for SIDS, in which Czechia had taken part. It was pleased that the Secretariat was working successfully, among others, in the UNESCO Field Offices, whose involvement, particularly on the accreditation of NGOs and periodic reports, will only be strengthened. Among the long list of activities supported by the Secretariat, the delegation mentioned in particular the development of the ‘Seoul Vision for the Future of Safeguarding Living Heritage for Sustainable Development and Peace’,[[4]](#footnote-4) and its collaboration with the Education Sector regarding the safeguarding of living heritage in formal and non-formal education, which is particularly close to its heart. The delegation thanked the former Secretary of the Convention, Mr Tim Curtis, for accompanying Czechia during its work within this Committee. He had been a true pillar in the successful implementation of the Convention.
11. The delegation of **Sweden** congratulated the Chairperson on his presidency and thanked the hosts in Botswana for their warm and friendly welcome, remarking on the vibrant dance traditions of Botswana showcased in Kasane, a vital part of the world’s living heritage. It was honoured that the President of the Republic of Botswana, H.E. Mr Mokgweetsi Masisi, had inaugurated the meeting, highlighting the importance of international cooperation on intangible cultural heritage. The delegation thanked the Secretariat for its comprehensive report and the impressive work carried out during the reporting period, in particular, the important work on safeguarding intangible cultural heritage in emergencies, such as the initiatives to strengthen resilience through culture during the war in Ukraine. The importance of the activities carried out to integrate living heritage in education and the role of living heritage in achieving sustainable development were also highlighted. The delegation looked forward to the next steps in the reflection of the broader implementation of Article 18, and thanked the Secretariat for organizing the previous meetings during the year. Although the important role of Indigenous communities in safeguarding efforts is highlighted in other items on the agenda, the delegation asked the Secretariat to elaborate on how they have worked with the intangible heritage of and with Indigenous people.
12. The delegation of **Ethiopia** congratulated the Chairperson on his election, expressing appreciation of the welcome ceremony and the folk music and dance performance on Sunday evening, a testament to Botswana’s intangible cultural heritage. Ethiopia also appreciated and thanked the Secretariat for its hard work. Since the seventeenth session held in Rabat, and despite financial constraints, it had undertaken work on capacity-building and the preparation of nomination files and technical support. One hundred and fourteen States Parties had benefitted from this programme, of which thirty-four are from Africa and SIDS. In this regard, the delegation appreciated the voluntary contribution and support provided by the Netherlands, Saudi Arabia and others. Concerning the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage through formal and non-formal education, the delegation wished to hear more on how the joint theory of change to guide a new project on living heritage and basic education in Namibia and Zimbabwe was being evaluated, and how it could be scaled up to other States Parties. Ethiopia fully supported the report and the draft decision.
13. The delegation of **Germany** extended gratitude to Botswana for hosting the eighteenth session of the Committee, noting its rich cultural heritage and warm hospitality, which provided a wonderful atmosphere for safeguarding living heritage. It also expressed gratitude to the people and the government of Botswana for their commitment to UNESCO’s goals and for ensuring the seamless organization of the session. The delegation thanked the Chairperson for his exemplary leadership and dedication to the Committee, and his commitment to preserving living heritage. Further, Germany expressed gratitude to colleagues at the Secretariat and the Assistant Director-General for their outstanding work during the last two years, especially in the field of safeguarding living heritage in emergencies, such as the joint initiative by UNESCO and the Ministry of Culture and Information Policy of Ukraine for the development of the Action Plan for the protection of cultures in Ukraine. It commended the project addressing the safeguarding needs of the Ukrainian population temporarily displaced in Romania and Slovakia, and for the capacity-building programmes in SIDS. Germany welcomed the implementation of the ‘dialogue process’ in the nomination cycle, resulting in positive evaluations of the nomination files in 2023. To strengthen this process, it sought to have more timely reporting on the process for the sake of clarity and transparency for all States Parties. The involvement and participation of the communities in the whole nomination process is of the utmost importance and should be further strengthened. As the 2003 Convention stands for the intersection of tradition and innovation, it welcomed the understanding of gender roles in its implementation to reflect and reinforce gender equality, in the spirit of UNESCO’s priority for gender. The Convention is not intended to be an instrument to cement traditional social structures and historical values, but rather to enable the further development of societies towards the freedom of every individual. The delegation welcomed the various initiatives on living heritage and sustainable development, as well as the broad involvement of NGOs in the implementation of the Convention. This Committee marked the twentieth anniversary of the Convention. Two decades of collective commitment and collaborative efforts have built a functional framework for safeguarding the living expressions of our shared humanity. After twenty years, we can proudly look back on the progress made and, at the same time, meet the ongoing challenges that require attention. Germany stood ready to actively engage with delegations and contribute knowledge and experience to preserve living heritage.
14. The delegation of **Côte d’Ivoire** expressed gratitude to the President of the Republic of Botswana, the government and the people of Botswana for the welcome, enhanced by popular traditional dances. It congratulated the Chairperson on his election and for all the efforts that led to this session, thanking the Secretariat and the Botswana authorities. The delegation was impressed by the density and quality of the Secretariat’s report on its activities during the period concerned, congratulating the Secretariat for the capacity- building in general, which should remain among the priorities of the Convention. Indeed, given the new conflicts and difficult situations faced around the world, the delegation was satisfied to note the Secretariat’s commitment to monitoring the implementation of pilot projects in priority regions in accordance with the ‘Operational principles and modalities for safeguarding intangible cultural heritage in emergencies’ (see [webpage](https://ich.unesco.org/en/operational-principles-and-modalities-in-emergencies-01143)). In this context, it was important to consider the gradual expansion of these projects to as many regions as possible, depending on the means available, which would contribute to strengthening the capacities of experts and beneficiary countries, and provide adequate responses to safeguarding living heritage in such situations. In addition, capacity-building has helped better understand the requirements of the Convention. With regard to the drafting of the periodic reports, Côte d’Ivoire, like other African countries that are carrying out the reporting, had become aware of what remains to be done in terms of policy and measures to safeguard living heritage, thereby increasing awareness of the Convention among government institutions and partners.
15. The delegation of **Morocco** congratulated the Chairperson on his election and for the quality of the work carried out, expressing gratitude to the Government of Botswana for its organization of this session, and to the President, who honoured the opening session with his presence. The delegation thanked the Assistant Director-General for the quality of the Secretariat’s report and for endeavouring to act on many of the subjects to which the delegation is attached, namely, capacity-building. It was also grateful for all the statutory meetings organized, the periodic reports, the financial assistance granted to several Member States, the decentralized work of the UNESCO Field Offices that had borne fruit, the work on all the nomination files, the training of trainers (an important element of the work by the Secretariat), and the different synergies between intangible cultural heritage and education, as noted by a number of colleagues. The delegation thanked Mr Tim Curtis for the extraordinary work accomplished to nourish and develop the Convention, making it today a benchmark Convention for expressing universal diversity. Morocco had the privilege and honour of hosting the last session and was thus able to see the extraordinary and immense work undertaken by the Secretariat. The delegation expressed heartfelt thanks to the Secretariat and all the team for their tireless and exceptional work, which deserved respect and recognition.
16. The delegation of Botswana thanked the Committee for the opportunity to host the eighteenth session and commended the Secretariat for its comprehensive report and sterling job in safeguarding living heritage. It extended gratitude to the Secretariat for its continued support in safeguarding intangible cultural heritage, adding that Botswana was privileged to be among the States Parties having been granted international assistance for an amount of US$94,447 for sustaining ‘Seperu folkdance and associated practices’. Botswana also benefited from capacity-building support of an amount of US$4,995 from the UNESCO Regional Office for Southern Africa towards the compilation of its periodic report for the next reporting cycle. Botswana took note of the efforts made towards capacity building and for the global facilitators network in response to Recommendation 7 of the 2021 Internal Oversight Service (IOS) evaluation. The delegation was thrilled to have three of its own experts among them. Finally, Botswana commended Namibia and Zimbabwe for their continued collaboration with the Education Sector, which resulted in the integration of living heritage into basic education. Botswana wished to join the global community in celebrating the twentieth anniversary of this Convention.
17. The delegation of the Republic of Korea thanked the Government of Botswana and the Secretariat for hosting this session in Africa. The Convention has never rested on its initial achievements and continued to evolve, as evidenced by the recent completion of the global reflection on the listing mechanisms and the launch of a new global reflection on a broader implementation of Article 18. Although the Convention has become an international normative instrument for the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage around the world, the Secretariat has solidly anchored the evolving systems and validated how the implementation of the Convention contributes to the UN Sustainable Development Goals. This session in Botswana was a powerful reminder of the critical importance of living harmoniously with all other species of animals and plants. The Korean government has supported the [MOOC](https://ich.unesco.org/en/massive-online-open-course-mooc-01228) on intangible cultural heritage and Sustainable Development through ICHCAP[[5]](#footnote-5) in cooperation with UNESCO Headquarters and the SDG Academy[[6]](#footnote-6) since 2021. The Republic of Korea welcomed the establishment of a new learning environment and hoped it will contribute to UNESCO’s digital transformation for more effective implementation of the Convention in the future.
18. The delegation of Peru congratulated the Chairperson on this excellent meeting, noting his vast experience in the multilateral arena, and thanked the government and people of Botswana for the warm hospitality and welcome in the impressive natural wealth and biodiversity of Botswana, as well as the diversity of cultural expressions experienced. It thanked the Secretariat for its comprehensive report on the work carried out since January 2022, especially the efforts leading to the implementation of the results of the global reflection on the listing mechanisms, including the introduction of significant new procedures for nominations to the Convention’s Lists. The delegation highlighted in particular the reflection carried out on strengthening Article 18 on the Register of Good Practices. It congratulated the Committee on the positive impact of the dialogue process used by the Evaluation Body to better understand the elements presented, a remark expressed by many delegations during the Committee’s seventeenth session in Rabat, which was reflected in the report presented by the Evaluation Body. The delegation believed that this would help communities better represent their aspirations for the Convention. In this year of the twentieth anniversary of the Convention, it congratulated the Secretariat for the excellent work so far in promoting living heritage, even though more could be done, especially to encourage more geographical balance in the Lists. In this regard, it congratulated the Secretariat for its ongoing efforts to promote capacity-building in the preparation of nomination files to support countries in their safeguarding efforts. It was noted that eight of the 45 files for examination in this session (18 per cent of all files) came from African countries, in stark contrast to the previous session.
19. The delegation of Bangladesh congratulated the Chairperson on his election and appreciated his hospitality and overall leadership. It thanked the Government of Botswana for hosting this session, remarking on the kind words expressed by the President, who had personally overseen every aspect of preparation so as to represent the best of Botswana, seen in the spectacular opening ceremony and the representation of its intangible cultural heritage. The delegation thanked the Assistant Director-General and his entire team, echoing the words of Morocco in its appreciation of the immense task undertaken by the Secretariat. Safeguarding intangible cultural heritage is pivotal in building an inclusive, just and peaceful global society through promoting culture, innovation and creativity. To that end, the delegation appreciated the dialogue process conducted, which helped bridge the gap in understanding between the submitting State and the Evaluation Body. However, it stressed the need to publish the summary of the dialogue process prior to the Committee session. It was recalled that the Committee is elected by the Member States, and the Committee members have a mandate from their Member States to protect and promote the sovereignty of the Convention. To that end, the delegation requested that the Secretariat publish the questions asked by the Evaluation Body as well as the answers provided by the States Parties during the dialogue process. In this way, States Parties are made aware of the gaps in the nomination file and the solutions proposed. The delegation believed in transparency and only wished to inscribe elements for which an open and accessible discussion is facilitated. A solution obtained without the Committee’s full knowledge could put into question the credibility of the element as intangible cultural heritage. Likewise, a discussion prior to the Committee commits the submitting State to the requirement of safeguarding, the common objective. Bangladesh reiterated its firm commitment towards upholding the Convention through collective efforts to protect and promote the living heritage of its rich culture. It believed that, through this Convention, every country, irrespective of size, would have an equal opportunity to contribute and develop a better understanding for the safeguarding of their respective intangible cultural heritage, a shared heritage of humankind. Indeed, all heritage matters because every community matters.
20. The delegation of Angola thanked Botswana for its warm welcome and rich culture, and for bringing the delegates closer to nature with the flora and fauna of the region. It congratulated the Bureau and the Secretariat for the preparation for this session, and thanked the outgoing Secretary, Mr Tim Curtis, for his years devoted to the Convention and for his excellent work, wishing him success in his new endeavours. The delegation took note of the improvements made in the positive evaluations of elements, and by the number of African elements to be included, thereby increasing the representation of African countries in the Lists of intangible cultural heritage. In this regard, it congratulated the Evaluation Body for its rigorous work and enhanced communication with submitting States, while recommending improvements in the consultative evaluation processes and for increased transparency, thus allowing Committee members to take clearer positions in the decision-making process. The Committee is increasingly seeing a collective awareness of the need, the urgency and the opportunity to extend actions on the study of safeguarding, always on the basis of collaboration and greater participation of society and communities. It is on the basis of these values that Angola had managed to strengthen its safeguarding mechanisms and accelerate the process of recognition and valorization by completing its study of certain national elements in the most varied fields. This is the case of Sona, which will be the first element of intangible cultural heritage to be inscribed by Angola, making this session even more special and memorable. Indeed, more community participation and political goodwill is needed to implement public policies for safeguarding heritage in developing countries, especially because of their persistent challenges, such as lack of technical and financial capacity. As such, the delegation called for greater cooperation at both the country and institutional levels, thereby minimizing the existing gap and ensuring that all States feel properly represented in the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity (hereinafter ‘the Representative List’). UNESCO must continue to play a key role in these processes by seeking ways to provide technical and financial assistance on an ongoing basis in order to strengthen the capacity of institutions and countries that need it, with the aim of achieving balanced representation and highlighting cultural wealth. Angola had recalled its commitment to culture during the 2022 MONDIACULT in Mexico,[[7]](#footnote-7) during which all States committed to protecting and promoting cultural diversity and safeguarding and promoting the cultural sector on behalf of future generations.
21. The Chairperson thanked Angola, its neighbour, noting that it was the Chair of the Africa Group and thanking Angola for allowing the Chobe River to run through Botswana.
22. The delegation of Panama thanked Botswana and the Chairperson for warmly welcoming the delegates in Kasane and for the opportunity to discover the cultural and natural diversity of the country and its traditions, while recognizing the practices in common. The delegation acknowledged the Secretariat’s hard work, noting the legacy of the work of Tim Curtis and his team over the years. It thanked the experts for their participation, noting how the relationship with them had evolved over the years and how dialogue will always improve this relationship. In these first twenty years of the Convention, as highlighted in the MONDIACULT Declaration, culture, including intangible cultural heritage, was recognized as a global common good and something we must share, protect and promote. Within the framework of the twentieth anniversary of the Convention, different conferences had been held in Panama, creating a space for reflection on the topic of intangible cultural heritage, not least because of the importance Panama attaches to intangible cultural heritage. Regional days of reflection were also held in the region. Panama had made a profound evaluation of its intangible cultural heritage over the last twenty years, establishing the creation of inclusive inventories that recognize Panama’s rich cultural diversity, as well as the legislation and public policies related to the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage. Just as UNESCO had highlighted the importance of synergies between the different sectors, Panama had also worked to emphasize the synergies between intangible, cultural and natural heritage. For example, in 2023, it was eagerly awaiting the inclusion of the cultural and ecological Sea Turtle Festival of the Armila turtles, where these synergies are in full display, to the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices. The project received the support and guidance of the Secretariat and other countries, which was highly appreciated. The delegation was also grateful for the support provided by the Secretariat to prepare its files in the application for funding.
23. The delegation of Saudi Arabia congratulated the Chairperson on his election and stewardship, thanking the Government of Botswana for hosting the eighteenth session of the Committee and for its warm welcome and honour in the presence of H.E. Mr Mokgweetsi Masisi, President of Botswana. It thanked the Secretariat for its detailed and excellent report and activities, expressing gratitude for its hard and dedicated work. The delegation highlighted the collaborative work between UNESCO and Saudi organizations, notably, the Ministry of Culture, the Heritage Commission, the Culinary Arts Commission, the Royal Commission for Al-Ula, the Royal Institute for Traditional Arts, and the Saudi Heritage Preservation Society. The collaboration resulted in partnering and impactful activities, including on capacity-building, sustainable development strategies and enhancing inventories and documentation processes. Additional activities included a series of training workshops and activities for periodic reporting under the Convention in Africa. These activities assist in the implementation of the Convention at both national and international levels. Saudi Arabia encouraged the Secretariat and State members to increase their efforts towards implementing global issues and the challenges they face when implementing the Convention. Most notably, climate adaptation, emergency preparedness and response, digitalization of heritage, development strategies and forming policies in compliance with the MONDIACULT Declaration. On another note, it echoed Bangladesh’s comments on the consultative evaluation process. For the sake of transparency, it also wished to receive summary reports of the results of the dialogue process as a learning experience for State members, in line with Culture Sector’s efforts towards synergies between the culture Conventions. The delegation invited delegates to attend the launch over lunchtime of one of its innovative projects, the International Food Atlas, a collaboration between Saudi Arabia and UNESCO on a digital platform for safeguarding, promoting and transmitting foodways for future generations. This project was funded by the Saudi Fund at UNESCO to support culture and heritage.
24. The delegation of Rwanda expressed gratitude for the warm welcome and generosity of the people and government of Botswana. Botswana is a true hotbed of diversity, distinguished by its wealth, its rich preservation of the environment, and its traditions. It congratulated the Secretariat for the excellent work and quality of the report, which highlighted the significant achievements and challenges faced. Particularly noteworthy activities include the revision of the nomination forms and procedures, the capacity-building, and the reflection on the application of Article 18 of the Convention. The exceptional initiatives that marked the twentieth anniversary of the Convention was also commended, with more than 120 activities organized at local, national and regional levels. The delegation highlighted the global meeting that gave birth to the Seoul Vision, offering stimulating perspectives for the future of the Convention focused on sustainable development and the preservation of living heritage. In the last Committee session in Rabat, Rwanda had expressed concern about the lack of representativeness on the List, emphasizing the need for equity in terms of geographical representation of the elements inscribed and submitted to the Committee. In 2023, it was delighted to note that a significant number, one-third of the nominations presented, came from usually under-represented regions, congratulating the States Parties on this achievement.
25. The delegation of Slovakia expressed appreciation of Botswana’s hospitality and welcome shown during the opening ceremony, which featured the wealth of its cultural heritage. There was a lot to be proud of as the Committee celebrates its twentieth anniversary, uniting us around pride in our identity and the relevance of the experience and knowledge of previous generations. Culture, including living heritage, lies at the heart of all Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Slovakia is strongly committed to integrating intangible cultural heritage into formal and nonformal education. With its new project, ‘Cultural Heritage and Traditional Folk Culture Responsibly’, Slovakia aims to improve the quality of teaching about intangible cultural heritage in primary schools. It also exploits artificial intelligence to improve the accessibility and attractiveness of intangible cultural heritage education to younger generations. In this regard, in cooperation with Italy, Hungary and Slovenia, it was developing a mobile application using augmented reality, which will help students and users immerse into history and explore the elements of intangible cultural heritage inscribed on the Lists and the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices, as well as World Heritage sites. The role of UNESCO in safeguarding living heritage in emergencies is of crucial importance. As one of the countries having benefited from International Assistance, it was currently implementing a project to address the safeguarding needs of Ukrainian communities displaced in Slovakia, and it was keen to share its preliminary observations. The delegates were thus welcomed to participate in the side event ‘Living Heritage in Emergencies, good practices in Eastern Europe’, to be held later in the day. The delegation thanked the Secretariat for its well-prepared report, and the Assistant Director-General and the Secretariat, as well as the former Secretary, Mr Tim Curtis, for the extraordinary work accomplished in safeguarding living heritage.
26. The delegation of Mauritania expressed gratitude and thanks to the people and government of Botswana for their warm welcome, thanking the Chairperson for his wise conduct of the session, whose location offered a great opportunity and deep immersion in the country’s rich and well-protected nature. The delegation thanked the Secretariat for the quality of the report, which provided an overview of the important activities undertaken, as well as the enormous achievements in different areas, particularly in strengthening the international cooperation and assistance mechanisms of the Convention. The year 2023 marked the twentieth anniversary of the Convention, which had reached almost universal ratification and a broadening of the concept of cultural heritage. This celebration is an important opportunity for States Parties to take stock of the impacts of the Convention over the past twenty years, to enhance public awareness of the importance of safeguarding living heritage, while reflecting on future directions that the Committee could take to further strengthen the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage. Mauritania, in its capacity as a member of the Committee, undertakes to ensure the achievement of the Committee’s objectives, which aim, among other things, at the promotion, enhancement and implementation of the Convention. In this context, Mauritania is convinced that the simplification of the rules governing the nomination process and the provision of technical assistance to under-represented countries in the preparation of nominations contributes more effectively to the implementation of the Convention. Under-represented countries should indeed benefit from appropriate measures to inscribe their intangible cultural heritage. By encouraging multinational applications and building the capacity of NGOs active in the field of safeguarding, the Committee will thus be optimized. Mauritania assured the Committee of its support, reiterating its thanks for the excellent preparation and good organization of this eighteenth session.
27. The delegation of Uzbekistan congratulated the Chairperson on his election, expressing appreciation to the government and the people of Botswana for bringing the meeting to Kasane. It thanked the Assistant Director-General and the Secretariat for their hard work and for the very comprehensive report, commending the Secretariat for having addressed the decisions of the governing bodies and for their concerted efforts to promote the Convention globally. The delegation fully supported the work to simplify the nomination procedures, and in particular to clear the backlog of files. Efforts to support capacity-building to enhance the potential and experience of Member States were also welcomed. Uzbekistan especially welcomed the focus on underrepresented countries on the Lists, including SIDS and African countries. This important work supports geographical and regional balance in promoting intangible cultural heritage elements. The delegation fully supported attempts to expand the reach and scale of formal and non-formal education around the world in an important multidisciplinary approach. There are some good examples, but there should be a lot more if we want to have young local experts dedicated to safeguarding cultural heritage. It seconded the warm words of appreciation addressed to the Netherlands, Sweden, Japan and other countries, for their generous financial contributions supporting the work in numerous areas. Another key aspect was the work aimed at enhancing dialogue and communication among stakeholders in the Convention, notably the dialogue process, which had proved its effectiveness with already impressive results. This process should be continued and expanded, reflecting the necessity and importance of capacity-building efforts. The dialogue process can be an additional valuable source of practical experience for Member States, potentially learning more from the communication with the Evaluation Body, including in addressing shortcomings and recommendations.
28. The delegation of India thanked Botswana for organizing this session, remarking on the warm words of welcome of the President. It commended the Secretariat on its work, as well as the Evaluation Body and the accredited NGOs, and welcomed the commitment of all the Committee members, Observer nations, and local communities to the Convention. On behalf of the 1.43 billion people of India, with its over 1,600 languages and dialects and thirty states with diverse cultural and linguistic footprints, the delegation spoke, on this twentieth anniversary, of how the world needs the Convention more than ever. Hence, the Convention must expand and permit more nominations to the Representative List. One nomination every two years does little justice to the broad intangible cultural heritage of India and the world, including SIDS. When an element is inscribed, it links local communities with UNESCO and the world. Indeed, we need to evaluate ways to accelerate this process of linking local communities. The Ministry of Culture of the Government of India is the nodal body covering the Convention, and it has facilitated several capacity-building programmes to spread awareness of the Convention. The delegation thanked Mr Tim Curtis, the former Secretary and now director of the UNESCO New Delhi office. It was hoped that he would use his presence to increase awareness of the Convention.
29. The delegation of Viet Nam congratulated and commended the Chairperson for his leadership, thanking Botswana for its warm welcome, hospitality, and rich cultural activities. It commended the Secretariat for its excellent report and achievements. Viet Nam highlighted the important capacity-building and activities provided to States Parties. It applauded the three thematic initiatives undertaken by the Secretariat linking living heritage and sustainable development and exploring the economic, social and environmental dimensions of safeguarding intangible cultural heritage. Viet Nam reiterated the important role of intangible cultural heritage, not only as a driving force for sustainable development but also for cultural diversity, creativity and intercultural dialogue. There were over 100 activities on the twentieth anniversary of the Convention, and Viet Nam had also joined in on numerous activities to celebrate the Convention. It appreciated the opportunity to work alongside the Secretariat, the Evaluation Body and the Committee on the implementation of the Convention.
30. The delegation of Brazil congratulated the Chairperson on his election and expressed gratitude for the hospitality extended by the people of Botswana and happiness to meet once again in Africa, highlighting the strong commitment to better geographical balance in the implementation of the Convention. It thanked the Secretariat for its detailed report, noting the clear efforts for a more balanced Convention that values all perceptions and highlights the relationship between intangible cultural heritage and human rights. Brazil is making a similar effort with the recreation of the Ministry of Culture, which is re-emerging with the strength needed to place culture as a central element in the social and economic development of the country. The priority attributed to the Brazilian policy of safeguarding intangible cultural heritage was reflected in the significant direct investments made in 2023, exceeding US$6 million and representing a growth of more than 1,600 per cent compared to investments in the previous four years. In this regard, the national intangible heritage programme had been reintroduced, which UNESCO in Brazil had recognized as new good practice, with fifty-eight projects benefitting of support in 2023 to promote documentation and measures to safeguard recognized elements and to identify and recognize Brazilian languages on the national inventory of linguistic diversity. These actions already put into practice many of the ideas discussed in the context of the working group on the implementation of Article 18. Brazil considers as urgent the thematic initiatives related to the economic implications of intangible heritage in view of the popularization of the Convention. It was concerned about the growth of large economic interests involved in intangible heritage and possible cultural misappropriations of community heritage. This initiative was thus very important but will be insufficient if its proper implementation by every State Party, NGO and other partners is not ensured. For this reason, over the next four years, Brazil will initiate research on the economic impact of safeguarding actions aimed at Brazilian elements on the Representative List. The delegation also emphasized the relationship between intangible cultural heritage and human rights through the enhancement of the consultation processes with representatives of groups, bearers of intangible cultural heritage elements, and traditional peoples and communities. Brazil has made a political decision to expressly invest in intangible cultural heritage in order to recognize the cultural diversity of the country, as well as the leading role the cultural expressions of its communities play in the fight against hunger and social inequality and, last but not least, in strengthening democracy. On behalf of Group IV in the Committee, the delegation invited all present to the launch event, the following day, of the publication organized by Brazil on the Latin American and Caribbean reflections within the framework of the twentieth anniversary of the Convention.
31. The delegation of Paraguay thanked the Chairperson for his work, experience and wisdom, and Botswana for the warm welcome, the opening ceremony and the kindness and friendliness of its people. It expressed gratitude at being gathered in Kasane, a place of majestic natural beauty and a testimony to the living heritage of humanity. The delegation thanked the Secretariat for its comprehensive document and extraordinary work and commitment. It recognized that the global reflection of the Convention’s listing mechanisms had made it possible to establish new listing procedures, as well as capacity building in the preparation of nominations, which had benefited SIDS, as well as the efforts made in the safeguarding of living heritage in emergency situations and sustainable development. It was pleased that the global network of facilitators for the capacity-building programme had been expanded and that sixty per cent of the new experts are women. The delegation encouraged these efforts in capacity building to enable the full implementation of the Convention and ensure greater geographical balance of the Lists.
32. The delegation of Burkina Faso saluted the host country and its President, and congratulated the Secretariat for all the activities accomplished and the Bureau for the challenges that had been met. It welcomed the innovations introduced in the process of preparing periodic reports. Even if this exercise is undoubtedly expensive for the focal points and States Parties, it had the merit of uniting all the national actors to set standards and public policies to safeguard intangible cultural heritage. The eighteenth session was an opportunity to see as many inscriptions as possible on the Lists. The delegation wished the Convention a long life, while celebrating its twenty years.
33. The delegation of Morocco paid tribute to the Evaluation Body, the experts and NGOs for the extraordinary work undertaken, while endorsing the point raised by Bangladesh on reporting to the Committee in the transmission of information on the dialogue process. It was recalled that it is the members of the Committee who have the final say on the inclusion of the various elements submitted. For this reason, the Committee should be better informed about the dialogue process so that decisions on the submitted files are taken in a fair and equitable manner. On behalf of the Committee members of the Arab Group, the delegation asked that Palestine be given the floor as an Observer to inform the Committee about the realities of living heritage in today’s Palestinian context.
34. The Chairperson confirmed that Observers would be given the chance to speak after the issues raised by the Committee were addressed. Regarding the issue of the dialogue process, the Committee would indeed have the opportunity to interact with the Evaluation Body during the proceedings on this matter.
35. The Assistant Director-General expressed gratitude for all the congratulations expressed to the Secretariat. The theme of intangible heritage and emergency situations mentioned by several Committee members is an issue that has been worked on in recent years and that has been fully integrated [in the work of the Convention]. The application of the Emergency Fund shows how important it can be when deployed in emergency situations to safeguard intangible cultural heritage, even preventing its disappearance in extreme cases. This is not only the case in situations of armed crisis, such as wars or civil conflicts, but also in situations of climate emergencies. This is a recurring theme – not only in this Convention, but as part of UNESCO’s mandate – that mostly affects developing countries and SIDS, especially in situations where the traditions, cultures and elements that are or could be inscribed are under threat of disappearing forever. Just as some languages are disappearing, as can be seen every five years in the World Atlas of Languages,[[8]](#footnote-8) so too can certain practices. This work will continue, and it was interesting to note that this action not only involved the Secretariat, but also called for a transversal crisis response team where the Secretariat was fully integrated with all focal points to be able to provide a holistic response. Another topic of importance brought up concerned the work developed around education, whether formal or informal. In this regard, intangible cultural heritage in education had taken a significant leap forward in recent years. The Assistant Director-General noted in particular the intervention by Slovakia. Indeed, knowledge about intangible cultural heritage elements can already be integrated into a greater understanding of the cultural identities found in different countries, and where members of the communities, especially younger members, have an important role to play in the dissemination, transmission and understanding of intangible cultural heritage, or what we call living heritage. For this reason, he thanked the countries that had provided financial support in this regard, specifically the Netherlands and the Republic of Korea, for their leadership in this field.
36. The Assistant Director-General spoke of another fundamental element, based on the experience and programme carried out in Namibia and Zimbabwe, for example, that has contributed to significant steps forward. Notably, he stressed the idea of seeing the effects of capacity building remain within the territory, that is, the transmission of expertise through national agents and experts so that it remains within the country over time. This had been the basis of the work done, not only on intangible cultural heritage but also across the Culture Sector. This was seen in the important experience in Namibia and Zimbabwe, which allowed for a territorial projection based on the lessons learned from this specific project, and which undoubtedly contributed to implementing a policy at the local level, thanks to funding by the Republic of Korea and the Netherlands. The Assistant Director-General then thanked several of the delegations for bringing up the topic of Indigenous peoples and communities. He noted that the use of the Regular Programme budget will help move forward on the lessons learned, both for intangible and tangible cultural heritage, in sites where there are Indigenous communities, the bearers and guardians of the territories and sites. The idea was to base this work on fact, that is on ten ongoing case studies, with a publication to be presented during the General Assembly of the States Parties in June 2024. This will enable specific work to be carried out on the contribution of Indigenous communities [to the Convention] as well as on the risks these communities face. Brazil mentioned one of the threats, which was not only mentioned in the MONDIACULT Declaration but also in the G20 New Delhi Leaders’ Declaration on culture.[[9]](#footnote-9) The concern is not only based on economics, but also on the misuse or modified use of elements, without due recognition of the role of the practitioners (i.e., those who carry the cultural legacies). This issue was now at the top of the agenda, and there was no doubt that the Committee had been fundamental in getting it on the agenda, enabling the Convention’s work with the Education and Science sectors through the LINKS programme.[[10]](#footnote-10) It also would also enable work on Indigenous languages with the Communications and Information Sector.
37. The Assistant Director-General returned to the request made by Bangladesh and Morocco to have more information on the dialogue process between the Evaluation Body and the States Parties. The Committee was reminded that the Secretariat had summarized the dialogue exchange in the working documents provided, for those States Parties that underwent a dialogue. However, if the Committee wished to have a more detailed account of the dialogue, then the Secretariat would of course respect such a request in future versions. The Secretariat was convinced that the dialogue process provided through this Convention had been one of the most beautiful gifts of the Convention. It was an open dialogue, clarifying certain issues that required prior consultations with the communities. Indeed, the dialogue was discussed with States Parties directly. More detailed reports would be prepared for the Committee in the future. Lastly, the Assistant Director-General thanked and recognized the importance of the Seoul Vision that was announced in July 2023. This document had been shared with the Committee for reflection and analysis. It provided a vision, presenting opportunities on how to keep moving forward, deepening and anchoring culture even further by highlighting its importance to communities. In the same way, the Naples Conference,[[11]](#footnote-11) held in November 2023, also helped to achieve what States Parties had requested: greater synergy between the 2003 Convention and the 1972 World Heritage Convention, two of the most universal Conventions at the United Nations. Indeed, the time had come to commence a dialogue on this common work, in terms of placing the communities at the centre of the action.
38. The Assistant Director-General returned to the question posed by India, on how to inscribe more elements. Currently, there are approximately 660 elements inscribed. If the pace of inscriptions continued, with an already stretched Secretariat working to its limit under the current conditions, the Evaluation Body could double the number of inscriptions to 1,200 in 10 years, at the rate of 60 inscriptions a year. He noted that this was not only a question of finance or human resources, it also concerned the ability of the Secretariat to continue working on capacity building, on collaborating with the Education Sector on topics of education and living heritage, and on contributing to the urgent work on climate change. This would overstretch the Secretariat on what it can realistically and responsibly deliver. Indeed, in 2018, there were forty-two files submitted for inscription. Today, there is a ceiling of sixty. Thus, an increase had been made. Today, Member States appreciate the usefulness of multinational inscriptions, in the context of UNESCO’s mandate that sees the benefit of intangible cultural heritage for building peace. This reflection, of course, depends on the Committee.
39. The delegation of **Bangladesh** thanked the Assistant Director-General for his reply, adding that it appreciated the dialogue process as a mechanism that can clarify understanding, not least because it is practically impossible for any expert or anybody to know everything about every element of intangible cultural heritage. It was thus a process through which we all learn, as it shares the information with everyone. In this year’s dialogue process, twenty-two questions were asked and had received responses from the submitting States. The delegation’s request was to ask the Secretariat to share those twenty-two questions and answers so as to learn but also to contribute to this dialogue process. This was, after all, the prerogative of the Committee’s work, which would also enrich the implementation of the Convention. Moreover, in this exceptional year, all the Body’s recommendations had been to inscribe, but it was unclear whether there were initial recommendations of referral or withdrawal. Normally, in this process, the submitting States receiving a referral decision can present their case before their communities, that is, they actually communicated with communities, thus showing their commitment to them. The delegation reiterated its appreciation of the dialogue process and only wished to see the Committee also participate in the dialogue.
40. The Assistant Director-General noted that the information regarding the dialogue process could be found [online](https://ich.unesco.org/en/8b-representative-list-01325). Concerning the second point, there were three files recommended for referral or not to inscribe. In this cycle, for three files that had initially been recommended for non-inscription in past cycles, the submitting States had re-submitted the files, which were now recommended for inscription. With regard to referrals, this good practice allowed technical issues to be corrected by the submitting States. This is the process that has been in place. An online example of the dialogue process with questions from the Evaluation Body and answers from the submitting State was shown on the screen in a process that was fully transparent, as it had always been.
41. The delegation of Bangladesh replied that it was published on Sunday.
42. The Chairperson suggested that these issues be raised again when the Evaluation Body comes to the podium [to discuss the nomination files]. Indeed, the Secretariat was happy to provide answers to any of the questions. The floor was opened to Observers.
43. The delegation of Palestine thanked Botswana, the President and the government for their kindness, paying tribute to the hard work of the Secretariat and for the quality of its report, as well as for all the documents provided for this session. It addressed best wishes to Mr Tim Curtis. The delegation asked for its statement to be recorded in the present summary records and thanked the members of the Arab Group for their unwavering support in general and for its statement concerning the tragic situation of living heritage in Palestine and, more precisely, in the Gaza Strip, currently under attack. Citing statistics of the structures relating directly or indirectly to intangible cultural heritage, the delegation noted that, before the start of the Israeli war in Gaza, there were seventy-six cultural centres, three major theatres, five museums, eighty public libraries and fifteen publishing houses. The delegation noted that unfortunately very few are still standing today due to the intense Israeli airstrikes on these structures and that it was difficult to provide precise numbers, as the situation changes every day. But for example, the delegation noted that the French Cultural Centre, one of the major active cultural centres in Gaza, was targeted by Israeli airstrikes a few days earlier. The three theatres, five museums, eighteen libraries and fifteen publishing houses were all hit, with the authorities assessing the damage. In addition, the delegation noted that the tragic situation in Gaza includes the destruction of schools, universities, hospitals, churches and mosques, even though churches and mosques also related to intangible cultural heritage. Intangible cultural heritage and culture in general is under intensive Israeli attack in the Gaza Strip. The delegation asked the Committee to pay greater attention to the situation of intangible cultural heritage in the event of armed conflicts and to strongly condemn any attack, including the Israeli attacks, on any intangible cultural heritage and on living heritage and cultural institutions in Gaza.
44. The Chairperson thanked Palestine for its statement, cognizant of the difficult time the country is facing.
45. The delegation of Germany reacted to the statement by Palestine, noting that the situation is indeed deplorable. The delegation noted that the Foreign Minister of Germany had repeatedly visited the region and talked to people on all sides. The delegation was well aware of the immense pain felt in all parts of the Middle East and noted that Germany provided a total of €161 million in 2023 for humanitarian assistance in the Palestinian territories. Furthermore, the German government was making available an additional €20 million in new development funding for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East. Notwithstanding, the delegation noted that the terror attacks by Hamas in Israel on 7 October 2023 was not a result of this situation, but stems from the intention of Hamas to completely destroy Israel and to secure its own power, regardless of the suffering of the Palestinian people, and including systematic sexualized violence deliberately targeting women, children and the elderly, because they know this would hit Israel’s society at its core. For Germany, Israel’s security is not negotiable. The delegation continued by saying that Germans live in a country that is responsible for the worst crime in history against humanity, a State-planned extinction of six million Jews with the target to completely extinguish Jewish life in Europe. For Jews worldwide, the creation of the State of Israel was a promise, a place where they can live in peace and security. Germany stands to its promise and stands with Israel. The delegation called on all States Parties to not be divided by disinformation and propaganda and allow terrorism to also poison UNESCO’s work at this session.
46. The Assistant Director-General informed the delegates of the press conference taking place over lunch. He recalled the side events also taking place: Slovakia’s round table on Living Heritage in Emergencies, Saudi Arabia’s launch of the project ‘International Food Atlas and Digital Platform for Safeguarding, Promoting, and Transmitting Food Ways to Future Generations’, UNESCO’s seminar on the economic dimension of intangible cultural heritage and safeguarding, and the ICH NGO Forum’s working group meeting on climate change and the human ecological environment.
47. The Chairperson adjourned the morning session.

*[Tuesday, 5 December 2023, afternoon session]*

**ITEM 5 OF THE AGENDA [CONT.]**

**REPORT OF THE SECRETARIAT ON ITS ACTIVITIES (JANUARY 2022–JUNE 2023)**

1. The **Chairperson** welcomed the delegates back to the afternoon session, noting Palestine’s request for the right of reply, after which the list of Observers would resume.
2. The delegation of **Palestine** noted that itwasshocked by an earlier intervention, remarking on the unfortunate situation in which a Committee member had made unfounded accusations. The delegation proceeded to say that it would advise to wait for the results of a neutral international investigation before making any claims. The delegation did not wish to open the debate, as this gathering was intended to celebrate the inscriptions of intangible cultural heritage. The delegation asked for its statement to be recorded in the present summary records.
3. The delegation of **Armenia** expressed gratitude to the Government of Botswana for hosting this event and for its warm welcome, as well as to the Secretariat and the Assistant Director-General for the comprehensive report and their commendable efforts in implementing various important initiatives. The Secretariat’s valuable contribution to the 2022 MONDIACULT Declaration on the protection of cultural rights was highlighted in particular. Further, the delegation welcomed the diverse projects dedicated to African countries and SIDS, specifically in the fields of living heritage and education. It thanked the Secretariat for initiating the global campaign to celebrate the twentieth anniversary of the Convention. In this regard, the delegation was particularly pleased with the decision to include the Armenian Kochari traditional group dance among six other demonstrations of traditional practices at the UNESCO Headquarters in September 2023 to celebrate the Convention’s anniversary. It also commended the Secretariat’s action in safeguarding living heritage in emergencies. As conflicts and natural disasters intensify, living heritage worldwide faces growing danger, directly threatening the transmission and survival of intangible cultural heritage. Hence, the topic of safeguarding intangible cultural heritage in emergencies remains crucial for protecting the lives of its bearers. In this regard, the delegation wished to draw attention to the Nagorno-Karabakh population, who, it noted, were ethnically cleansed and forcibly displaced in September 2023 following a ten-month-long blockade, resulting in a humanitarian crisis and starvation. The delegation noted that the transmission of the cultural identity and living heritage of the Indigenous Armenians of Nagorno-Karabakh has thus been interrupted. The delegation pursued to note that UNESCO promptly addressed the issue of the Nagorno-Karabakh refugees’ educational needs by sending an emergency mission to Armenia. The delegation appreciated this urgent response and expected that UNESCO will also address the challenges associated with preserving the intangible cultural heritage of the people of Nagorno-Karabakh.
4. The delegation of Azerbaijan thanked the host country, the government and the people of Botswana for the excellent organization and generous hospitality. It also thanked the Secretariat for its detailed and clear report. Azerbaijan considers the Committee as an instrumental body for the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage and has always been committed to bringing added value to its work by introducing its own expertise in safeguarding intangible cultural heritage, as well as in cooperating with the communities concerned. Azerbaijan actively supports programmes and initiatives for the effective safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage in different parts of the world through the Azerbaijan UNESCO Funds-in-Trust established in 2003. Through this mechanism, important projects in the field of safeguarding intangible cultural heritage in Africa, Asia and Latin America had been successfully implemented. It was thus keen to continue assisting countries in need, especially in Africa and among SIDS, through capacity-building activities. In the last two years, its National Commission successfully organized two capacity-building programmes for twenty-four secretary-generals and representatives of National Commissions of African countries for UNESCO. The delegation welcomed the measures undertaken by the Secretariat in strengthening the synergies between the 2003 Convention and other UNESCO culture conventions, and in safeguarding intangible cultural heritage in emergencies, including in situations of armed conflict and national disasters, which is of utmost importance to Azerbaijan. In this sense, the government has financially contributed to the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund to further increase capacity-building activities for countries in need. This work should be continued and strengthened in the coming years. The delegation noted that as a country affected by the destruction of cultural heritage by armed conflict during thirty years of occupation of internationally recognized territories by Armenia, the delegation of Azerbaijan was fully aware of the importance of preserving tangible and intangible cultural heritage. As a result of armed conflict, numerous examples of intangible cultural heritage, including traditional arts and crafts, had been annihilated. Social activities, rituals and practices were in danger, as surviving communities had to flee to other regions of the country with no connection to their cultural environment for thirty years. Azerbaijan reiterated the importance of strengthening the role of intangible cultural heritage in cultural policies, inviting the Secretariat to further support member States’ sustainable development programmes and policies as identified in the 2022 MONDIACULT Declaration.
5. The delegation of Barbados joined the other delegations in congratulating the Chairperson on his election, commending the Secretariat for its excellent report, which provided an extensive overview of its activities. This report is important as it shows what is being done and where to focus efforts to further promote the Convention and safeguard intangible cultural heritage. The delegation supported the activities in the current report, especially in the areas of: (a) capacity building on nominations, as Barbados prepares its nomination files for the elements of ‘Road Tennis’ and ‘Barbados Landship’; (b) safeguarding living heritage in emergencies, which has become increasingly urgent in the Caribbean, particularly when considering the devastating impact of the now unpredictable and disruptive hurricane season; (c) thematic initiatives on living heritage and sustainable development, focusing on the area of living heritage and climate change. It is clear that for SIDS such as Barbados everyone has a role to play and a responsibility to address the impact of climate change on living heritage. It is not only a concern for politicians and activists.
6. The delegation of Egypt extended congratulations to Botswana for organizing the eighteenth session of the Committee, as well as its appreciation of the Secretariat for its outstanding work in implementing the activities of the Convention and for providing necessary support to the governing bodies and the Evaluation Body to strengthen the safeguarding of living heritage as we celebrate the twentieth anniversary of the Convention. The delegation welcomed UNESCO’s efforts in expanding the capacity-building programmes and developing thematic initiatives to support different geographical regions, particularly the Arab and African states. These activities had contributed to increasing the number of nomination files by African States to nine files. In addition, twelve files were submitted from the African continent, either individually or through multinational nominations. It also welcomed UNESCO’s advocacy for the recognition of culture as a global public good and as a key pillar of sustainability to respond to the global challenges of the post-2030 Agenda, in line with the priorities identified in the MONDIACULT 2022 Declaration.
7. The delegation of France thanked Botswana for its warm welcome and commended the Chairperson for his conduct of the proceedings. France is attached to the Convention and was happy to support its activities through its voluntary contributions to the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund. To celebrate the twentieth anniversary, France organized several events throughout the year and, in particular, at the Palais de Chaillot, a ‘Fest-Noz’, an element inscribed on the Representative List in 2012. It thanked all the delegations that came along to dance. France also shared its intention to announce its candidacy to the Committee at the next General Assembly, which it had not served since 2008, adding that it would appreciate the support of the States Parties.
8. The delegation of Mongolia expressed its appreciation to the Government of Botswana for the warm hospitality, thanking the Assistant Director-General and the Secretariat for the detailed presentation of its crucial activities, such as the global reflection on the listing mechanisms, the awareness-raising and capacity-building activities, the response to emergency situations, and the development of thematic initiatives, among others. With the newly adopted 42 C/5, the delegation believed that many efforts will be made, especially to combat climate change through living heritage, and to strengthen intersectoral cooperation with the integration of safeguarding living heritage and its significance in education and youth engagement. Since its ratification of the Convention in 2005, Mongolia has been improving its legal environments for safeguarding intangible cultural heritage. In the framework of improving the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage and enhancing its viability, in 2020 Mongolia made the decision to develop an independent law for intangible cultural heritage safeguarding. The draft law was elaborated to reflect the Convention and the experience of pioneering countries that have already approved their independent laws for intangible cultural heritage. The new law is expected to be discussed by Parliament in the first half of 2024. This law will create a more favourable legal environment to strengthen the implementation of the Convention and to contribute more to the safeguarding of living heritage. The delegation will continue working closely with the Secretariat, the Committee, States Parties, experts and NGOs to ensure all living heritage is safeguarded and transmitted to future generations.
9. The delegation of Poland thanked the hosts for their warmth, with the local people in Kasane making for an exceptional experience. It appreciated the work of the Secretariat for the wonderful job promoting the Convention and for its work with the States Parties, with particular praise for Tim Curtis. The year 2023 is a special year, marking the twentieth anniversary of the Convention, and it was particularly symbolic that the Committee was meeting in Botswana, on the African continent. The delegation stressed that targeted destruction of cultural heritage, including intangible cultural heritage, must cease everywhere, as there is no justification for it.
10. The delegation of China expressed thanks to Botswana for organizing this session, and for its warm welcome and hospitality. It particularly thanked the Secretariat for its report on this work. Since January 2022, the Secretariat has made significant progress in terms of capacity-building, the implementation of the results of the global reflection on the listing mechanisms, the reflection on a broader implementation of Article 18 of the Convention, international assistance, and so forth, thus contributing to better implementation and the sustainable development of the Convention. China stood ready to continue working with the Secretariat and States Parties to further achieve the objectives of the Convention.
11. The delegation of Mexico congratulated the Chairperson on his nomination, thanking Botswana for its hospitality in hosting this session. It also extended its appreciation to UNESCO, the Secretariat and Mr Tim Curtis for the excellent work and collaboration during the past year. Mexico recognized the achievements made towards safeguarding the living heritage of the world and the heritage of humanity over the last twenty years. It was pleased to present a joint nomination with Cuba, and it welcomed all the nominations and inscriptions resulting from this session. Mexico is committed to the agreements derived from MONDIACULT 2022, particularly the recognition of culture as a global public good, the protection of cultural heritage in all its forms, and the inclusion of a specific goal for culture in the UN development agenda.
12. The delegation of Norway congratulated the Chairperson on his election and was happy that the Committee meeting was taking place in Botswana. It commended the Secretariat for its consistently excellent and remarkable work, and expressed support for the revisions to the listing mechanisms, especially for the reflection on Article 18. The delegation was delighted that the evaluation of the reflection process so far had led to new insights that will help safeguard and ensure the sustainability and legitimacy of broader work with the Convention. It also supported the important steps taken in the contributions to sustainable development. Norway had previously stated that it wished to see a stronger acknowledgement of the role of civil society in general, especially with regards to Indigenous communities, in safeguarding intangible cultural heritage, in the spirit of the Convention and while fulfilling the SDG goals. It appreciated that the significant role of Indigenous peoples and communities had been underlined more clearly at MONDIACULT in Mexico.
13. The delegation of Belgium congratulated the Chairperson on his election, thanking the hosts for the warm welcome. Belgium and its communities in Wallonia, Brussels and Flanders thanked the Secretariat for its excellent report. In particular, it congratulated UNESCO for the numerous events organized for the twentieth anniversary of the Convention. Belgium was delighted to have played an active role in these festivities both on its territory and during ‘Heritage Days’ at UNESCO. This occasion brilliantly highlighted living heritage, which will now be celebrated every year on 17 October. The delegation concluded by thanking Mr Tim Curtis for his years of valuable dedication and guidance. It looked forward to joint efforts to preserve intangible cultural heritage for generations to come.
14. The Chairperson turned to the adoption of the draft decision. With no comments or objections, the Chairperson declared Decision [18.COM 5](https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions/18.COM/5) adopted.

**ITEM 8 OF THE AGENDA**

**REPORT OF THE EVALUATION BODY ON ITS WORK IN 2023**

**Documents:** [*LHE/23/18.COM/8*](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-23-18.COM-8_EN.docx)
[*Order of files Rev.4*](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/18COM_Order_of_files_EN_Rev.4.docx)

**Decision:** [*18.COM 8*](https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions/18.COM/8)

1. The **Chairperson** turned to the report of the Evaluation Body on its work in 2023.This was one of the key items of interest for stakeholders around the world, particularly for communities concerned by this year’s nominations. The results of the evaluation on the nominations were overwhelmingly positive thanks to the hard work of the governing bodies of the Convention to make the list a dynamic, inter-related and fluid system. The Chair of the Evaluation Body, Mr Nigel Encalada (from Belize), its Vice-Chair, Ms Gulnara Aitpaeva (from Aigine Cultural Research Centre), and its Rapporteur, Ms Evdokia Tsakiridis (from Workshop Intangible Heritage Flanders), joined the podium.
2. The **Assistant Director-General** recalled that the Evaluation Body for this cycle was established by the Committee at its seventeenth session. He commended all the members of the Body for their efforts and dedication to the work. The Committee was thus tasked to evaluate: six nominations to the Urgent Safeguarding List, including one nomination to the Urgent Safeguarding List combined with an International Assistance request (agenda item 8.a); forty-five nominations to the Representative List (agenda item 8.b); four proposals to the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices (agenda item 8.c); and one request for International Assistance greater than US$100,000 (agenda item 8.d). The Assistant Director-General then explained how the discussions on agenda item 8 would be organized. First, Mr Encalada, Ms Aitpaeva and Ms Tsakiridis would present a brief oral report on the work of the Evaluation Body and the key cross-cutting issues identified in this cycle. All fifty-six files were recommended for inscription, selection or approval. Following the oral report, the floor would be opened to Committee members for specific questions to the Evaluation Body concerning issues addressed in the report. The Committee would then proceed to evaluate each file individually. As previously determined in Decision [17.COM 14](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/17.COM/14), nominations would be examined in English alphabetical order, starting with the letter ‘N’ under each mechanism. A tentative schedule had been prepared under ‘Order of Files’, with revisions discussed by the Bureau and published under Item 8 on the dedicated webpage. A general debate will follow the evaluation of all the individual files, after which the overall decision 18.COM 8 would be adopted.
3. The **Chairperson** explained the time management process, the aspects of which were covered in the circular message sent on 17 November 2023 to the States Parties. The provisional timetable, approved by the Bureau on 2 October 2023, foresaw four sessions of about twelve hours, for nomination-related items. Given that all the submissions were positively recommended, the ‘working agreement’ would not come into play, as few, or even no amendments, were expected. Instead, time would be spent on learning from each other’s safeguarding experiences. In this regard, the Chairperson requested that, after the examination of each file, the Evaluation Body speak to highlight noteworthy aspects from the file and/or provide safeguarding advice based on its expertise. Following adoption, the submitting State was invited to deliver a statement, share a performance, and/or show a video clip. This year, where possible, a direct video link to communities was set up to allow communities at home to celebrate the moment of inscription. Members wishing to discuss or amend specific draft decisions on nominations were invited to send them to the Secretariat using the online form. Members and Observers were reminded of the large numbers of people following the Committee’s work through live webcast or through the news media, and it was therefore important to keep close to the schedule.
4. The **Chair of the Evaluation Body, Mr Nigel Encalada** welcomed the delegates, and the Evaluation Body Vice-Chair (Ms. Gulnara Aitpaeva) and Rapporteur (Ms. Evdokia Tsakiridis), who would also present parts of the overall report. Ms Tsakiridis would present the working methods, positive observations and criteria-specific issues, and Ms Aitpaeva would present the cross-cutting issues. Mr Encalada began with a brief overview of the cycle. Indeed, it was a pleasure for him and all the experts to have had the opportunity to serve the Convention and its States Parties, NGOs and communities this cycle, which coincided with the twentieth anniversary celebration of the Convention. In approximately nine months of work, the Secretariat undertook an indexing exercise on the nominations submitted in this year’s cycle in order to identify the dominant theme across all the nominated elements. This concluded with this year’s nominations characterized by the concept of ‘family’. In particular, it revealed an emphasis on the role of women in safeguarding and transmitting living heritage practices in non-formal settings and everyday life. This is a fitting coincidence as – at the heart of the Convention – are the communities engaged in raising awareness about the living heritage of humanity, all of which originate from families in every sense of the word. Since the outset, the Convention has grown from strength to strength, with its committees and assemblies, States Parties and experts speaking on behalf of the communities and the families they represent at the international level. In this spirit, and on the occasion of the twentieth anniversary, the delegations in Kasane had arrived as a global family.
5. **Mr Nigel Encalada** noted that the evaluation process had yielded an unprecedented outcome. After examination of the nomination files, including 12 dialogue cases, 22 questions on specific issues and 3 withdrawals, 100 per cent (or 56 files) were recommended for inscription. In light of already-approved amendments and principles brought about by the global reflection on the listing mechanisms of the Convention, the Body viewed this cycle as a ‘transition year’. For example, no file was prejudiced on the basis of criterion R2, a criterion that had been problematic over the years for both submitting States and the Evaluation Body. This had now been addressed in the new nomination forms. Secondly, the experts were asked to look for the presence of the community throughout the file and to see whether responses that appeared incorrectly in other sections could satisfy the requirements of the file as a whole. This request was in line with the previous practice of the Body. Where this was insufficient, a ‘dialogue process’ was deployed. The Body exercised a good deal of discretion based on collective insights and experience on issues related to each file, and it noted an overall improvement in the quality of files. This was deemed as likely due to the global capacity-building initiatives currently underway in some regions, along with the upstream practices undertaken by the Secretariat prior to the submission of files. In this presentation, in addition to addressing the usual cross-cutting and recurring issues, the Body had chosen to highlight the positive aspects and to comment on or provide recommendations for safeguarding measures, where considered necessary. Some of these recommendations appear in the draft decisions, where applicable. As a Body, it was satisfied with the course of action. As a whole, Mr Encalada reminded States Parties to always ensure the communities’ free, prior and informed consent; that is, their participation in implementing safeguarding plans and measures, their sustained role in defining elements and updating inventories, and their role in the nomination process itself.
6. The **Rapporteur of the Evaluation Body, Ms Evdokia Tsakiridis,** recalled thatthe seventeenth session of the Committee established the present body for the 2023 cycle. The Body comprised twelve members, with six experts representing States Parties non-members of the Committee, and six members representing accredited NGOs. Following the system of rotation among the seats, the Committee reappointed eight continuing members and elected four new members, taking into consideration equitable geographical representation and the members’ qualifications in various domains of intangible cultural heritage. The six experts were: from Group I, Ms Evrim Ölçer Özünel (Türkiye); from Group II, Mr Rimvydas Laužikas (Lithuania); from Group III, Mr Nigel Encalada (Belize); from Group IV, Mr Kirk Siang Yeo (Singapore); from Group V(a), Ms Tiana Lalaina Razafimanantsoa (Madagascar); and from Group V(b), Ms Nahla Abdallah Emam (Egypt). The accredited NGOs were: from Group I, Workshop intangible heritage Flanders; from Group II, European Association of Folklore Festivals; from Group III, Daniel Rubin de la Borbolla Center; from Group IV, Aigine Cultural Research Center – Aigine CRC; from Group V(a), The Cross-Cultural Foundation of Uganda (CCFU); and from Group V(b), Syria Trust for Development. The report of the Evaluation Body consisted of five working documents. The overall report deals with general observations and working methods of the Evaluation Body. The Vice-Chair, Ms Gulnara Aitpaeva, would present the cross-cutting issues observed during this cycle. As was the case in previous years, the Evaluation Body met three times in the 2023 cycle. The first meeting was held fully online in February 2023. At this meeting, the Secretariat conducted an orientation for the Evaluation Body members and discussed cross-cutting issues observed in past cycles. At the same meeting, the Chair, Vice Chair and Rapporteur were elected. The second meeting was held in person in June 2023 at UNESCO Headquarters. During this meeting, the Body deliberated and arrived at decisions for each of the nomination files. At the third meeting in September, the Chair, Vice Chair and Rapporteur joined the Secretariat in Paris, and the rest of the Body participated online to discuss the files that underwent the dialogue process, as well as the draft decisions and the overall report. To ensure neutrality, members did not participate, nor were they involved in, the evaluation of files from their country of nationality, or where their NGO is based. One member abstained from evaluating four nominations. The Body’s work was guided by the Convention, the Operational Directives and the decisions of previous bodies. As with previous years, the twelve members of the Body evaluated each file within a collective decision-making process, ensuring that evaluations were consistent with and across the files of previous Bodies. Nonetheless, the Body took into consideration the particularities of each file and the specific contexts concerning each element. It based its evaluations on the information included in the nomination files and did not make assumptions about any missing details. Nevertheless, the Body members were also guided by their own experience and observations in their capacity as experts. The Body strove to provide advice on various safeguarding matters to each nomination. While the Body recognized the advantages of meeting in person, the online interface continues to be a useful platform. The Body commended the Secretariat for the well-designed tool and supported its continued use for future cycles.
7. **Ms Evdokia Tsakiridis** reminded the Committee that this was the fourth cycle of the full implementation of the dialogue process, one of the concrete results of the Global reflection. Accordingly, amendments to the Operational Directives were adopted by the ninth session of the General Assembly. As the files in this cycle were submitted before the adoption of Resolution [9.GA 9](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/9.GA/9), the amendments to the Operational Directives did not directly impact the work of the Evaluation Body in 2023. Nevertheless, the Body was cognizant of the main principles that underpinned the reflection and conducted its work in this spirit. In particular, the Body took into consideration the removal of Criterion P.9 from the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices, and the adjustments to all criteria for the Representative List and the Urgent Safeguarding List. The Body deployed the use of the dialogue process in cases where clarification helped evaluate the nomination files. First-time files were also evaluated in consideration of the ongoing capacity-building initiatives being undertaken by States Parties. As in past cycles, the dialogue process was used when there was a minor absence of information or a confusing statement, which could be clarified by a simple question-and-answer exchange with the submitting State(s). In this cycle, the dialogue process involved twelve files, including one nomination to the Urgent Safeguarding List and the rest to the Representative List. In two cases, the Body asked questions on more than one criterion, for a total of twenty-two questions. In some multinational files, questions were posed to certain States, within the group of submitting States, to seek clarifications from them specifically, as the other submitting States had provided sufficient information in the file. All twelve files that underwent the dialogue process were recommended for inscription.
8. **Ms Evdokia Tsakiridis** was happy to note that all fifty-six files presented to the Committee in this cycle were recommended for inscription, selection or approval. Compared to the cycle in 2022, the number of files recommended for referral had decreased from 27 per cent to 0 per cent. The number of files recommended for inscription had correspondingly increased from 71 per cent to 100 per cent. This is the first time that the totality of nominations in a cycle satisfied the inscription criteria. Notwithstanding this overwhelmingly positive outcome, the Body called upon submitting States to pay careful attention to the safeguarding advice given for each nomination, as well as to the cross-cutting issues raised in its report. The Body congratulated the many communities and the submitting States Parties for their successful nominations. During this cycle, the Body again noted the increased number of good examples and well-drafted files, and the high quality of the files in general. Of the files examined in this cycle, seven had been previously referred and three had been previously withdrawn. In this regard, the Body noted that States Parties had taken into account its comments, thereby notably improving their re-submissions. Noteworthy observations include the number of files that demonstrate positive linkages between intangible cultural heritage and environmental sustainability, such as files on sustainable agricultural practices or the sustainable use of natural resources, for instance in relation to crafts. Other nominations show the contribution of safeguarding intangible cultural heritage to sustainable development in its different perspectives, including, among others, through its capacity to provide sustainable livelihoods and to stimulate inclusion. Several files demonstrated linkages between ICH and World Heritage. Indeed, inscription of intangible cultural heritage elements connected to UNESCO World Heritage sites may be mutually beneficial for their safeguarding on the one hand, and protection on the other. This cycle especially showed the benefit of the dialogue process (with the twelve files recommended for inscription as a result). The Body emphasized the benefit of good quality videos for the overall understanding of the nomination files.
9. **Ms Evdokia Tsakiridis** further reported that the Body was pleased to examine thirteen multinational nominations in this cycle, a similar number of files to the 2022 cycle. The Body commended the fact that many nomination files included jointly developed safeguarding measures and demonstrated intensive multinational preparation processes. However, in some instances the Body noted an imbalance in how States Parties explained their roles in the nomination process as a whole. For this reason, for a few files, the Body deployed the use of the dialogue process, particularly for criteria R.3 and R.4. For the future, States Parties were reminded to prepare their files in such a way that explains the role of all submitting States in the nomination process where the criteria require an explanation. The Body recognized the complexity of preparing multinational files and commended the efforts by the States Parties to achieve this. It was pleased to note that the Secretariat was in the process of preparing a guidance note to assist States Parties in line with Decision [15.COM 8](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/15.COM/8). Regarding nominations to the Urgent Safeguarding List and the Representative List, observations included some of the challenges faced by submitting States, as alluded to in previous decisions and working documents. For example, the Body noted that there were a number of challenges faced by States Parties that are closely connected to specific criteria. While some of these issues had been identified in previous cycles, the Body drew attention to issues that were specifically prominent in this year’s nomination cycle. In relation to defining the element of intangible cultural heritage when the element involves a religious rite or practice, the States Parties should clearly elaborate on the social and cultural aspects of the nominated element. Where the nomination file asks for information on gender-related roles, States were encouraged to elaborate on the cross-section of such roles associated with the practice and transmission of the element. The Body noted the recurring issues with criterion R.2. As with past cycles, several files provided information only about the visibility and awarenessof the nominated element itself, but did not provide information about the visibility and awareness of intangible cultural heritage in general. Given the changes to the Operational Directives, the Body was lenient with its treatment of criterion R.2/U.2. Files were not considered for referral on the basis of this criterion alone. Furthermore, community participation is central to the evaluation of criterion R.3/U.3. The Body observed that community participation in the planning and implementation of the safeguarding measures was not always well explained. In these instances, it may be interpreted that the measures were developed using top-down approaches. To avoid this, States Parties were encouraged to deploy approaches that ensure the widest possible participation of communities in the planning of the safeguarding measures and to ensure that the file clearly explains their role in implementing the proposed measures and plans. In several instances, nomination files made reference to safeguarding measures which the Body perceived as being generic statements. This made it challenging to understand what the specific measures were, and whether they were past, ongoing or future measures. States Parties should be as specific as possible about the measures and clearly distinguish whether measures are past, ongoing or future. Moreover, the Body observed that, in a few instances, the safeguarding plans outlined in U.3. did not always address the threats highlighted elsewhere in the file. States Parties are encouraged to ensure that safeguarding plans address the threats described in the nomination file.
10. **Ms Evdokia Tsakiridis** further underlined that letters of consent serve to verify the role of communities with the nominated element, their awareness about the Lists of the Convention, and their participation in the nomination file. Nomination files should therefore include a range of letters that establish free, prior and informed consent, establish community awareness about the particular List of the Convention to which the element is being nominated, and are sufficiently representative of the communities concerned. In several instances, consent letters were presented in standardized formats, which should be avoided. Instead, States Parties were encouraged to ensure the communities’ widest possible participation and to have participants convey their consent in personalized ways, whether in writing or other formats, such as video recordings. Additionally, in the case of multinational nominations, letters of consent should reflect the communities’ consent to a multinational file rather than a national file. Regarding the role of public officials and public institutions, if they are considered as members or representatives of the communities, then their roles should be clearly explained. This is because the Body tends to consider such public officials and institutions as being part of the State Party, even though this may not necessarily be the case. Community participation in the inventorying process includes identifying and defining the element as well as participating in the updating of inventories. Community participation in the inventorying process was not always well explained in some files or, in some instances, the explanations were duplicated in other sub-sections and were therefore incoherent. States Parties were encouraged to clearly explain the various ways in which communities were involved in the inventorying process in the context of criterion R.5/U.5. For the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices, the responses to individual files were first evaluated according to the criteria and then as a whole. However, in some instances, the language quality of the descriptions made it difficult to gain a holistic understanding of the programmes. States Parties were thus encouraged to pay attention to linguistic quality and provide clear descriptions about the programmes implemented.
11. The **Vice-Chair of the Evaluation Body**, **Ms Gulnara Aitpaeva,** highlighted the meaning behind this ‘family cycle’of nominations. To better understand the thematic connections between the elements nominated in this cycle, the Secretariat undertook an indexing exercise on the nominations submitted(except for ‘standalone’ requests for International Assistance). The exercise, which connects elements to concepts featured on the ‘[Dive Into Living Heritage’](https://ich.unesco.org/dive/?TSPD_101_R0=080713870fab2000e4080d4d6b57ea4fa4eaa72691d513067d35c0460c9bca41cb95e72e437b0cbe085d7238d21430000bfcc6e36ce3346cacd88ebcb7c0e1afe8617bdc3e12440fc17cdc79a73340015167584944c24c1cddacf9d63a892560) interface, revealed that the dominant theme across all the nominated elements could lead to this year’s nominations being characterized as a ‘family’ cycle, with particular emphasis on the role of women in safeguarding and transmitting living heritage practices in non-formal settings and everyday life. This reinforces the idea that living heritage can act as a conduit that brings diverse communities together, strengthening the bonds within and among them and, in essence, representing the common humanity that is shared across cultures. In addition, many of the nominations are related to the creation and transmission of practices related to handicraft production, once again, within a family setting. As observed in past cycles, elements of intangible cultural heritage could be directly linked to economic activities, such as crafts, foodways, tourist attractions, performances or other sources of income for the communities concerned. In this context, some States actively developed measures promoting aspects of livelihoods. The Body acknowledged this reality and considered that this link is not strictly interpreted as being detrimental to the viability of nominated elements. However, States Parties are reminded that the primary purpose of the nomination of an element is to safeguard its social and cultural functions and contexts. This aspect should be the central description within the submitted file. Similarly, where elements are connected to tourism, States Parties should identify measures or plans that mitigate the unintended consequences that may arise from inscription. The Body was pleased to note that the Secretariat had organized an expert meeting on the economic dimensions of intangible cultural heritage safeguarding in September and October 2023. The recommendations of the experts laid the groundwork for the preparation of guidance notes on this subject. The Body took note of particular scenarios where existing non formal modes of transmission were becoming less viable. As a result, States Parties had proposed to adopt more formal measures to ensure the continued transmission of the element. For example, where non-formal family transmission was previously viable, but is no longer possible, States Parties are proposing formal transmission modes outside of the family unit, such as through schools or other organized programmes. While this may be necessary for the element’s safeguarding, States Parties should be aware of the possible risks, such as decontextualization.
12. **Ms Gulnara Aitpaeva** added that, in a few instances, legal frameworks, policies, licenses and certifications were identified within the file as ongoing or proposed as safeguarding measures. States Parties are asked to consider the dynamics of how the element is practised and transmitted, and to mitigate possible unintended effects, such as ‘freezing’ or decontextualization that may result from such measures. As per recent cycles, there was an increasing number of nominations that emphasized the link between intangible cultural heritage and the environment, and which also reflects biocultural diversity. While some files were silent on the ecological impact associated with the practice of particular elements, the Body was pleased to note that several files proposed measures for environmental safeguarding, sustainable building techniques and agricultural practices, as well as overall sustainable development.It is understood that migration occurs for a variety of reasons and that communities may carry with them aspects of their intangible cultural heritage. In the preparation of nomination files that feature elements from migrant communities, the Evaluation Body considered it useful to provide a description of the migrant community, its relation to the element, and the current context in which the element is found. This will provide a more holistic narrative about the nature and viability of these types of elements. Similarly, in these types of files, rural to urban migration, particularly youth, was often cited as a threat to the viability of an element. States Parties were encouraged to examine this situation closely and to consider what safeguarding plans can be used to address this phenomenon. Regarding gender roles, the Convention upholds mutual respect for gender roles in the practice, transmission and safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage. As with past cycles, the Evaluation Body encouraged States Parties to elaborate on the gender roles relating to elements submitted for inscription. Attempts should be made to include such descriptions in nomination files. Whereas some files remained silent on this point, others should be commended for their deliberate descriptions of gender roles. Additionally, States should provide sufficient information to show that, in terms of gender, the practice of the element is not a source of conflict, marginalization or discrimination in the context in which it is practised. Finally, when submitting States refer to the supernatural, it is important to provide explanations to establish a link to the element described. The Body is aware that such references might not be easily explained, or that some information may need to be withheld, but efforts should be made to clearly show its connection to the element.
13. The **Rapporteur** **of the Evaluation Body** recalled that the Evaluation Body successfully evaluated fifty-nine files, of which fifty-six were presented to the Committee. This immense workload was completed thanks to the dedication of all Body members, with the support of the Secretariat. However, this workload will only increase in future cycles, as requests for transfers between the Lists and inscriptions on an extended or reduced basis will be treated outside the annual ceiling of files. For this reason, the Body requested that the Committee carefully consider the workload as well as the working methods in future cycles in the interest of ensuring the thorough and consistent evaluation of the files. The Rapporteur concluded that the overall report contains many positive aspects, recurring issues, emerging trends and challenges. It was hoped that this report will be a useful reference for States Parties and organizations when they prepare future nomination files and consider the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage in their countries. The Body expressed gratitude to the Committee for entrusting its members with the evaluations, and thanked the Secretariat for its hard work and dedication in supporting its work.
14. The **Chairperson** thanked the Evaluation Body for its presentation, which raised several critical and relevant issues that would no doubt inform the debate of the Committee. It was interesting to note that the Body had considered that the nominations presented to this Committee was viewed as a ‘family’ cycle. Given the late hour, it was proposed to present the files by the Evaluation Body, rather than open a general debate.

**ITEM 8.a OF THE AGENDA**

**EXAMINATION OF NOMINATIONS FOR INSCRIPTION ON THE LIST OF INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE OF HUMANITY IN NEED OF SAFEGUARDING**

**Documents:** [*LHE/23/18.COM/8.a*](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-23-18.COM-8.a_EN.docx)
[*6 nominations*](https://ich.unesco.org/en/8a-urgent-safeguarding-list-01324)

1. The **Assistant Director-General** explained that the Committee would examine nominations by the Syrian Arab Republic, Türkiye, Djibouti, Malaysia, Mozambique and Paraguay. The file from Paraguay is a nomination to the Urgent Safeguarding List combined with a request for International Assistance. The Assistant Director-General recalled the criteria that would guide the decisions, which were displayed on the screen, reminding the Committee that all the criteria had to be satisfied.
2. The **Chair of the Evaluation Body** presented the first nomination file, **Traditional Syrian glassblowing** [draft decision 8.a.1] submitted by the **Syrian Arab Republic**. Traditional Syrian glassblowing is the artisanal craft of creating glass objects using pieces of waste glass, practised mostly in Damascus. To create an object, pieces of glass are placed inside a handmade brick oven to melt. The craftspeople twist the molten glass around a hollow metal rod. They then blow into the rod to inflate the glass, using metal tongs to mould it into the desired shape, often colouring the glass or engraving it with cultural symbols. In the past, the practice remained within specific families, with the father passing on the craft to his children. Today, the related knowledge and skills are passed down informally through hands-on practice and instruction in workshops.
3. The **Vice-Chair of the Evaluation Body** noted the efforts by the State Party in light of the post-war situation in Syria. The file was well prepared and featured strong participation of the communities in the overall nomination process. The Body recommended the element for inscription on the Urgent Safeguarding List.
4. **The Chairperson declared Decision** [**18.COM 8.a.1**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions/18.COM/8.A.1) **adopted to inscribe Traditional Syrian glassblowing** **on the Urgent Safeguarding List.**
5. The delegation of the **Syrian Arab Republic** spoke of how glass blowing has its origins in a time when craftspeople pioneered the technique of blowing molten glass into breath-taking works of art. The legacy of their skill has spread across the globe, enriching the cultural tapestry of countless societies. Glass blowing is an ancient practice. Born in the heart of Damascus, this art is a testament to the richness of human history and creativity. Today, it is recognized as an element of intangible cultural heritage in need of urgent safeguarding, the urgency of which cannot be overstated. The principles of UNESCO are deeply rooted in promoting sustainable development. *But how can development be sustainable when the drums of war beat, or when economic sanctions strangle the life out of our communities?* There can be no development without peace, and no development when the lifeblood of heritage is drained away. Our communities are enduring hardships that challenge their existence. In the wake of war, as the country strives to mend its society, imposed economic sanctions add another layer to challenge the resilience of the people. These sanctions strip away the means for communities to secure their livelihoods, to pass on their knowledge to future generations, and to preserve the soul of the nation. It is a tragedy that Damascus is at risk of losing its living heritage. But this applies to communities that suffer decades-long occupations and economic sanctions around the world, especially in the Arab region. This is not a political matter; it is a matter for humanity, because one cannot safeguard heritage while ignoring the stark reality that communities are suffering. Although a celebration today remains elusive, the delegation appreciated the efforts involved in inscribing Syrian glass blowing to the Urgent Safeguarding List, which acknowledges the critical need to protect this intangible cultural heritage, and a collective concern that can drive consensus action towards peace, justice and solidarity.

*[A video of the element was shown.]*

1. The **Chair of the Evaluation Body** presented the next nomination file, **Traditional knowledge, methods and practices concerning olive cultivation** [draft decision 8.a.2] submitted by **Türkiye**. Traditional knowledge, methods and practices concerning olive cultivation refers to grafting, pruning and fertilizing wild olive trees, and to picking, harvesting and processing the olives. The practices are based on traditional knowledge and practices concerning nature, such as ideal soil characteristics, climate and manure. Several rituals, festivals and social practices mark the beginning and the end of the harvest season. In addition to the symbolism of the olive tree and leaf (associated with peace, eternity, wisdom and harmony), olive cultivation enhances solidarity, cooperation and harmony within the community, while also contributing to environmental sustainability efforts.
2. The **Vice-Chair of the Evaluation Body** added that the file included the issue of youth and rural-to-urban migration in its safeguarding plan. It was important to be vigilant about the potential over-commercialization of the element, while recognizing the importance of intangible cultural heritage for sustainable livelihoods. The Body recommended the element for inscription on the Urgent Safeguarding List.
3. **The Chairperson declared Decision** [**18.COM 8.a.2**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions/18.COM/8.A.2) **adopted to inscribe Traditional knowledge, methods and practices concerning olive cultivation on the Urgent Safeguarding List.**
4. The delegation of **Türkiye** thanked Botswana for its warm welcome in this beautiful country. As a modern agricultural production, olive cultivation is not under threat in Türkiye. However, the traditional knowledge, methods and practices that have been applied and transmitted for centuries are under threat. The viability and transmission of these methods and practices of olive cultivation, which includes various processes such as harvesting, picking, curing and extracting oil, are at risk and need urgent safeguarding. Traditional practices of the element have an important role in linking intangible cultural heritage and the environment, which is also reflected through cultural diversity. This nomination promotes the relationship between humans and nature, provides a sustainable source of income through the proposed safeguarding measures, and contributes to sustainable agricultural practices. Türkiye was grateful for the strong networking and cooperation among the stakeholders at local and national levels.

*[A video of the element was shown.]*

1. The **Chair of the Evaluation Body** presented the next nomination file, **Xeedho** [draft decision 8.a.3] submitted by **Djibouti**. Xeedho is a dish given by a mother-in-law to her son-in-law to celebrate the first week of her daughter’s marriage. It consists of a container carved from a tree trunk, made to hold small pieces of dried dromedary meat that is fried in butter and preserved in ghee. This is wrapped and decorated to represent a woman’s set of clothes. Xeedho is an integral part of the wedding ceremony in Djibouti and the subject of riddles and poetry. A carefully prepared, high-quality xeedho reflects a mother-in-law’s appreciation for her new son-in-law, thus strengthening social ties between the families of the bride and groom.
2. The **Vice-Chair of the Evaluation Body** noted the improved file by Djibouti following its referral in 2021. It is important to actively seek out other practitioners of the element and to raise awareness, as outlined in the safeguarding plan. The Body recommended the element for inscription on the Urgent Safeguarding List.
3. **The Chairperson declared Decision** [**18.COM 8.a.3**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions/18.COM/8.A.3) **adopted to inscribe Xeedho** **on the Urgent Safeguarding List.**

*[A video of the element was shown.]*

1. The delegation of **Djibouti** began by thanking the people and government of Botswana, particularly the President, for the hospitality. On the occasion of Djibouti’s first element of intangible cultural heritage inscribed on the Urgent Safeguarding List, the delegation thanked the Secretariat for its technical and financial assistance to improve the file, as well as the Evaluation Body. Following this first inscription, Djibouti will endeavour to regularly share its immense intangible cultural heritage. Already, a multinational element was in the nomination process for 2024. The delegation took note of the dynamism, commitment and mobilization of H.E Ms Hibo Moumin Assowweh, Minister of Youth and Culture, as well as of her department, which spared no effort in the inscription of this element. Xeedho, a culinary dish exclusively offered on the seventh day of the wedding, is composed of a round, sweet element of dates that is taken back to the hut, the traditional African house, reflecting the new home, blessings and love. The second, salty element is composed of small cubes of camel meat mixed with traditional butter, which manifests as abundance in the home, and children. In its capacity as a member of the UNESCO family, and symbolically, Djibouti offered the Xeedho to UNESCO, the loyal son-in-law or husband to Botswana, as Botswana is loyal to UNESCO. Djibouti in general, and particularly the women responsible for maintaining this living heritage, thanked UNESCO for this recognition. A Xeedho dish was presented with a tasting ceremony planned later for the delegates.
2. The **Chair of the Evaluation Body** presented the next nomination file, **Mek Mulung** [draft decision 8.a.4] submitted by **Malaysia**. Mek Mulung is a traditional performance involving acting, dialogue, singing and dancing. It is performed by a group of fifteen to twenty people accompanied by a music ensemble. Mek Mulung follows a set structure and is performed in an open barn, with the spectators surrounding the performers. It was initially performed as a celebration and expression of gratitude following a good harvest. It begins with a communal feast on the day before the performance for the artists and their neighbours, friends and guests. It is viewed as a means of promoting lively social interaction and dialogue.
3. The **Rapporteur of the Evaluation Body** noted the efforts made to identify the conditions affecting the element through engagement with the communities concerned. It is important to ensure their continued strong participation in implementing the proposed safeguarding measures. The Body recommended the element for inscription on the Urgent Safeguarding List.
4. **The** **Chairperson declared Decision** [**18.COM 8.a.4**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions/18.COM/8.A.4) **adopted to inscribe Mek Mulung** **on the Urgent Safeguarding List.**
5. The delegation of **Malaysia** congratulated the Chairperson for his excellent conduct of the session, commending the government and the people of Botswana for hosting and the Secretariat for its hard work in preparing this meeting. Malaysia acknowledged the Evaluation Body for its extensive work, commitment and dedication. An appreciation video from H.E. Dato Sri Tiong King Sing, Minister of Tourism, Arts and Culture of Malaysia was presented, followed by a live performance from Wang Tepus, a district in the State of Kedah in Malaysia, of a Mek Mulung theatre performance, Putra Cahaya Bulan. This mystical art form was also exhibited at the Malaysian Exhibition Hall for the next three days of the meeting.
6. **H.E. Mr Dato Sri Tiong King Sing, Minister of Tourism, Arts and Culture of Malaysia,** on behalf of the country, spoke of its pride and honour at having the Mek Mulung, one of Malaysia’s most valuable performing arts, inscribed on the Urgent Safeguarding List. The Minister thanked the Committee for the recognition of this truly ancient, traditional performing art.
7. The **Chairperson** congratulated Malaysia for the inscription and the performance.
8. The **Chairperson of the Evaluation Body** presented the next nomination file, **Ingoma Ya Mapiko** [draft decision 8.a.5] submitted by **Mozambique**. Ingoma Ya Mapiko is a celebratory dance practised by the Makonde people. A part of the traditional rite of passage from puberty to adulthood, it is performed in an enclosure, usually under mango trees, with dancers, musicians and the public coming together. It is a theatrical performance in which dancers perform alone or as a group, wearing masks that represent animals or people. It symbolizes human spirit, harmony with the cosmos, and the fight between good and evil, and is viewed as a means of overcoming fear. It is also a means of transmitting ancestral values, beliefs and customs, and of helping youth familiarize themselves with the transformations of their bodies as they reach maturity.
9. The **Rapporteur of the Evaluation Body** noted the relevance of making use of the International Assistance mechanism to receive financial support for activities aimed at safeguarding intangible cultural heritage, as defined in Article 20 of the Convention. He reminded States Parties that is important, when submitting nomination files in the future, to avoid standardized letters of consent and to ensure the free, prior and informed consent of the communities concerned. The Body recommended the element for inscription on the Urgent Safeguarding List.
10. **The Chairperson declared Decision** [**18.COM 8.a.5**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions/18.COM/8.A.5) **adopted to inscribe Ingoma Ya Mapiko on the Urgent Safeguarding List.**
11. **H.E. Ms Eldevina Materula, Minister of Culture and Tourism of Mozambique,** was honoured to address this session on behalf of the Government of Mozambique, thanking Botswana for the great hospitality and the Secretariat for its excellent organization. Mozambique ratified the Convention in 2007, one year after its entry into force. This act is a testimony to the importance that Mozambique and its communities accord to cultural heritage. Intangible cultural heritage is important for the definition of people’s identity as well as for the promotion and respect of cultural diversity. Since its ratification, Mozambique has carried out actions to promote and safeguard intangible cultural heritage, such as the National Festival of Culture, currently in its eleventh edition. The Minister highlighted the conduct of community inventories of intangible cultural heritage with the involvement of the communities, the first custodians of cultural heritage. For this action, she thanked UNESCO for its technical and financial support. Mozambique recognizes culture as an essential factor for the promotion of sustainable development, social well-being, and peace, harmony and respect for diversity. It is in this sense that, in the 2020 to 2024 cycle, the Government defined priorities for culture among several actions for the promotion of research, preservation, enhancement and dissemination of tangible and intangible cultural heritage, as well as strengthening Mozambique’s position in the world’s cultural map through the inscription of elements on UNESCO Lists. It was within this priority that Mozambique submitted the Ingoma Ya Mapiko dance. It was recalled that Mozambique has faced several climatic events and instability in recent years, whose impacts were felt in the lives of communities and also on intangible cultural heritage, as they have led to the destruction of sacred sites, mythical objects and secular rituals, as well as to forced migration and a lack of raw materials. Inscription was thus a first response to these challenges. This inscription enhances the work of safeguarding intangible cultural heritage, but also challenges the country to strengthen actions in favour of the implementation of the Convention. One of the immediate challenges is to continue its work on inventories and to improve the legal framework to ensure greater protection of intangible cultural heritage. In order to achieve these objectives, the Minister reiterated the importance of UNESCO and its partners in the Committee to strengthen assistance. The Minister thanked the communities of Ingoma Ya Mapiko for their support and consent to the inscription process, as well as the team of Mozambican specialists, the UNESCO experts for their tireless monitoring, and the Committee for its recognition of Ingoma Ya Mapiko on the Urgent Safeguarding List.

*[A video of the element was shown.]*

1. The **Chair of the Evaluation Body** presented the next nomination file, **Ancestral and traditional techniques for the elaboration of the ‘Poncho Para’i de 60 Listas’, from the city of Piribebuy, Republic of Paraguay** [draft decision 8.a.6] submitted by **Paraguay**. Ancestral and traditional techniques for the elaboration of the ‘Poncho Para’i de 60 Listas’ from the city of Piribebuyis a handmade garment consisting of three parts. Each part entails different crafting procedures, which are carried out collaboratively by women weavers. Each weaver makes a part of the poncho and specializes in one of the processes. While weavers have their own style and designs, they develop skills for teamwork in order to save time and resources, with the ultimate goal of maintaining the quality of the product. Historically, the ancestral techniques, which were first used by the native peoples, have been transmitted from weaver mothers to daughters orally, through observation and practice. Today, the Safeguarding School also helps weavers pass on their knowledge to future generations. Paraguay also requestedInternational Assistance from the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund for the implementation of the safeguarding plan. This eighteen-month project aims to ensure the transmission of the knowledge and techniques of making the ponchos, and is to be implemented by the National Secretariat of Culture in partnership with UNESCO. The proposed programmes will result in the development of a certification system and the creation of an online store to be managed by the bearers of the element. The project is expected to increase local capacities to continue and transmit the ancestral techniques of making the poncho. It will also lead to the creation of a network and cooperative of weavers. Moreover, the activities will highlight the cultural value of the poncho at the national and international levels and enable the identification of similar safeguarding activities for other intangible cultural heritage elements in Paraguay.
2. The **Rapporteur of the Evaluation Body** added that the file contained a well-made video. It was noted that the State Party utilized the opportunity to apply for International Assistance. The State Party was reminded to ensure that the benefits of the project will outlast its timeline, and to ensure broad community participation in safeguarding efforts. The Body recommended the application to receive International Assistance and the element’s inscription on the Urgent Safeguarding List.
3. For this nomination, the **Chairperson** recalled that the Committee was asked to decide on the criteria for inscription on the Urgent Safeguarding List, as well as the extent to which the criteria for International Assistance request is met. The criteria for granting such requests were shown on the screen. In addition, Paragraph 10 of the Operational Directives refers to two factors that the Committee would also consider in its evaluation. It was recalled that it was not necessary to meet every criterion in order for the request to be approved.
4. **The Chairperson declared Decision** [**18.COM 8.a.6**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions/18.COM/8.A.6) **adopted to inscribe Ancestral and traditional techniques for the elaboration of the ‘Poncho Para’i de 60 Listas’, from the city of Piribebuy, Republic of Paraguay on the Urgent Safeguarding List, approve the International Assistance and grant the amount of US$74,500 to the State Party to this end.**
5. The delegation of **Paraguay** thanked the Committee for this inscription, which is a commitment, an encouragement and a recognition of the bearers of this heritage, and for all the people who work anonymously towards a common goal, for a common dream, and the power of community. The poncho is a star of the heroic Piribebuy. For Paraguayans, the poncho is, in the words of a poet, a vertical ranch of glories, an aged crucible of time, a traveller of nostalgia, a rider of memories, a knight of the winds.
6. **H.E. Ms Adriana Ortiz, Minister of Culture of Paraguay**, spoke with joy and emotion of the hearts of all Paraguayans in this moment, overflowing with pride. For the first time, an artisanal and ancestral element of Paraguay, the elaboration of the Para’í poncho de 60 Listas from the city of Piribebuy, was inscribed on the Urgent Safeguarding List. The nation will follow the protection and safeguarding of its heritage, its rich and diverse Guarani culture that identifies Paraguayans as a multicultural and multilingual country with more than nineteen Indigenous peoples, five linguistic families and two official languages, Guarani and Spanish, and which is also composed of a melting pot of migrant and Afro-descendant cultures that currently make up the cultural diversity of Paraguay. The Minister expressed gratitude to the Government of Botswana for facilitating this meeting, and to UNESCO and every Member of the Committee for their support that will contribute to enhancing efforts to safeguard the Poncho Para’í de 60 Listas. Being internationally recognized is a tribute, first and foremost, to those who keep the tradition alive, the master craftsmen and women of the city of Piribebuy. The delegation was joined with the great master craftswoman, Ms Rosa Segovia, custodian of this noble traditional knowledge. Ms Segovia is a living treasure, a master craftswoman and bearer of the traditional knowledge of making the Poncho Para’í de 60 Listas. This inscription is the result of a long process between various key players, the master craftsmen and women of Piribebuy, the private sector, the municipality of Piribebuy, and the Government. This candidacy is promoted by the Paraguayan Institute of Crafts and was also led by the National Secretariat of Culture through the National Committee for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage, with the unconditional support of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and its Permanent Delegation to UNESCO. Paraguay was filled with excitement for the future and determined to preserve the cultural heritage that defines its beloved country, and pride in wearing the Poncho Para’í de 60 Listas.

**ITEM 8.b OF THE AGENDA**

**EXAMINATION OF NOMINATIONS FOR INSCRIPTION ON THE REPRESENTATIVE LIST OF THE INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE OF HUMANITY**

**Documents:** [*LHE/23/18.COM/8.b*](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-23-18.COM-8.b_EN.docx)
[*45 nominations*](https://ich.unesco.org/en/8b-representative-list-01325)

1. The **Chairperson** congratulated all the States Parties for their inscribed elements, turning to agenda item 8.b and the inscriptions to the Representative List.
2. The **Assistant Director-General** recalled that there were forty-five nominations to examine for possible inscription on the Representative List. The criteria guiding the Committee’s decisions were displayed on the screen. The submitting States Parties were requested to demonstrate that a nominated element satisfied all the criteria.
3. The **Rapporteur of the Evaluation Body** presented the first nomination file, **Rotterdam Summer Carnival** [draft decision 8.b.1] submitted by the **Netherlands**. Rotterdam SummerCarnival is a multicultural celebration that unites participants from the Caribbean and European Netherlands, as well as ethnic minority groups from Central and South America and Africa living in the Netherlands. The event includes a street parade, a brass band competition and a festival market featuring Caribbean food. The practice is transmitted informally through preparations and participation in the carnival. Carnival groups come together to prepare floats, music and decorations based on a specific theme. The Rotterdam Summer Carnival is tied to people’s cultural roots and their emancipation, bolstering individuality, expression and self-worth. By uniting groups of different backgrounds, it also fosters acceptance of and respect for diverse cultural traditions, promoting dialogue, among other things.
4. The **Chair of the Evaluation Body** added that the element promotes social cohesion and respect among different communities, including migrants. The nomination also presents safeguarding measures that address potential challenges to the element, such as over-crowdedness and over-commercialization.
5. **The Chairperson declared Decision** [**18.COM 8.b.1**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions/18.COM/8.B.1) **adopted to inscribe Rotterdam Summer Carnival on the Representative List.**

*[A video of the element was shown.]*

1. The delegation of the **Netherlands** thanked Botswana for hosting this meeting, and the Secretariat, the Evaluation Body and the Committee for their excellent work, efforts and support for this inscription.
2. Mr Humphrey Euson, a bearer of the community, was grateful for the occasion to celebrate a significant moment of culture, diversity and the lively spirit of the Summer Carnival of Rotterdam, officially recognized by UNESCO. The Carnival has evolved beyond a simple celebration to become a beloved tradition filled with colour, rhythm and unity. This recognition honours the passion and hard work of many who make this event a source of joy for the country. He remarked on the transformative impact of this celebration, a festival and a blend of culture showcasing strength in diversity. The pulse of the Summer Carnival of Rotterdam beats with the heart of many creative connections that go beyond boundaries, profoundly influencing countless lives through its vibrant colours and brightening the streets with happiness and lively rhythms for generations to come.
3. The Assistant Director-General announced the two side events taking place after this afternoon’s session, including the ICH NGO Forum events ‘Practitioner Perspective on Intangible Cultural Heritage’ and ‘Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage, a practical interpretation of the 2003 Convention’, and that of the UNESCO Chair on Intangible Cultural Heritage and Sustainable Development organized by France.
4. The Chairperson adjourned the session for a pause before the evening session.

*[Tuesday, 5 December 2023, evening session]*

**ITEM 8.b OF THE AGENDA [CONT.]**

**EXAMINATION OF NOMINATIONS FOR INSCRIPTION ON THE REPRESENTATIVE LIST OF THE INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE OF HUMANITY**

1. The Assistant Director-General explained that as the technical issues meant that the draft decisions could not be projected onto the screen and noting that the documents for the inscriptions had already been widely circulated and that there were no submitted amendments to the draft decisions, he proposed to proceed with the evaluations by the Evaluation Body and adopt the decisions accordingly. With no objections, the Assistant Director-General invited the Vice-Chair of the Evaluation Body to proceed with the next file.
2. The **Vice**-**Chair of the Evaluation Body** presented the next nomination file, **Traditional knowledge and skills of production of the atlas and adras fabrics** [draft decision 8.b.9] submitted by **Tajikistan.** These are two kinds of traditional woven fabrics. There are many steps in the production process, from gathering cocoons and collecting cotton, to spinning, wrapping, dyeing and weaving the threads by hand. Dresses prepared from atlas and adras cloths are widely used by women and girls during celebrations in the workplace, in schools and at home. The fabrics are popular clothes among Tajik women, who consider them as part of their cultural identity. They usually wear clothes made from atlas and adras in official ceremonies, festivals, traditional holidays, social gatherings and events.
3. The **Rapporteur** **of the Evaluation Body** added that the element is a source of livelihood, contributing to poverty reduction and providing employment opportunities for women. The Body noted the importance of ensuring the most active possible participation of the communities concerned in every aspect of the safeguarding measures. This element was recommended for inscription on the Representative List.
4. **The** **Chairperson declared Decision** [**18.COM 8.b.9**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions/18.COM/8.B.9) **adopted to inscribe Traditional knowledge and skills of production of the atlas and adras fabrics on the Representative List.**
5. The delegation of **Tajikistan** extended gratitude to Botswana for the warm welcome and excellent organization of the session. It was proud of the inscription of Traditional knowledge and skills of production of atlas and adras fabrics on the Representative List. This positive decision allows this type of art to sustainably develop and contributes to its continued popularization, transferring the skills from generation to generation. Atlas and adras are the products of manual labour, the most important, authentic and decorative means of glorifying the beauty and artistic taste of the people. The Tajik people were famous for their atlas and adras fabrics along the Silk Roads from East to West for thousands of years. The method of making and producing atlas and adras is ancient, and the fabrics originate from the textile traditions of the Tajik people. Atlas and adras fabrics are very colourful and rich in ornaments. They have not lost their special look from the moment they appeared to the present day. The delegation expressed gratitude to all its partners, particularly the Committee and the Evaluation Body, for their support.
6. The **Rapporteur of the Evaluation Body** presented the next nomination file, **Sango Festival, Oyo** [draft decision 8.b.2] submitted by **Nigeria.** The Sango Festival of Oyo marks the beginning of the Yoruba Traditional New Year. The ten-day festival is an ancestral worship strongly connected to the social, religious, cultural and political institutions of the Oyo State. It encompasses different rites and involves chanting, storytelling, drumming and dancing. Children acquire the related knowledge and skills by observing and imitating elders and attending Saturday worship. Sango magical crafts and rites, however, are transmitted through apprenticeships.
7. The **Chair of the Evaluation Body** noted the State Party’s positive role in connecting the element to the social, cultural and religious institutions of the country. The submitted file was notably improved following the decision of the Committee to refer the file in 2021. This element was recommended for inscription on the Representative List.
8. **The Chairperson declared Decision** [**18.COM 8.b.2**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions/18.COM/8.B.2) **adopted to inscribe Sango Festival, Oyo** **on the Representative List.**
9. The delegation of **Nigeria** presented astatement on behalf of H.E. Ms Hannatu Musawa, Minister of Arts, Culture and the Creative Economy to congratulate the Government of Botswana and UNESCO for organizing this eighteenth session in Kasane. It was with immense honour and gratitude that it celebrated the inscription of Sango Festival of Oyo on the Representative List. This recognition is a testament to the rich history of Nigeria’s cultural diversity and the significance of the Sango Oyo Festival in preserving and showcasing its heritage. On behalf of the President of Nigeria, H.E. Mr Bola Tinubu, heartfelt appreciation was extended to UNESCO for acknowledging the cultural importance of these elements. The Sango Oyo Festival embodies the spirit of unity, tradition, resilience and colour that defines the nation. It serves as a beacon, binding us together as a people, and reminding us of the need to keep the spirit alive. Highest praise was extended to Nigeria for its commitment to continue safeguarding and promoting its intangible cultural heritage. The Ministry of Arts, Culture and the Creative Economy of Nigeria will remain steadfast in its dedication to fostering an environment where its traditions can thrive and evolve. In accepting this recognition, the Ministry pledged to work tirelessly to ensure that the Sango Oyo Festival and other aspects of the country’s cultural wealth are safeguarded for future generations. The delegation thanked UNESCO, the Secretariat, the Evaluation Body and the Committee for the excellent work done.

*[A video of the element was shown.]*

1. The delegation of **Nigeria** [second speaker]spoke on behalfof the king of Alaafin Oyo, of the community of Yoruba people and Oyo States, to appreciate the inscription of this ancient Sango Festival of Oyo, which took ten years to reach UNESCO. The community was delighted. A member of the community, speaking in Indigenous language, commended UNESCO and the Committee, wishing for a successful meeting.
2. The **Rapporteur of the Evaluation Body** presented the next nomination file, **Dabkeh, traditional dance in Palestine** [draft decision 8.b.3] submitted by **Palestine.** It is a group dance, accompanied by traditional wind instruments and popular singing. Dabkeh is performed by eleven dancers, regardless of gender and age, during festivals, celebrations and events such as weddings and graduations. The dance can be performed by professional groups or spontaneously in public squares and family yards. Most Palestinians know the dabkeh dance and practise it as a means of sharing their joy with family, friends and neighbours. It is a means of expressing cultural identity, celebrating family occasions and increasing social ties.
3. The **Chair of the Evaluation Body** noted that community participation in preparing the nomination file was based on fruitful and long-term collaboration between communities, practitioners and NGOs in Palestine, and that their involvement in the implementation of the safeguarding measures will be continued. Dabkeh is widely practised in the region, and the State Party was encouraged to consider a multinational nomination on an extended basis, in line with the principles of international cooperation and the promotion of mutual understanding of the Convention. This element was recommended for inscription on the Representative List.
4. **The Chairperson declared Decision** [**18.COM 8.b.3**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions/18.COM/8.B.3) **adopted to inscribe Dabkeh, traditional dance in Palestine on the Representative List.**
5. The delegation of **Palestine** spoke withmixed feelings. Although happy for the inscription, it was a sad situation, with the delegation addressing thanks to the practitioners of Dabkeh in Palestine, and gratitude to the national and international experts who participated in the nomination file. Tribute was paid to the professional and hard work of the Evaluation Body, as well as the NGOs in Palestine who contributed to the preparation of the file, and by extension, to all the NGOs present. The delegation noted that the Minister of Culture, H.E. Mr Atef Abu Saif, was unable to attend as he was in Gaza. Other members of his team were also unable to attend: the director of the Heritage Department, Mr Saleh Nazzal; the expert, Ms Amani Al-Junaidi; as well as a group of Dabkeh dancers who were supposed to give a short performance to celebrate the twentieth anniversary of the Convention in Botswana. The delegation noted that while the inscription was supposed to be a huge celebration in Palestine, as they had waited for this for a long time, no celebration would be possible these days in Palestine, especially in Gaza. Not wishing to talk about conflicts, the delegation turned to celebrating culture and intangible cultural heritage, assuring the Committee that the cultural identity and memory of the Palestinian people cannot be erased by bombing and noted that this inscription is proof of Palestine’s commitment and a message of hope from the Committee to the Palestinian people. The delegation dedicated this inscription to the Dabkeh groups and dancers in the Gaza Strip, congratulating them.

*[A video of the element was shown.]*

1. The **Rapporteur of the Evaluation Body** presented the next nomination file, **Aklan piña handloom weaving** [draft decision 8.b.5] submitted by the **Philippines.** Piña is a textile made from pineapple leaf fibres and woven using a handloom. The knowledge and skills of piña handloom weaving are primarily passed on within families. Children grow up observing older family members engaged in pinya Bisaya cultivation and piña weaving, and eventually learn the craft under their guidance. The practice is also transmitted through the Schools of Living Traditions, which was initiated by local communities in partnership with the government to help safeguard intangible cultural heritage in the Philippines. Piña is the preferred textile for making formal attire and is a vehicle for innovation and creativity.
2. The **Vice-Chair of the Evaluation Body** noted that the element fosters sustainable development, as it is a source of livelihood that empowers families and local communities and encourages the production of eco-friendly and organic products. The nomination was a well-prepared file that features broad involvement of the communities, groups and individuals concerned and a well-thought-out safeguarding plan. This element was recommended for inscription on the Representative List.
3. **The Chairperson declared Decision** [**18.COM 8.b.5**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions/18.COM/8.B.5) **adopted to inscribe Aklan piña handloom weaving** **on the Representative List.**
4. The delegation of the **Philippines** presented the Barong Tagalog, which the ambassador was wearing. It was a gift from the Aklanon community of the Philippines who made the piña cloth and who practice the age-old weaving tradition. The delegation was honoured to witness this tradition join the long list of traditions from around the world in the Representative List.

*[A video of the element was shown.]*

1. The **Rapporteur of the Evaluation Body** presented the next nomination file, **Polonaise, traditional Polish dance** [draft decision 8.b.6] submitted by **Poland**. A group dance, it can be enacted by a few to even several hundred pairs marching in procession. As the tempo is moderate, participants with no prior experience can observe others and join in on the dance. Today, the tradition of dancing the polonaise is inextricably linked with prom. In some communities, the polonaise is also danced at weddings, New Year’s celebrations, carnival balls and other festivities. The polonaise commemorates important moments in family and community life and symbolizes cooperation, reconciliation and equality. Because it is often danced by people of all ages and backgrounds, it also promotes unity, solidarity and dialogue.
2. The **Vice-Chair of the Evaluation Body** noted the importance of ensuring the most active possible participation of the communities concerned in every aspect of the safeguarding measures and of developing long-term measures. The practice of the element is inclusive of people with disabilities and from migrant backgrounds. This element was recommended for inscription on the Representative List.
3. **The Chairperson declared Decision** [**18.COM 8.b.6**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions/18.COM/8.B.6) **adopted to inscribe Polonaise, traditional Polish dance** **on the Representative List.**
4. The delegation of **Poland** thanked the Committee for the inscription of Polonaise, traditional Polish dance on the Representative List. It was a moment of great joy for all, particularly for the children, youth and adults who practise the polonaise. Polonaise is performed at the most important moments of our lives, at the beginning or the end of a given stage of life. Dancing the polonaise is a tradition that has been uniting various groups all over Poland for generations. The polonaise is a living tradition, practised widely and frequently throughout contemporary Poland, in villages, small towns and large urban centres. The delegation congratulated all those involved in the nomination process and all the bearers who find meaning and beauty in the intergenerational transmission of this tradition.

*[A video of the element was shown.]*

1. The **Vice-Chair of the Evaluation Body** presented the next nomination file, **Procession and celebrations of Prophet Mohammed’s birthday in Sudan** [draft decision 8.b.7] submitted by **Sudan**. The Procession and celebrations of Prophet Mohammed’s birthday in Sudanstarts twelve days before the Prophet’s birthday. It begins with a procession of thousands of people of all ages, community leaders, government officials, army and police forces, and music corps. During the parade, participants perform religious and mystical songs and ritual dances and recite Sufi prayers. The celebration culminates in al-Molid square, a large open-air space decorated with lights and flags and covered in prayer rugs. The celebrations are then launched by an official speech. Participants enjoy the performances and traditional food and buy their children candies and toys.
2. The **Rapporteur of the Evaluation Body** noted the importance of providing comprehensive safeguarding plans and ensuring the widest possible participation of the communities concerned in the implementation of the safeguarding plan. Duplication of information in response to different sections of nomination files and standardized letters of consent should also be avoided. This element was recommended for inscription on the Representative List.
3. **The Chairperson declared Decision** [**18.COM 8.b.7**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions/18.COM/8.B.7) **adopted to inscribe Procession and celebrations of Prophet Mohammed’s birthday in Sudan** **on the Representative List.**
4. The delegation of **Sudan** was absent, but the delegates gave a round of congratulatory applause.
5. The **Vice-Chair of the Evaluation Body** presented the next nomination file, **Alpine pasture season** [draft decision 8.b.8] submitted by **Switzerland**. Alpine pasture season refers to the period between May and October, when cattle, sheep and goats are driven to high-altitude pastures to take advantage of the extra forage. During this time, alpine farmers of all genders care for the animals, maintain the pastures, fences and buildings, process the milk into cheese and other products, and welcome visitors. The centuries-old practice contributes to the preservation of natural landscapes and creates economic and social ties between the local populations and the alpine farmers. It has given rise to the knowledge and skills needed to maintain the sites, as well as to a variety of social and religious practices, such as rituals, prayers and blessings, traditional clothing, livestock competitions and local festivities.
6. The **Rapporteur** **of the Evaluation Body** noted that this is a well-prepared file, including a good quality video that provides a detailed visual presentation of the cultural practices associated with the element. The Body appreciated that the element contributes to the conservation of an ancestral cultural landscape. This element was recommended for inscription on the Representative List.
7. **The Chairperson declared Decision** [**18.COM 8.b.8**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions/18.COM/8.B.8) **adopted to inscribe Alpine pasture season** **on the Representative List.**
8. The delegation of **Switzerland** thanked the Committee for the inscription, expressing gratitude to the Evaluation Body for its work and positive assessment, highlighting the ties between alpine pastures and the sustainability of the environment and agriculture. Bringing livestock to summer pastures on high altitude pastures is a living tradition that has been documented and known since the Middle Ages. The know-how and practices of the alpine season have been adapted to local climatic, social, cultural and economic conditions, from the ‘Inalps’ to the ‘Désalps’, in Gruyère patois; from *poyas* to *rindyas;* and from cheese production methods to know-how linked to grassland management.From the artisanal manufacture of utensils to the various traditional songs, the alpine pasture season brings together a whole repertoire of know-how, knowledge and customs, making it a shared and diversified living heritage. This nomination is the reflection and view held by the bearers of their traditions on the evolution and challenges encountered. The inscription marks an important step, but not the end of the process. A collective approach to transmitting and promoting the alpine pasture season continues to be pursued by the communities with the support of the authorities. On 7 December 2023, in Bulle, Gruyère, a themed day around the Alpine season would be organized to celebrate this inscription and to bring together stakeholders and partners. The delegation thanked all those involved in the preparation of this nomination, particularly the alpinists and their organizations.

*[A video of the element was shown.]*

1. The **Vice-Chair** **of the Evaluation Body** presented the next nomination file, **Art of Akhal-Teke horse breeding and traditions of horses’ decoration** [draft decision 8.b.11] submitted by **Turkmenistan**. The Akhal-Teke is a breed of horses created in the territory of modern Turkmenistan. Characterized by their large size, intelligence, agility, strength and shiny coat, Akhal-Teke horses are hardy and can manage without food and water for long stretches of time. Knowledge and skills related to the breeding and care of Akhal-Teke horses are transmitted formally and informally. The horses are an important part of the historical and cultural identity of Turkmenistan, and the related traditions increase awareness of the importance of living heritage in general.
2. The **Chair of the Evaluation Body** added that, in future nominations, detailed explanations on the social functions and cultural meanings concerning the nominated element should be provided. It is important to ensure the widest possible participation of the communities concerned in planning and implementing the safeguarding measures. This element was recommended for inscription on the Representative List.
3. **The Chairperson declared Decision** [**18.COM 8.b.11**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions/18.COM/8.B.11) **adopted to inscribe Art of Akhal-Teke horse breeding and traditions of horses’ decoration** **on the Representative List.**
4. Thedelegation of **Turkmenistan** expressed appreciation to Botswana for the warm hospitality and for hosting this session. Gratitude was also extended to the Committee and the Secretariat for their support, as well as special thanks given to the National Commission of Turkmenistan for UNESCO for its significant role in preparing the nomination, and to Ms Chinar Rustamova, Secretary-General of the National Commission of Turkmenistan, who was present. The Akhal-Teke horse, renowned for its grace, strength and endurance, has been an integral part of the country’s cultural heritage for centuries. It is not merely a breed, it embodies the spirit of the people, symbolizing the unity of their past, present and future. The traditions associated with Akhal-Teke horse breeding, as well as the meticulous artistry involved in decorating these creatures, have been passed down through generations, forming an inseparable bond with Turkmen identity. The national leader of Turkmen people, H.E. Mr Gurbanguly Mälikgulyýewiç Berdimuhamedow played a significant role in preserving and enhancing the global reputation of the Akhal-Teke horse breeding. Under the leadership of the President of Turkmenistan, national horse breeding has been elevated to unprecedented heights. Comprehensive measures have been undertaken to develop its infrastructure, intensify international cooperation, promote equestrian sports, and preserve the national tradition of horseback riding. This inscription will contribute to increasing the significance of Akhal-Teke horses, opening up the relationship between cultural and social spheres at the international level, within the framework of national projects in the field of horse breeding.

*[A video of the element was shown.]*

1. The **Vice-Chair** **of the Evaluation Body** presented the next nomination file, **Harees dish: know-how, skills and practices** [draft decision 8.b.12] submitted by **United Arab Emirates, Oman and Saudi Arabia**. Harees is a popular traditional dish made with wheat grain, meat and ghee. Harees is prepared for many occasions, particularly during Ramadan and for social events such as weddings. Harees is present in many social and cultural elements such as folk stories, sayings and poetry. The related skills and knowledge are passed on from mothers to daughters, in educational institutes, restaurants and hotels, and through the media and official institutions. A means of promoting social connection, the practice strengthens bonds between people and communities while enhancing cultural affinity in the societies concerned.
2. The **Chair of the Evaluation Body** noted that theelement is a regionally shared food heritage and the States Parties therefore developed and proposed joint safeguarding measures. This element was recommended for inscription on the Representative List.
3. **The Chairperson declared Decision** [**18.COM 8.b.12**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions/18.COM/8.B.12) **adopted to inscribe Harees dish: know-how, skills and practices on the Representative List.**
4. The delegation of **Saudi Arabia** spoke on behalf of the submitting States Parties to express gratitude to the Committee, the Secretariat and the Evaluation Body for their valuable efforts during the dialogue process. The inscription of Harees dish: know-how, skills and practices, is a treasured moment for Saudi Arabia, Oman and the United Arab Emirates. Special gratitude was conveyed to the United Arab Emirates for taking the lead on this inscription. Harees is a popular traditional dish that is widely consumed in the Gulf Cooperation Council countries, specifically in the States involved in the nomination. Since ancient times, communities in these nations have grown wheat, the main ingredient in the dish, preserving the skills and methods of making Harees, which is considered an essential dish to be consumed on social and national occasions. The inscription brings pride to the practising communities, especially those involved in the nomination process. The States concerned are committed to the joint safeguarding measures to support the communities. The delegation invited the delegates to enjoy the experience of tasting Harees in a side event the following day.

*[A video of the element was shown.]*

1. The **Chair** **of the Evaluation Body** presented the next nomination file, **Transhumance, the seasonal droving of livestock** [draft decision 8.b.14] submitted by **Albania, Andorra, Austria, Croatia, France, Greece, Italy, Luxembourg, Romania and Spain.** Transhumance refers to the seasonal movement of people with their livestock between geographical or climatic regions. An ancestral practice, transhumance stems from a deep knowledge about the environment and entails social practices and rituals related to the care, breeding and training of animals and the management of natural resources. An entire socio-economic system has been developed around transhumance, from gastronomy to local handicrafts and festivities. Families have been enacting and transmitting transhumance through observation and practice for many generations. The practice is also transmitted through workshops organized by local communities, associations and networks of herders and farmers, as well as through universities and research institutes.
2. The **Vice-Chair** **of the Evaluation Body** added that the element contributes to social inclusion and strengthens cultural identity and ties between families, communities and territories, while counteracting the effects of rural depopulation. It aligns with the principles of cooperation and is based on cultural and environmental values. This element was recommended for inscription on the Representative List.
3. **The Chairperson declared Decision** [**18.COM 8.b.14**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions/18.COM/8.B.14) **adopted to inscribe Transhumance, the seasonal droving of livestock on the Representative List.**
4. The delegation of **Spain** thanked both the Secretariat and the Committee, as well as the Evaluation Body, for their assessment and for helping to expand this practice. It is a representative, inclusive manifestation that knows no borders and no territory. This was already the case in 2019, when Italy, Greece and Austria led this proposal, and it was already the case when the Committee then decided that an extension should be made, and that Spain would have the honour of coordinating it. Four years after a long transhumance, it was an honour for Spain to represent all the bearer communities from Albania, Andorra, Croatia, France, Italy, Luxembourg, Romania and Spain that joined Italy, Greece and Austria. Transhumance is many things. It comprises traditional techniques, traditional trades, festivals, songs, but above all, it is representative of thousands of communities and territories that have had practices in balance with nature since ancestral times, sometimes for millennia. For all these countries, transhumance means two things: it is one of the best examples of intangible cultural heritage because of its representative, inclusive nature, but at the same time it is a model of sustainable economy in balance with nature. The delegation thanked UNESCO for this recognition.

*[A video message from the communities was shown.]*

1. The **Chair** **of the Evaluation Body** presented the next nomination file, **Sona, drawings and geometric figures on sand** [draft decision 8.b.15] submitted by **Angola.** Sona seeks to convey beliefs, thoughts and emotions, as well as the relationship between human beings and nature. Practitioners mark reference points on a wet floor covered in sand, tracing lines around these points. The figures and drawings are viewed as a means of transmitting stories, knowledge and collective memory to new generations. Sona serves as an opportunity to maintain and transmit Indigenous knowledge. It is passed on during initiation rites for youth who are preparing to assume social functions. Sona is also practised as a decorative art, and in recent decades, educational institutes have started using Sona as a means of teaching and advancing knowledge about mathematics, ethno-mathematics and anthropology.
2. The **Vice-Chair of the Evaluation Body** noted that theelement was the first one to be nominated by Angola for inscription. She added that, when submitting nomination files in the future, it was important to highlight gender-specific roles, the means of transmission and the social functions. This element was recommended for inscription on the Representative List.
3. **The Chairperson declared Decision** [**18.COM 8.b.15**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions/18.COM/8.B.15) **adopted to inscribe Sona, drawings and geometric figures on sand** **on the Representative List.**
4. The delegation of **Angola** thanked Botswana for its welcome. It was with great satisfaction and pride that Sona, drawings and geometric figures on sand, Angola’s first inscription of a cultural element since its ratification of the 2003 Convention. The delegation thanked the Committee for its recognition of Sona, as well as for the technical assistance provided by the Secretariat. It thanked the Evaluation Body for its examination of Sona and for its recommendations. Sona, an ancient art from the eastern region of Angola, consists of making sand drawings. The element was declared a national element of intangible cultural heritage under Executive Decree 99-21 of 2021. Cokwe culture from the eastern region of Angola is also known for its decorative art, applied in the ornamentation of basketry, iron work, ceramics, sculpture, wall painting, houses and works of art, among others. These designs have been represented in various publications. Researchers as well as oral sources explain that the Sona recounts possible events about hunts, daily history, romances, representations of God, places, and village people, among other activities in the lives of the communities. The Sona drawings have been recognized as a kind of geometry or even as mathematical friezes, consisting of drawings in the sand executed with the greatest precision, and which serve to transmit to new generations the intense experiences of the Mukandas and Mungonge, which are specific male initiation rituals in the Cokwe tradition. Historians present the art of sand drawing as part of the most efficient way of the ancients, the connoisseurs of Sona, of sharing their beliefs and myths through oral tradition. Inscription was the culmination of the measures that the government had implemented, while remaining committed to the conservation, protection and management of existing heritage in the country in general and living heritage in particular, with the direct participation of communities. This first inscription will encourage new generations to learn about Indigenous knowledge and serve as a catalyst for unity in diversity. Angola will continue to preserve and promote Indigenous knowledge and transmit it to children in educational institutions and through contemporary works of art, which will help awaken and promote intangible cultural heritage. The delegation gave special thanks to the local Sona communities for their collaboration, and to the Angolan experts who devoted their time.

*[A video of the element was shown.]*

1. The **Chair** **of the Evaluation Body** presented the next nomination file, **Tradition of blacksmithing in Gyumri** [draft decision 8.b.16] submitted by **Armenia**. Blacksmithing involves the creation and repair of iron objects. It is characteristic of the city of Gyumri, where inhabitants continue to preserve existing items made by old masters and to forge and use the iron products in their daily life. Blacksmithing can be seen both in the interior and exterior of private and public buildings and is associated with the values of diligence, honesty, fair work and mutual respect. Current blacksmiths, some of which are fifth- or sixth-generation masters, play an active role in safeguarding and transmitting the tradition of urban blacksmithing as well as its history, traditional skills and knowledge. Today, the representation of women in the craft is gradually increasing.
2. The **Rapporteur of the Evaluation Body** added thatthe planned safeguarding measures are comprehensive and are part of an action plan that includes the role of bearers and practitioners of the element. This element was recommended for inscription on the Representative List.
3. **The Chairperson declared Decision** [**18.COM 8.b.16**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions/18.COM/8.B.16) **adopted to inscribe Tradition of blacksmithing in Gyumri on the Representative List.**
4. The delegation of **Armenia** extended gratitude to the Evaluation Body for their recommendation, as well as to the Committee for the decision to inscribe the Tradition of blacksmithing in Gyumri on the Representative List. It was a profound honour for the Gyumri community in Armenia, which is renowned for its rich and vibrant living heritage. Gyumri is considered the cultural capital of Armenia, and blacksmithing has played an essential role in shaping the city’s cultural identity, including its distinctive architectural and artistic character. This recognition holds significant importance, positively impacting the safeguarding of this tradition at both national and international levels. This inscription also underscores Armenians’ unwavering commitment to the goals of the Convention. By enhancing the visibility of intangible cultural heritage and promoting awareness of its significance, this inscription further aligns with Armenia’s mission to encourage dialogue that respects cultural diversity.
5. The delegation of **Armenia** [second speaker and national expert] spoke on behalf of the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport to thank the Committee for this inscription. Profound gratitude and congratulations went to all the communities, bearers, researchers, NGOs, and educational and cultural institutions involved in the preparation of this nomination. The element relates to the safeguarding and distribution of blacksmithing of the Gyumri community. Blacksmithing in Armenia is considered one of the focal points of culture, as other spheres of metallurgy have branched from it. Urban blacksmithing in Gyumri differs not only from rural traditions but also from other urban traditions because, in addition to the preparation of everyday tools and devices, a big focus was placed on the artistic processing of iron and the aesthetic appearance of the tools. The element relates to the families of artisan blacksmiths, individual blacksmiths, specialized educational institutions teaching blacksmithing as an applied artistic craft, the museums of the Gyumri community that safeguards and exhibits examples of artistic blacksmithing as typical elements of the urban culture and, of course, NGOs engaged in safeguarding the crafts tradition of the Gyumri community. They have all contributed to safeguarding and transmitting blacksmithing in Gyumri through generations.

*[A video of the element was shown.]*

1. The **Chair** **of the Evaluation Body** presented the next nomination file, **Traditional irrigation: knowledge, technique and organization** [draft decision 8.b.17] submitted by **Austria, Belgium, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands** and **Switzerland.** Traditional irrigation uses gravity and hand-made constructions, such as channels and ditches, to distribute water from naturally-occurring water catchment points (such as springs, streams and glaciers) to the fields. The practice requires a profound understanding of the natural landscape, water flow and weather conditions, as well as close cooperation between those responsible for the distribution of the water, and others involved in the maintenance of the physical structures. The practice is passed on to generations informally, through observation and training from experienced members, although cooperatives, associations, scholars and institutions also play an important role in the transmission of knowledge. For practitioners, traditional irrigation and the centuries-old channel systems related to the practice are strong identity markers.
2. The **Vice-Chair of the Evaluation Body** added that thefile is a good example of cooperation among submitting States. The element is closely connected with the environment and demonstrates the sustainable use of natural resources. This element was recommended for inscription on the Representative List.
3. **The Chairperson declared Decision** [**18.COM 8.b.17**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions/18.COM/8.B.17) **adopted to inscribe Traditional irrigation: knowledge, technique and organization on the Representative List.**
4. The delegation of **Austria** spoke on behalf of the submitting States to thank the host country for its warm hospitality, as well as the Secretariat, the Evaluation Body and the Committee for the quality of their work and efforts. This inscription filled the submitted States with pride and satisfaction. Together with the national coordinators, the NGOs, and especially the engaged communities throughout Europe, they had worked hard for several years to reach this point. The delegation mentioned in particular Mr Christian Leibundgut, who had been invaluable to the whole process, but had sadly passed away a few weeks earlier. Traditional irrigation bears witness to the important contribution of cultural heritage when dealing with nature and the environment in a sustainable way, by promoting inclusive economic development at local and international levels and by using natural resources and preserving biodiversity. Furthermore, it demonstrates the close connection between people and nature. Passing on traditional knowledge and the necessary skills is among the central aspects of this tradition and an important cultural factor. The practice is deeply rooted in the identity of the practitioners. The multinational inscription will also enrich the diversity of living heritage internationally. It makes this living tradition visible and raises awareness of the diversity of our cultural heritage.

*[A video message from the communities was shown.]*

1. The **Rapporteur** **of the Evaluation Body** presented the next nomination file, **Junkanoo** [draft decision 8.b.22] submitted by the **Bahamas**. Junkanoo is the countries’ national cultural festival, brought to the Bahamas by enslaved Africans who used their three-day holiday to recreate festivals from home. An outlet for creative expression, today Junkanoo is mainly celebrated through parades that retain many African elements and are a grand spectacle of Indigenous music, performances, storytelling and craftsmanship. Junkanoo is a celebration of unity, bringing together thousands of people of all ages and backgrounds in the creation of towering, colourful costumes with cardboard and crepe paper. The entire community plays a part in preparing youth for their rites of passage into Junkanoo.
2. The **Vice-Chair** **of the Evaluation Body** added that the element was the first nomination for inscription by the Bahamas. It is a celebration of resilience, and a post-slavery expression of culture among the African diaspora. She added that is important to be aware of the potential risk of decontextualization and over-commercialization, and to ensure that any unintended consequences are monitored and well managed. This element was recommended for inscription on the Representative List.
3. **The Chairperson declared Decision** [**18.COM 8.b.22**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions/18.COM/8.B.22) **adopted to inscribe Junkanoo on the Representative List.**
4. The delegation of the **Bahamas** paid homage to the Chairperson, and on behalf of the people of the Bahamas, presented him with a Junkanoo costume piece representing a headpiece and shield in the national colours (aquamarine, gold and black) in honour of the fiftieth anniversary of national independence. This beautiful piece is the creation of Junkanoo practitioner Levar Adams. The delegation extended greetings on behalf of the Governor-General, Hon. Ms Cynthia Pratt, and the Prime Minister, Hon. Mr Philip Davis. The Bahamas is a SIDS, an archipelago comprising hundreds of islands, keys and rocks, like precious jewels spread across 100,000 square miles of sea. It is a nation of just over 400,000 souls, most of whom trace their ancestral roots to the African continent, and whose forefathers and foremothers were transported by way of the ocean of pain known as the Middle Passage. Centuries ago, the creative expression called Junkanoo was born and had since survived and thrived through dramatic social, political and economic change, proving to be an authentic, resilient and enduring cultural manifestation of a proud people. While its rhythms fundamentally harken to Mother Africa, its evolution has become a modern-day expression of the strength and triumphant spirit of the Bahamian people. Junkanoo is a complex art form, a rich fusion of brilliant colours, intricate craftwork and design, towering pieces, rhythmic orchestral music of drums, cowbells and brass instruments, and choreographed dance. It is a merging cultural space for creators from all walks of life, including men and women. It attracts spectators in the thousands, and its infectious energy invites the participation and a pulsating oneness from the people in the sidelines. Bahamians say Junkanoo is in their belly and resonates in their heart and soul. It is an emblazoned component of national identity. It is right and necessary that this cultural treasure be safeguarded and treasured for the Bahamas and for the world. The delegation was grateful to the UNESCO Junkanoo Committee of the Bahamas for its fundamental groundwork, which had led to this moment. The Junkanoo community was also recognized, having provided its support behind this monumental effort. This inscription is historic, as it was the Bahamas’ first submission since becoming a signatory to the Convention in 2014. The delegation thanked the Evaluation Body for its work and for its recommendation to inscribe Junkanoo, conveying the warm sentiments to the Committee for its decision to inscribe Junkanoo on the Representative List. The government and people of the Bahamas were grateful to UNESCO for its continued partnership in the pursuit of the advancement of the Bahamian people and of peoples everywhere.

*[A video of the element was shown.]*

1. The **Vice-Chair of the Evaluation Body** presented the next nomination file, **Bolero: identity, emotion and poetry turned into song** [draft decision 8.b.28] submitted by **Cuba** and **Mexico.** Bolero is an indispensable part of the Latin American sentimental song, with a strong lyrical character deeply rooted in Cuba and Mexico. A cultural amalgam, it combines the language used in European poetry with the African rhythms of enslaved peoples and the sentiments of the native peoples of the Americas. Bolero lyrics allude to daily life, and the songs are performed in a variety of spaces, from households to public areas and large concert halls, as well as in festivals and as serenades. Today, new boleros continue to be composed, and the lyrics and music make room for an ever-evolving dialogue with the traditions of both countries.
2. The **Chair of the Evaluation Body** added that the nomination is a well-prepared file and includes a good-quality video. The file presents a detailed and well-structured safeguarding plan, which explains the current challenges, objectives and programmes to address them. Measures had been jointly developed by bearers and practitioners from both submitting States. This element was recommended for inscription on the Representative List.
3. **The Chairperson declared Decision** [**18.COM 8.b.28**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions/18.COM/8.B.28) **adopted to inscribe Bolero: identity, emotion and poetry turned into song on the Representative List.**

*[A video of the element was shown.]*

1. The delegation of **Mexico** expressed thanks to the Secretariat, as well as to the government and people of Botswana for their hospitality and warmth. It appreciated the examination by the Evaluating Body that led to the inscription of Bolero on the Representative List. The delegation thanked UNESCO for the extraordinary progress it had made these past twenty years, both for recognizing and safeguarding intangible cultural heritage and for promoting the methodology, guidance and instruments to enable these achievements. Mexico had worked together with Cuba on this nomination, and it wished to recognize and thank both the bearers and the institutions whose hard work had made this dream come true. Mexico reiterated its commitment to ensure that Bolero is duly taught, preserved and disseminated as a living heritage.
2. The delegation of **Cuba** spoke on behalf of its Minister of Culture, H.E. Mr Alpidio Alonso Grau, to express his gratitude for the inscription. The peoples of Cuba and Mexico were now celebrating the inscription of ‘Bolero: identity, emotion and poetry turned into song’ on the Representative List. Bolero has a strong sense of collective identity within Cuban and Mexican cultures and has been passed down through generations for its genuine cheer, music, rhythms, melodies and poetic lyrics. Today, it is practised in many other Latin American countries and across the world. The delegation thanked the Secretariat, the Evaluation Body and the Committee for recognizing the quality of the file and the safeguarding plan. It congratulated the Member States for the twenty years of commitment to public policies in favour of living heritage, reiterating its responsibility towards intangible cultural heritage. The delegation congratulated Botswana for its welcome in this beautiful country. It invited the delegates at the end of the evening to enjoy the Bolero and to taste Mexican tequila and extraordinary Cuban rum in celebration of this inscription, an example of cooperation in the field of culture.
3. The **Vice-Chair** **of the Evaluation Body** presented the next nomination file, **Shuwalid** **festival** [draft decision 8.b.30] submitted by **Ethiopia.** This annual three-day festival is celebrated by the Harari people of Ethiopia. It marks the end of six days of fasting to compensate omissions during Ramadan. The Harari people celebrate Shuwalid at the shrines of Aw Shulum Ahmed and Aw Akebara, in the city of Harar. The festival starts with supplications and spiritual songs, followed by the reading of scriptures, music and dance. The celebration is concluded with words of blessing. The occasion unites community members of all ages and genders, and serves as a platform for community elders to share their knowledge and experiences and to give blessings to the next generations, as well as for youth to learn about cultural values, norms and traditions.
4. The **Chair of the Evaluation Body** added that the Shuwalid Festival creates opportunities for younger generations to learn about cultural values, norms and traditions, and to be aware and proud of their identity. The State Party is encouraged to pay specific attention to the linguistic quality of files to be submitted in the future and to avoid standardized letters of consent. This element was recommended for inscription on the Representative List.
5. **The Chairperson declared Decision** [**18.COM 8.b.30**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions/18.COM/8.B.30) **adopted to inscribe Shuwalid** **festival** **on the Representative List.**
6. The delegation of **Ethiopia** extended gratitude to the Evaluation Body and the Secretariat, thanking the Committee for adopting the decision. Ethiopia is a country of cultural, natural and linguistic diversities. It is a land of origins. First, it is the cradle of humankind, proven through the many paleontological discoveries of human ancestors, such as *Ardipithecus ramides* and *Australopithecus afarensis*, or Lucy. Secondly, Ethiopia is the origin of coffee. Thirdly, it is a source of the longest river in the world, the Nile. Ethiopia is therefore proud of this land of origins. As a country with seventy-eight ethnic and eighty-three linguistic groups, Ethiopia has a wealth of diverse intangible cultural heritage. The Shuwalid Festival is of among thousands. The people of Harar preserved this festival for generations. Harar is one of the oldest cities in Ethiopia, with a history dating back to the tenth century AD. Indeed, ‘Harar Jugol, the Fortified Historic Town’ was inscribed on the World Heritage List in 2006. Harar is the fourth holy city of Islam. It was the first and greatest Islamic scholarly centre in East Africa. Its magnificent medieval architecture is still a living testament of its glory. Shuwalid is one of the elements of intangible cultural heritage of the Harari people. Celebrated annually, the festival marks the end of six days of fasting, observed to compensate omissions of fasting days during Ramadan. The festival is celebrated for three consecutive days, from the evening of the sixth day to the eighth day of Shuwal, the ten months of the Islamic and Harari calendar. The Harari people celebrate the Shuwalid festival in a colourful manner that reflects their cultural values and traditions at the shrines of Aw Shulum Ahmed and Aw Akebara, established in memory of great religious men at the principal gates of the city. The holiday ritual kicks off with elders’ supplications and praising songs to Allah and the Prophet Muhammad. When the elderly read scriptures written in Arabic and the Harari language, echoed by other attendees. The celebration concludes with the blessing of the Murid, who are leaders of the shrines. The festival creates social cohesion and transfers social and cultural values to younger generations. The inscription of Shuwalid festival on the Representative List recognizes the global efforts of Ethiopia in general and of the Harari people in particular in preserving Islamic intangible cultural heritage. Since March 2018, the Government of Ethiopia has given due attention to the protection and preservation of tangible and intangible cultural heritage, resulting in the inclusion of several elements of intangible cultural heritage, ranging from performances and festivities to Indigenous knowledge systems, in the national inventory. The role of local communities in safeguarding intangible cultural heritage has increased tremendously, demonstrating Ethiopia’s commitment to the implementation of the Convention.
7. The **Chair** **of the Evaluation Body** presented the next nomination file, **Traditional craft skills and arts of Al-Mudhif building** [draft decision 8.b.35] submitted by **Iraq**. Al-Mudhif is a large arched building made of reed and papyrus, both of which grow naturally in the marshes of southern Iraq. The building serves as a gathering place where members of the community can exchange, address conflicts, share experiences, tell stories and practise cultural activities and social rituals such as weddings, circumcisions, religious ceremonies and national celebrations. Al-Mudhif is also viewed as a space for transmitting traditional knowledge, values, handicraft skills, norms and customs to children and youth. The traditional customs and handicraft skills related to constructing Al-Mudhif are transmitted informally through hands-on practice and participation in cultural activities. The practice is also transmitted through stories and legends, as well as through publications, the media and the activities of NGOs.
8. The **Rapporteur of the Evaluation Body** added that the process of safeguarding the element is associated with environmental sustainability. The Body noted the importance of referring to the appropriate Convention. This element was recommended for inscription on the Representative List.
9. **The Chairperson declared Decision** [**18.COM 8.b.35**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions/18.COM/8.B.35) **adopted to inscribe Traditional craft skills and arts of Al-Mudhif building** **on the Representative List.**

*[A video of the element was shown.]*

1. The delegation of **Iraq** expressed thanks and appreciation for the great efforts by UNESCO to safeguard the heritage of the peoples of the world. Thanks also went to the Secretariat and the Evaluation Body for its recommendation to inscribe this national file. The file was prepared through joint national efforts between the Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Antiquities, the body responsible for implementing the Convention, and the local communities, which included the heads and individuals of tribes from all concerned NGOs that are located exclusively in the areas of the Iraqi Marsh where this craft is widespread. This traditional craft constitutes an important part of their cultural identity. It dates back to the Sumerian civilization and is still widely practised to this day. This inscription will support all the local communities concerned, making them feel proud of their living cultural heritage.
2. The **Chair** **of the Evaluation Body** presented the next nomination file, **Arts, skills and practices associated with engraving on metals (gold, silver and copper)** [draft decision 8.b.36] submitted by **Iraq, Algeria, Egypt, Mauritania, Morocco, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Tunisia** and **Yemen.** Engraving on metals such as gold, silver and copper is a centuries-old practice that entails manually cutting words, symbols or geometric patterns, including Quran verses and prayers, into the surfaces of decorative, utilitarian, religious or ceremonial objects. Their social and symbolic meanings and functions vary according to the communities concerned. Engraved objects, such as jewellery or household objects, are often presented as traditional gifts for weddings or used in religious rituals and traditional and alternative medicine. The element is transmitted within families, through observation and hands-on practice, as well as through workshops organized by training centres, organizations and universities. Practised by people of all ages and genders, metal engraving and the use of engraved objects are means of expressing the cultural, religious and geographical identity and the socio-economic status of the communities concerned.
3. The **Rapporteur** **of the Evaluation Body** added that it is important to ensure the widest possible participation of the communities concerned in planning and implementing the proposed safeguarding measures. The Body noted the importance of referring to the appropriate Convention. This element was recommended for inscription on the Representative List.
4. **The Chairperson declared Decision** [**18.COM 8.b.36**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions/18.COM/8.B.36) **adopted to inscribe Arts, skills and practices associated with engraving on metals (gold, silver and copper)** **on the Representative List.**
5. The delegation of **Iraq** spoke onbehalf of all the States participating in the preparation of the multinational file: Algeria, Egypt, Mauritania, Morocco, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Tunisia and Yemen. They expressed thanks to the Secretariat and the Evaluation Body for the recommendation to inscribe the element on the Representative List. The inscription of this Arab multinational file on the Representative List will contribute to strengthening Arab relations, creating space for and encouraging dialogue based on respect, as well as ensuring the viability of the element and its knowledge for future generations. These are the goals that UNESCO seeks to achieve through this Convention. The Arab States were currently preparing another multinational file for submission to UNESCO early in 2024. The delegation invited the States, where this element is widespread, to join and support the file.
6. The **Rapporteur** presented the next nomination file, **Al-Man’ouché, an emblematic culinary practice in Lebanon** [draft decision 8.b.40] submitted by **Lebanon**. Al-Man’ouché is a flatbread prepared in homes and specialized bakeries, and enjoyed during breakfast by people of all backgrounds in Lebanon. The dough is indented using fingertips and is topped with a mixture of thyme, sumac, toasted sesame seeds, salt and olive oil. Al-Man’ouché is prepared by women for domestic consumption and by men, women and all members of the same family in small Man’ouché bakeries. The techniques of preparing Man’ouché and its toppings are usually transmitted informally from parents to children. When members of the same family participate in making al-Man’ouché, there is a division of tasks according to gender. The aroma of al-Man’ouché is a strong identifying factor that evokes traditional morning gatherings, or *sobhhiyé*, key moments of social interaction. The preparation of al-Man’ouché for sale in small bakeries also contributes to local economic development.
7. The **Vice-Chair of the Evaluation Body** added that the nomination identifies threats, such as those dealing with over-commercialization, counterfeiting of ingredients, unsustainable ingredient cultivation and decontextualization, and proposes measures to mitigate them. The Body noted the importance of using vocabulary appropriate to the spirit of the Convention and of avoiding expressions which may suggest claims of ownership. This element was recommended for inscription on the Representative List.
8. **The Chairperson declared Decision** [**18.COM 8.b.40**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions/18.COM/8.B.40) **adopted to inscribe Al-Man’ouché, an emblematic culinary practice in Lebanon** **on the Representative List.**
9. The delegation of **Lebanon** thanked the Secretariat and the Evaluation Body for their excellent work and for the recognition of Al-Man’ouché. Nothing is more popular than Al-Man’ouché in Lebanon; it is the most popular, festive dish eaten for celebrations. It is a dish that it also consumed during periods of condolences. It is also a dish for breakfast, and has passed through generations, across communities. It is known as the food for the poor. Unfortunately, even the poor are suffering and are unable to have their daily Al-Man’ouché. The news of inscription will make people happy, which was especially needed at the present time in the region and given the difficulties people are facing. The delegation invited other Member States to join Lebanon in the inscription of the file. The Al-Man’ouché is a cultural heritage of the region, and Lebanese people have also taken it across the world, always carrying it in their bags. It is an emotional, nostalgic food, reminding us of our country of origin.

*[A video of the element was shown.]*

1. The **Rapporteur** **of the Evaluation Body** presented the next nomination file, **Sodai straw garden making in Lithuania** [draft decision 8.b.41] submitted by **Lithuania.** Sodai straw gardens are hanging ornaments made from the stalks of grains. This practice involves the cultivation of grain (typically rye), the treatment of straw and the creation of geometric structures of varying sizes. The structures are then decorated with details symbolizing fertility and prosperity. The practice is passed on informally within families or during events such as festivals, exhibitions, conferences and summer camps. Being an integral part of traditional wooden home interiors, sodai gardens are viewed as spiritual gifts. They provide a sense of shared cultural heritage and continuity to the practising communities, while strengthening communal partnerships, intergenerational bonds and cultural diversity.
2. The **Vice-Chair of the Evaluation Body** added that the file is well prepared, including clear descriptions of the element’s social meanings and cultural functions. The Body noted the wide involvement of the communities in the preparation of the nomination file. This element was recommended for inscription on the Representative List.
3. **The Chairperson declared Decision** [**18.COM 8.b.41**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions/18.COM/8.B.41) **adopted to inscribe Sodai straw garden making in Lithuania** **on the Representative List.**
4. The delegation of **Lithuania** thanked all the organizers of the session, and Botswana for its warm welcome, hospitality and the opportunity to discover the beauty of the country. It particularly thanked the Committee and the Evaluation Body for the decision to inscribe Sodai straw garden making on the Representative List. Preparing the nomination was an extraordinary opportunity for the sodai community. This not only reinforced their sense of recognition and esteem, but they also discovered many aspects of this tradition for society. The result was the creation of the NGO Gardens of Heaven, which brings together nearly seventy sodai artisans, mainly women, and the number continues to grow. In total, there are now 200 sodai artisans. The delegation invited the delegates to discover the making of sodai with the participation of its artisans the following day.

*[A video of the element was shown.]*

1. The delegation of **Lithuania** [second speaker, a practitioner] explained that itcreates a world of wonder and beauty, a garden of paradise, with a human being trying to decorate it, thereby starting their own garden created in the heart and by hands as a symbol for perfect space and living harmony. The symbolic tree of life has reached us from ancient times. Everything fits within it, the underworld and the sky, people and all living things. In this garden, the angels are watching us and our beautiful Earth. The garden presented had been made over a few days and nights in Botswana. In one place, it brings together beautiful cultural spaces as blessings for peace, harmony and prosperity for wonderful Botswana. The entire community of straw garden makers and the NGO Gardens of Heaven were deeply touched by the inscription.
2. The **Rapporteur** presented the next nomination file, **Hiragasy, a performing art of the Central Highlands of Madagascar** [draft decision 8.b.42] submitted by **Madagascar**. Hiragasy is a performing art composed of song, dance and speech. Originating in the central highlands of Madagascar, the performance takes place in public spaces. The lyrics of hiragasy performances allude to moral, civic and cultural values, and the music is performed using traditional instruments. The art is transmitted informally within families, with children following their parents on tour and joining in on the performances. The practice is viewed as a means of conveying values, history and knowledge of Malagasy ancestors. In rural areas, hiragasy is considered as a vital means of educating young people. It maintains social cohesion and promotes peace within the family and among fellow citizens and society.
3. The **Vice-Chair** **of the Evaluation Body** added that the file demonstrated efforts to safeguard the element in the context of modernization and rural exodus via non-formal modes of transmission. The Body noted the need to pay attention to the risk of decontextualization with the proposed safeguarding measures. This element was recommended for inscription on the Representative List.
4. **The Chairperson declared Decision** [**18.COM 8.b.42**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions/18.COM/8.B.42) **adopted to inscribe Hiragasy, a performing art of the Central Highlands of Madagascar on the Representative List.**
5. The **Chairperson** noted that Madagascar was unable to connect online.Given the time, the meeting was closed with a number of announcements. The Chairperson adjourned the evening session.

*[Wednesday, 6 December 2023, morning session]*

**ITEM 8.b OF THE AGENDA [CONT.]**

**EXAMINATION OF NOMINATIONS FOR INSCRIPTION ON THE REPRESENTATIVE LIST OF THE INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE OF HUMANITY**

1. The **Chairperson** announced that the previous day had been productive thanks to the evening session. The Committee managed to inscribe all six nominations to the Urgent Safeguarding List, as well as twenty-two out of the forty-five nominations to the Representative List. Before resuming agenda item 8.b, he proposed to play the two videos from Poland that were interrupted by technical issues, followed by the video from Madagascar that was similarly interrupted near the end of the evening session.

*[Two videos of Poland and the video of Madagascar were shown.]*

1. The **Chairperson** congratulated Poland and Madagascar and turned to the next file.
2. The **Vice-Chair of the Evaluation Body** presented the day’s first nomination, **Maltese Village Festa, an annual community celebration** [draft decision 8.b.43] submitted by **Malta.** The festa is a community event of religious origin held annually in village parishes across Malta and Gozo. The main festa season in Malta starts towards the end of April and runs until the beginning of October, with multiple events taking place in different villages. Festa weeks entail concerts, band marches, firework displays and bell ringing. Typical festa food, such as nougat, is sold from street stalls. The practice is transmitted informally through participation in the preparation and events. The festa remains an important part of cultural heritage in Maltese villages, uniting families, visitors and local communities in a celebration of popular religiosity and local identities.
3. The **Rapporteur** **of the Evaluation Body** added that a Unit for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage will be established to monitor and evaluate the impact of the inscription of festa and to provide a platform for stakeholder consultations. The Body noted the development of safeguarding measures that demonstrate the inclusion of people with disabilities. This element was recommended for inscription on the Representative List.
4. **The Chairperson declared Decision** [**18.COM 8.b.43**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions/18.COM/8.B.43) **adopted to inscribe Maltese Village Festa, an annual community celebration on the Representative List.**
5. The delegation of **Malta** took thefloor for the first time since it ratified the Convention to praise the Chairperson for his excellent stewardship, and the Secretariat and the Evaluation Body for their hard work and commitment, rising to meet the various challenges that came their way. The Maltese Village Festa is perhaps the most iconic and well-researched element of Maltese culture. On behalf of the Ministry of National Heritage, Arts and Local Government, and the people of Malta, the delegation welcomed this honour with pride as it spreads the labour of love of the tireless festa volunteers from Malta to the world.

*[A video of the element was shown.]*

1. The **Vice-Chair of the Evaluation Body** presented the next nomination, **Mahadra, a community system for transmission of traditional knowledge and oral expressions** [draft decision 8.b.44] submitted by **Mauritania.** Mahadra is a community framework for education and socialization in which traditional knowledge and literary expressions are transmitted, mainly through listening and memorization. The classes take place under a tent, covered with mats or carpets and cushions on the floor. Mahadra is open and available to everyone, regardless of gender, age or social background. The topics covered include language and traditional literature, religious sciences, and knowledge about nature and the universe. Mahadra itself is a transmission system, which is based on a moral and social contract between the teachers and their students. The practice is a form of expression that promotes socialization, communication, integration and social cohesion. It is also intricately linked to the transmission of Mauritanian poetry and storytelling, providing a sense of continuity, belonging and shared cultural identity for the communities concerned.
2. The **Rapporteur** **of the Evaluation Body** added that the element exists as a complement to the modern school system. Its social functions include providing a space for socialization, fostering communication between communities, and promoting social cohesion. The State Party submitted an improved file following the decision of the Committee to refer the file in 2021. This element was recommended for inscription on the Representative List.
3. **The Chairperson declared Decision** [**18.COM 8.b.44**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions/18.COM/8.B.44) **adopted to inscribe Mahadra, a community system for transmission of traditional knowledge and oral expressions on the Representative List.**
4. The delegation of **Mauritania** thanked the Chairperson and the Government and people of Botswana for their warm and welcoming hospitality, adding that it was grateful to participate in the eighteenth session of the Committee, entrenching the values of fraternity, respect and tolerance between peoples. Mauritania was among the first countries to have ratified the Convention in 2006, thus expressing its conviction of the importance of safeguarding the intangible cultural heritage of humanity, which reflects the richness and diversity of cultures around the world. Considering the importance of intangible cultural heritage, the country has revised its law on tangible cultural heritage to include intangible cultural heritage. Intangible cultural heritage is an expression of the diversity of cultures, communities and peoples. Consequently, Mauritania works to promote and safeguard its rich and diverse intangible cultural heritage and to guarantee its transmission to future generations in accordance with the spirit and principles of the Convention. The inscription of Mahadra, a community system for transmission of traditional knowledge and oral expressions on the Representative List, as its first file, is proof that the Committee works to consolidate the values of tolerance between peoples. The Mahadra has contributed to building bridges of solidarity based on knowledge and teaching, shared between the peoples of the sub-region. The Mahadra provides a comprehensive education, at the end of which the learner is not only ready for further education but also able to play an important role in leading communities. It also constitutes the historical framework in which elites from various regions meet, exchange ideas and build peace. The Mahadra made it possible, from the first decades of the creation of the country, to train schoolteachers, thus contributing to the construction of the modern State. Its inscription is a recognition of the cultural role Mahadra has played in the teaching of science and the promotion of a culture of tolerance between peoples. This inscription also concretizes the will of H.E. Mr Mohamed Ould Cheikh Ghazouani, President of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania, to realize this major historical event. The delegation expressed gratitude to the Evaluation Body, the Committee and the experts for their examination of the file and to all those who contributed to its preparation.
5. The **Vice-Chair of the Evaluation Body** presented the next nomination, **Songkran in Thailand, traditional Thai New Year festival** [draft decision 8.b.10] submitted by **Thailand.** Songkran refers to the sun’s annual passing into the Aries constellation, the first sign of the Zodiac, which marks the traditional start of the New Year. Activities include pouring water, bathing important Buddha images, splashing water on family and friends, folk plays, games, music and feasting. The tradition is passed on through participation in the festivities and regular social and family interactions, as well as through educational institutes, government agencies, the media and Thai astrologers. Songkran promotes community cooperation, unity and forgiveness. It is viewed as a time to symbolically wash away misfortunes, pray for prosperity for the coming year, reunite with family members, and honour ancestors and older adults.
6. The **Chair of the Evaluation Body** added that the nomination file is well prepared and features strong participation of the relevant communities in the nomination process. It highlights the threats to the element and proposes safeguarding measures to address them. This element was recommended for inscription on the Representative List.
7. **The Chairperson declared Decision** [**18.COM 8.b.10**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions/18.COM/8.B.10) **adopted to inscribe Songkran in Thailand, traditional Thai New Year festival on the Representative List.**
8. The delegation of **Thailand,** represented byMrKowit Pakamart, Director-General of the Cultural Promotion Department, Ministry of Culture, presented a video of the Prime Minister who, on behalf of the Royal Thai Government and Thai people, wished to express his appreciation and invite delegates to join Songkran in Thailand every April.
9. [In a video message] the **Prime Minister of Thailand**, **H.E. Mr Srettha Thavisin**expressed appreciation to the Government of Botswana for hosting this eighteenth session of the Committee. He thanked the Evaluation Body members for their dedication and commitment, and the Committee for inscribing Songkran in Thailand on the Representative List. He also thanked the Secretariat for its hard work. Songkran is the traditional Thai New Year, celebrated in mid-April throughout the country. The tradition has been practised and passed down from generation to generation by Thai people and ethnic communities. This exquisite and meaningful tradition reflects Thai values of gratitude to ancestors, generosity and goodwill towards others, and a spirit of unity. All Songkran activities are sacred and composed of different elements of cultural heritage. Some of the most well-known traditions of Songkran include alms, sprinkling water on Buddha images, pouring scented water over the revered elders’ hands, as well as attending folk plays and performances depicting the legend of Songkran. It reflects cultural diversity and human creativity, and is essential for achieving sustainable development. He hoped that the dialogue and mutual understanding it promotes will contribute to attaining peace and security for all.

*[A video of the element was shown.]*

1. The **Chair of the Evaluation Body** presented the next nomination, a multinational file, **Art of illumination** **Təzhib/Tazhib/Zarhalkori/Tezhip/Naqqoshlik** [draft decision 8.b.18] submitted by **Azerbaijan, Islamic Republic of Iran, Tajikistan, Türkiye** and **Uzbekistan.** The Art of illumination is a centuries-old decorative art practised on the pages of manuscripts, calligraphic texts and miniatures. The practice is transmitted through apprenticeships as well as through formal and non-formal education, including in many universities, academies, research centres, and public and private workshops. The colours, patterns and motifs used have symbolic meanings, and it is common to embellish religious texts, literary and historical manuscripts, marriage deeds and even commercial treaties with illuminations. The practice is therefore closely tied to the beliefs and cultural practices of communities.
2. The **Rapporteur** **of the Evaluation Body** added that it is important to ensure the widest possible participation of the communities concerned in planning and implementing safeguarding measures. The Body also noted that listing numbers and organizations is insufficient to illustrate the participation of communities in planning and implementing safeguarding measures. This element was recommended for inscription on the Representative List.
3. **The Chairperson declared Decision** [**18.COM 8.b.18**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions/18.COM/8.B.18) **adopted to inscribe Art of illumination** **Təzhib/ Tazhib/ Zarhalkori/ Tezhip/ Naqqoshlik** **on the Representative List.**
4. The delegation of **Türkiye** explained that the Art of illumination is one of the traditional decorative arts that has been practised on manuscripts, calligraphy, texts and miniatures for centuries. The element has many social and cultural functions in the submitting States, as it is part of their cultural identity. The element has historical bonds between past and present, and transmits a sense of cultural community at national, regional and international levels. The delegation expressed gratitude to the submitting States, as it was a privilege to be able to expand cooperation and develop safeguarding efforts.
5. The delegation of **Tajikistan** was extremely proud of the close cooperation with the submitting States on the multinational nomination, Tazhib, and its inscription on the Representative List. This nomination indicates the multilateral efforts and cooperation in the protecting cultural heritage. It thanked the Committee for supporting this inscription.
6. The delegation of the **Islamic Republic of Iran** spoke of the Art of illumination, or Tazhib in Persian, as a unique traditional art that has a rich and vibrant history spanning thousands of years in Iran. Countless precious examples of illuminated sacred texts, important documents, endowment letters, and literary masterpieces have been created in Iran, many of which are now housed in museum archives and private collections. The delegation thanked the Committee, the Evaluating Body and the Secretariat, extending appreciation to the other submitting States for their invaluable contribution.
7. The delegation of **Uzbekistan** remarked that the Art of illumination, called Naqqoshlik in Uzbekistan, has been practised and widely known for centuries in all ancient cities in the country, which traditionally had a very strong school of Naqqoshlik, one of the integral components of its rich cultural and scientific heritage. Today, artists and communities will celebrate this milestone occasion thanks to the inscription of this traditional decorative art. The delegation was grateful to all the stakeholders for their valuable contributions that resulted in this inscription. It also thanked the artists that are doing their best to preserve this art, as well as the National Commission, the Evaluation Body and the Committee for having supported the evaluation.

*[A video of the element was shown.]*

1. The **Rapporteur of the Evaluation Body** presented the next nomination, a multinational file, **Iftar/Eftari/Iftar/Iftor and its socio-cultural traditions** [draft decision 8.b.19] submitted by **Azerbaijan, Islamic Republic of Iran, Türkiye and Uzbekistan.** The element is observed by Muslims at sunset in the month of Ramadan, upon completion of all religious and ceremonial rites. Observed by people of all ages, genders and backgrounds, it marks the daily termination of the hardships of fasting from dawn to sunset. The evening prayer is followed by activities, such as praying ceremonies, music, storytelling, games, preparing and serving traditional and local meals and marriage arrangements. For communities, it often takes the form of gatherings or meals, strengthening family and community ties and promoting charity, solidarity and social exchange.
2. The **Chair of the Evaluation Body** added that nominations should provide a comprehensive description of the social functions and cultural meanings of the element rather than overemphasizing its religious aspects. The Body noted that it is important to ensure the widest possible participation of the communities concerned in planning and implementing safeguarding measures, and in the preparation of multinational nominations. This element was recommended for inscription on the Representative List.
3. **The Chairperson declared Decision** [**18.COM 8.b.19**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions/18.COM/8.B.19) **adopted to inscribe Iftar/Eftari/Iftar/Iftor and its socio-cultural traditions** **on the Representative List.**
4. The delegation of the **Islamic Republic of Iran** explained that Iftar/Eftari/Iftar/Iftor and its socio-cultural traditions expresses the friendship and hospitality of Muslims among all sects of Islam. Iftar time in Ramadan is an opportunity to be together, strengthen social and family relations, and promote peace and empathy among all, regardless of apparent differences. In the custom and tradition of Eftari, feeding the poor, orphans and the needy and raising the spirits of others are the most important parts of the ceremony.
5. The delegation of **Türkiye** expressed gratitude for the inscription of the joint nomination file. In all the submitting States, the element has been uniting practitioners and participants for centuries, regardless of age, gender and social background. It supports solidarity and cooperation, encourages empathy for the poor, and strengthens social ties between family members. UNESCO stands as a symbol of multiculturalism, with its Member States cooperating and working to safeguard their values and cultural heritage.
6. The delegation of **Azerbaijan** thanked the Committee for this decision, as well as the Evaluation Body for the evaluation of this file, congratulating colleagues from Türkiye, Iran and Uzbekistan. Iftar is a symbol of unity and solidarity, which brings people around the world together and is celebrated within a family gathering. In Azerbaijan, the national traditional meals are presented during Iftar, which takes the form of a collective gathering and brings everyone together regardless of their background and cultural belonging. Iftar is a ceremony of diversity.
7. The delegation of **Uzbekistan** explained that Iftar was initially born in Uzbekistan on religious grounds in the seventh to eighth centuries. Throughout the centuries, while transmitted across generations, this tradition laid deep roots in the socio-economic life of every family in the country. Today, it is not solely a religious tradition celebrated during Ramadan month, it has become a crucial factor of unity within society that nurtures best practices and human values, which serve to promote intercultural understanding, dialogue and peace. Inscription is a clear testimony of the irreversible role that Iftar plays in our societies. The delegation thanked the Evaluation Body and the Committee for acknowledging its essence and importance.

*[A video of the element was shown.]*

1. The **Rapporteur of the Evaluation Body** presented the next nomination, a multinational file, **Craftsmanship and performing art of balaban/mey** [draft decision 8.b.20] submitted by **Azerbaijan** and **Türkiye.** Balaban (in Azerbaijan) or Mey (in Türkiye) is a woodwind instrument. The knowledge, skills and techniques of crafting and playing the instrument are typically passed on informally within families through observation and hands-on experience, as well as through apprenticeships. The musical practice is also transmitted formally in universities and high schools, traditional music conservatories, institutions and student music communities. Balaban plays a significant role in the music cultures of the submitting States and is commonly used as a solo or accompanying instrument at folk festivities, weddings and concerts.
2. The **Chair of the Evaluation Body** added thatthe nomination elaborates on jointly implementing past and current safeguarding measures. This element was recommended for inscription on the Representative List.
3. **The Chairperson declared Decision** [**18.COM 8.b.20**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions/18.COM/8.B.20) **adopted to inscribe Craftsmanship and performing art of balaban/mey on the Representative List.**
4. The delegation of **Azerbaijan** thanked the Committee, the Secretariat and the Evaluation Body for the positive recommendation, congratulating the government and people of Azerbaijan and Türkiye, as well as the craftspeople, composers, performers, teachers and students involved in the production, performance, training and promotion of this great wind instrument. Balaban/mey is a woodwind instrument that has been performed by communities in Azerbaijan and Türkiye for centuries. The great Azerbaijani composer, Uzeyir Hajibayov, was the first to have transcribed balaban into notation and introduced it to orchestras in 1913. Since that time, note-based teaching of balaban performance has significantly developed. The balaban performing art is now taught to children in music schools in Azerbaijan, as well as in secondary music schools in Mugham style and many other musical centres. The government, including local authorities, have continuously safeguarded balaban as one of the essential elements of cultural identity.
5. The delegation of **Türkiye** remarked that the Craftsmanship and performing art of balaban/mey has various social and cultural aspects connected with social practices, memory and cultural identity in both Azerbaijan and Türkiye. It thanked the stakeholders and hoped that the inscription will inspire both countries to safeguard their shared common living heritage.

*[A video of the element was shown.]*

1. The **Rapporteur of the Evaluation Body** presented the next nomination, a multinational file, **Craftsmanship of mother of pearl inlay** [draft decision 8.b.21] submitted by **Azerbaijan** and **Türkiye**. The element is the practice of inserting mother-of-pearl pieces into wooden objects such as Koran cases, desks, chests, chairs, mirrors, jewel cases and musical instruments. For craftspeople and their families, the element represents a part of daily life and is a source of identity and pride. It is transmitted through apprenticeships and in universities, public education centres and workshops. Today, craftspeople also share their knowledge and skills through social media and online blogs, forums and workshops, thus strengthening social cohesion and cultural exchange across different countries.
2. The **Chair of the Evaluation Body** added that the nomination was a well-prepared file, paying attention to the sustainable sourcing of raw materials. The element plays a role in personal development, mental relaxation and rehabilitation, while fostering social and cultural interaction between its practitioners. This element was recommended for inscription on the Representative List.
3. The **Chairperson declared Decision** [**18.COM 8.b.21**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions/18.COM/8.B.21) **adopted to inscribe Craftsmanship of mother of pearl inlay** **on the Representative List.**
4. The delegation of **Türkiye** explained that the craftsmanship of mother-of-pearl inlay has been practised and safeguarded for centuries. The aesthetic qualities and function of the mother-of-pearl inlay within communities have been the main driving force for the viability and transmission of the element, representing a part of daily life and bearing a strong cultural function and identity. As noted in the Body’s report, the file preparation process is a good example of teamwork with the Azerbaijani colleagues and demonstrates the strong technical cooperation between two States.
5. The delegation of **Azerbaijan** congratulated Türkiye for the inscription and its cooperation in preparing this multinational file, thanking the Committee and the Evaluation Body. Craftsmanship and mother-of-pearl inlay is represented by communities of the craftspeople and their families involved in safeguarding and transmitting the element from generation to generation in the capital, Baku, as well as in the different regions and cities of Azerbaijan, such as Shirvan, Shaki, Shusha and Nakhchivan. For many Azerbaijanis living abroad, Craftsmanship of mother-of-pearl inlay and decorations represent a part of their cultural identity.

*[A video of the element was shown.]*

1. The **Rapporteur of the Evaluation Body** presented the next nomination, **Rickshaws and rickshaw painting in Dhaka** [draft decision 8.b.23] submitted by **Bangladesh**. Rickshaws are small, three-wheeled passenger vehicles that are pulled by one person. Traditionally these are made by hand by a small group of craftsmen, and decorated with colourful floral patterns, natural imagery, birds and animals, creative depictions of historical events, fables, national heroes, movie stars and text. Decorated rickshaws are emblematic of urban life in Dhaka, resulting in exhibitions and festive events and often featuring in films and other artworks.
2. The **Vice-Chair of the Evaluation Body** noted that the file had previously been referred and notably improved, including with the addition of a good-quality video as well as information about the development of a detailed inventory system. She added that it is important to ensure the widest possible community participation in implementing the safeguarding measures. This element was recommended for inscription on the Representative List.
3. **The Chairperson declared Decision** [**18.COM 8.b.23**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions/18.COM/8.B.23) **adopted to inscribe Rickshaws and rickshaw painting in Dhaka** **on the Representative List.**
4. The delegation of **Bangladesh** thanked the Committee for the inscription of Rickshaws and rickshaw painting in Dhaka, Bangladesh’s fifth inscribed element, thanking the Evaluation Body for its assessment and recommendations. The delegation recalled with appreciation the work of Mr Tim Curtis, former Secretary of the Convention, for his valuable contribution to the Convention. Rickshaw painting in Dhaka is not just an artwork, but a moving canvas. It embodies the country’s social, cultural and political evolution. The artists have been carrying forward this art form for generations. The delegation was delighted that the artwork of the commoners’ vehicle had earned global recognition, dedicating this achievement to the people of Bangladesh, whose love for the artwork inspires the artisans. The government, under the leadership of Hon. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina Wazed, stands ready to safeguard this intangible cultural heritage and accelerate its promotion in partnership with the communities. It congratulated all the States Parties for the inscription of their elements this session, and concluded with a few words in Bangla to congratulate the communities.

*[A video of the element was shown.]*

1. The **Vice-Chair of the Evaluation Body** presented the next nomination, **Nguon, rituals of governance and associated expressions in the Bamoun community** [draft decision 8.b.25] submitted by **Cameroon.** It refers to a series of rituals that take place over a period of three days, between the Mfon (or monarch) and his people. The rituals are aimed at promoting dialogue, harmony and peace. Every two years, ritual chiefs consult the members of the community on the state of the kingdom. Carrying the collected opinions, they enter the palace at night and in secret to talk with the monarch. The monarch subsequently attends a public ‘trial’ on his governance, with ritual chiefs reading out indictments based on the community’s feedback. He may receive fines or even be removed from office. If granted a new mandate, he delivers an acceptance speech and receives the renewal of allegiance. Popular celebrations follow. These rituals are a source of social cohesion and resilience and a means of upholding values, such as accountability, freedom of expression and humility.
2. The **Rapporteur of the Evaluation Body** added thatthe element presents creative ways to build and preserve resilience, solidarity, local economies, environmental sustainability, biological diversity and health, among others. This element is the first nomination by Cameroon, and it addresses social and developmental issues, such as HIV/AIDS and poverty reduction. This element was recommended for inscription on the Representative List.
3. **The Chairperson declared Decision** [**18.COM 8.b.25**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions/18.COM/8.B.25) **adopted to inscribe Nguon, rituals of governance and associated expressions in the Bamoun community** **on the Representative List.**
4. The delegation of **Cameroon**, represented by the **Minister of Arts and Culture,** **H.E. Mr Pierre Ismaël Bidoung Kpwatt,** conveyed his thanks to the Director-General of UNESCO on behalf of H.E. Mr Paul Biya, President of Cameroon, for this exceptional inscription. Indeed, for the very first time in its artistic and cultural history, Cameroon had inscribed its first element, Nguon, rituals of governance and associated expressions in the Bamoun community on the Representative List. It is an act of immeasurable importance, not only for the Bamoun community, represented by its sultan, His Majesty Mouhamed Nabil Nfonrifum Mbombo Njoya, but also for Cameroon. Cameroon is a synthesis of Africa due to its great human, cultural, linguistic, economic and physical diversity. It is a country known for being a haven of stability and a land of human values, such as hospitality, fraternity and harmonious cohabitation. With a population of more than 25 million, Cameroon has over 263 living local languages and two official languages, French and English. The various Cameroonian ethnic groups live in the ten regions of Cameroon, and their commitment to the work of endogenous, integrated and global development strengthens the country. Culture in Cameroon therefore comprises a set of positive, original, constant aspects, cultural universes that underpin the community of ethnic groups and guarantee their survival throughout history, while supporting cultural identity and national unity. In Cameroon, culture is the cement of unity. The country’s first inscription reaffirms the importance of the development of cultural heritage by communities, a vector for promoting cultural identities and shared values, contributing to living together and social cohesion. The inscription further galvanizes communities to preserve the cultural universes that enrich the dialogue of peoples and cultures. The country is already considering nomination files for elements representative of the four cultural areas of Cameroon, such as Ngondo, Fantasia and Tokna Massana, while remaining open to multinational forms. The Minister thanked the UNESCO Office for Central Africa and the National Commission for UNESCO, as well as the community for its commitment to this process, inviting the delegates to a cultural representation to be organized by Cameroon later that evening.
5. The **Vice-Chair of the Evaluation Body** presented the next nomination, **Traditional skills of loincloth weaving** [draft decision 8.b.27] submitted by **Côte d’Ivoire.** The element is characterized by the specific weaving techniques and raw materials used. The fabrics woven by the Gouro, Baoule, Malinke, Senufo, Koulango, Nafana and Abron communities are made from dyed cotton threads of various colours. They are woven in narrow strips on a hand loom designed by the weaver. The strips are then joined together to form a fabric with different patterns. The traditional skills are specific to each ethno-linguistic group and reflect the social and cultural contexts of each community. These woven fabrics are cultural symbols that are generally used for traditional ceremonies, such as weddings, celebrations and funerals. This element was recommended for inscription on the Representative List.
6. The **Rapporteur of the Evaluation Body** added thatthe community actively participated in establishing the safeguarding measures and recommendations were included. The file served as a good example of a widely practiced traditional activity that is compatible with the principles of sustainable development. This element was recommended for inscription on the Representative List.
7. **The Chairperson declared Decision** [**18.COM 8.b.27**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions/18.COM/8.B.27) **adopted to inscribe Traditional skills of loincloth weaving on the Representative List.**
8. The delegation of **Côte d’Ivoire** expressed gratitude for the inscription of Traditional skills of loincloth weaving on the Representative List. After the inscription of ‘Gbofe of Afounkaha, the music of the transverse trumps of the Tagbana community’ in 2008, the ‘Cultural Practices and Expressions linked to the Balafon of the Senufo communities of Mali, Burkina Faso and Côte d’Ivoire’ in 2012 in a multinational nomination, the ‘Zaouli, popular music and dance of the Guro communities of Côte d’Ivoire’ in 2017, Côte d'Ivoire had just inscribed its fourth element. This success is the result of the determination of the Minister of Culture and Francophonie, H.E. Ms Françoise Remarck, to safeguard intangible cultural heritage, as well as the commitment of all stakeholders, especially the communities who work daily to keep these skills alive. The communities expressed their gratitude to the Committee. These centuries-old skills are transmitted from one generation to the next and constitute a social marker of their cultural identity. Aware of the scope of the Committee’s decision, Côte d’Ivoire and the community of bearers undertake to implement the safeguarding measures in the file. The delegation thanked the Evaluation Body for its excellent work.

*[A video of the element was shown.]*

1. The **Chair of the Evaluation Body** presented the next nomination, **Garba of Gujarat** [draft decision 8.b.32] submitted by **India.** The Garbais a ritualistic and devotional dance that is performed on the occasion of the Hindu festival of Navaratri, which is dedicated to the worship of the feminine energy. It takes place around a perforated earthenware pot lit with an oil lamp, or an image of the mother goddess Amba. The practitioners and bearers of Garba are broad and inclusive, from the dancers to the musicians, social groups, craftspeople and religious figures involved in the festivities and preparations. Garba fosters social equality by diluting socio-economic, gender and religious structures. It continues to be inclusive of diverse and marginalized communities, thus strengthening social bonds.
2. The **Vice-Chair of the Evaluation Body** added that the file included an excellent supporting video and demonstrated broad support for the nomination. The Body noted that the element is a means of collective celebration, promoting unity in diversity and fostering social equality by bringing together people of all genders, religions and socio-economic backgrounds. This element was recommended for inscription on the Representative List.
3. **The Chairperson declared Decision** [**18.COM 8.b.32**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions/18.COM/8.B.32) **adopted to inscribe Garba of Gujarat on the Representative List.**
4. The delegation of **India** spoke with great pride and happiness on behalf of the country for the inscription of Garba of Gujarat on the Representative List. This day will be remembered as a day of celebration, not just in Gujarat or India, but in countries in Africa, SIDS, and in the Indian diaspora. The delegation thanked UNESCO, the Ministry of Culture of the Government of India, the local community concerned, and all those who participate in Garba. To experience the Garba dance is to wear its exquisitely handcrafted costumes. The delegates were invited to visit Gujarat during the Navratri festival.

*[A live performance of Garba took place.]*

1. The **Chair of the Evaluation Body** presented the next nomination, **Jamu wellness culture** [draft decision 8.b.33] submitted by **Indonesia.** Jamu is a form of herbal medicine and treatment that has been practised in Indonesia since the eighth century. It is based on the belief of curing hot diseases with medicines of a cold nature, and cold diseases with medicines of a hot nature, with a healthy condition being a balance between hot and cold elements in the body. Jamu aims to increase immunity and maintain health. The practice is transmitted informally, typically within families and among neighbours, although some practitioners are self-taught. Jamu is also taught in universities. It is associated with respect for confidentiality and trust, and its practice is viewed as a means of strengthening social ties.
2. The **Vice-Chair of the Evaluation Body** added that the file showed strong community engagement in the nomination process demonstrated through qualitative and quantitative data. The element’s nomination increases awareness about the connection between intangible cultural heritage and health, particularly following the COVID-19 pandemic. This element was recommended for inscription on the Representative List.
3. **The Chairperson declared Decision** [**18.COM 8.b.33**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions/18.COM/8.B.33) **adopted to inscribe Jamu wellness culture** **on the Representative List.**
4. The delegation of **Indonesia** thanked Botswana for its warm welcome and hospitality, and the Secretariat and the Evaluation Body for the quality of their work. The delegates were invited to a Jamu tasting the following day.
5. The **Minister of Education, Culture, Research and Technology of Indonesia**, **H.E.** **Mr Nadiem Makarim,** expressed his honour to speak at the eighteenth session of the Committee, an important moment in Indonesia’s journey in safeguarding and developing its cultural heritage. Jamu, the Indonesian traditional herbal medicine, has been an inseparable part of Indonesian lives for centuries. Archaeological evidence shows that the origin of Jamu can be traced back as far as the eighth century. As one of its elements of cultural heritage, Jamu represents the deep, meaningful and harmonious relationship between humans and nature. Jamu is made from natural materials, such as seeds, flowers and fruits, that grow in the surroundings. There are various kinds and recipes of Jamu across the country that are handed down across generations. This practice is made possible by Indonesia’s biodiversity, as 75 per cent of the world’s plants, many of which are endemic, grow there. The lasting local knowledge of this biodiversity has been the foundation of its herbal medicine for centuries. The Minister extended gratitude to the Committee for the inscription of Jamu on the Representative List. This designation will strengthen the country’s efforts to protect and develop Jamu as a natural and cultural heritage, and its contribution to global health and wellness.

*[A video of the element was shown.]*

1. The **Chair of the Evaluation Body** presented the next nomination, a multinational file, **Sadeh/Sada celebration** [draft decision 8.b.34] submitted by the **Islamic Republic of Iran** and **Tajikistan.** Sadeh, or Sada, is a celebration held annually on 30 January. In the folk calendar, it marks the day when farmlands are prepared for their next spring plantation and when people celebrate the end of the coldest winter days, with fifty days and fifty nights remaining to spring. The day also marks the traditional start of agricultural work for the new season, with farmers sprinkling fertilizer on their lands and gardeners pruning trees and bushes. The element involves singing, dancing and praying around a fire and offering blessings and dry or fresh fruits. In both countries, the practice, including the preparation of traditional dishes, is transmitted through participation, observation and storytelling. It unites people from different cultural, ethnic and religious backgrounds, providing an opportunity for peaceful interactions around agricultural and food traditions and promoting diversity and the continuation of oral expressions and memory.
2. The **Rapporteur** **of the Evaluation Body** added that it is important to ensure the widest possible participation of the communities concerned in planning and implementing safeguarding measures, and to consider the possible effects of the inscription of the element, including unintended consequences of increased tourism. The Body noted that listing numbers and organizations does not provide sufficient elaboration on the participation of communities in planning and implementing safeguarding measures. This element was recommended for inscription on the Representative List.
3. **The Chairperson declared Decision** [**18.COM 8.b.34**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions/18.COM/8.B.34) **adopted to inscribe Sadeh/Sada celebration on the Representative List.**
4. The delegation of **Tajikistan** expressed gratitude on behalf of the government to the Evaluation Body and the Committee for inscribing the Sadeh/Sada celebration. Sada is one of the ancient festivals of the Iranian peoples. Its essence is the victory of light over darkness, heat over cold, good over evil. People celebrate it by lighting large bonfires. Sada is celebrated every year on the tenth day of the month of Bahman of the solar Hijri calendar, which is equal to 13 or 31 January. The main idea of the Sada holiday is to honour light and warmth, and to start preparations for agriculture and horticulture. The delegation thanked Iran for the close cooperation for this significant achievement.
5. The delegation of the **Islamic Republic of Iran** explained that ancient celebrations in Iran are deeply rooted in sacred beliefs and archetypal symbols. These rituals embody a profound respect for nature and humanity, fostering happiness, peace and unity. During these celebrations, women, children, men and the elderly, regardless of their differences, come together and observe these sacred rituals, and praise the one and only God. The delegation was grateful to the Secretariat, the Chairperson and the Committee for this inscription. It extended appreciation to Tajik colleagues for their invaluable collaboration in the preparation of this nomination file. It was immensely honoured that one of Iran’s ancient festivals was inscribed. This ancient celebration signifies the preparation of Mother Earth for the revival of plants in the coming spring.
6. The **Rapporteur** **of the Evaluation Body** presented the next nomination, **Elechek, Kyrgyz female headwear: traditional knowledge and rituals** [draft decision 8.b.38] submitted by Kyrgyzstan. The headwear consists of a hair cap and a very long piece of white fabric that is wrapped around the head like a turban and adorned with embroidery, ribbons and jewellery. The practice is an integral part of the traditional marriage ceremony in Kyrgyzstan. A rite of passage, the ritual of wrapping the bride’s first elechek takes place at her family’s house before she leaves with the groom. During the ceremony, elders utter blessings to convey the community’s wishes for the bride and her new family, such as good health, fertility and harmony. A married woman may wear the elechek at significant occasions, changing its styles accordingly.
7. The **Chair of the Evaluation Body** noted thatthe element strengthens the local identity of women and empowers them. The file is well prepared, featuring strong community participation in the overall nomination process and the development of the safeguarding plan. This element was recommended for inscription on the Representative List.
8. **The Chairperson declared Decision** [**18.COM 8.b.38**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions/18.COM/8.B.38) **adopted to inscribe Elechek, Kyrgyz female headwear: traditional knowledge and rituals** **on the Representative List.**
9. In the absence of the delegation of **Kyrgyzstan**, a video of the element was shown.
10. The **Rapporteur** **of the Evaluation Body** presented the next nomination, **Traditional craft of Naga motif weaving in Lao communities** [draft decision 8.b.39] submitted by **Lao People’s Democratic Republic**. The Naga is a mythical, serpent-like creature that lives in rivers. Lao people believe that Naga are ancestors that watch over them. To show their respect, they add Naga motifs to different objects, the most common of which are textiles through weaving. Naga motifs are woven by hand using a traditional wooden loom; they are neither embroidered nor printed. The centuries-old practice is transmitted within families informally, and in vocational centres, cultural centres and universities. Textiles with the Naga design are used throughout a person’s life. Many women prepare Naga motifs to wear when they die, believing the powerful image will send them to heaven.
11. The **Chair of the Evaluation Body** added thatthe element’s social and cultural meanings include showing respect to ancestors and providing protection to the people who wear or carry a depiction of Naga. The Body noted the importance of using vocabulary appropriate to the spirit of the Convention. This element was recommended for inscription on the Representative List.
12. **The Chairperson declared Decision** [**18.COM 8.b.39**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions/18.COM/8.B.39) **adopted to inscribe Traditional craft of Naga motif weaving in Lao communities** **on the Representative List.**
13. In the absence of the delegation of **Lao People’s Democratic Republic**, a video of the element was shown.
14. The **Chair of the Evaluation Body** presented the next nomination, **Traditional wooden boatbuilding** **in Carriacou and Petite Martinique** [draft decision 8.b.31] submitted by **Grenada**. It isa centuries-old tradition practised in Carriacou and Petite Martinique. It includes the building of the boats as well as the surrounding traditions and rituals, such as the festivities around launching a new boat. The men, women and children in the boat-building communities each have specific roles and functions during each stage of the process. Once the boat is completed, it is given a traditional blessing and designated godparents. Traditionally these are children under the age of eight, tasked with revealing the boat’s name. Women and girls prepare the traditional smoked food and cake for the launching celebration. While traditionally enacted by men, the practice increasingly involves women who provide technical assistance in the process.
15. The **Vice-Chair of the Evaluation Body** added that the element encourages sustainable development, as wind-powered sails provide a carbon-neutral transportation option, and the wood used does not have negative effects on the marine ecosystem. It is a first nomination for inscription by Grenada. Attention should be paid to the potential risk of over-commercialization of the element, and to ensure that any unintended consequences from tourism are monitored and well managed. This element was recommended for inscription on the Representative List.
16. **The Chairperson declared Decision** [**18.COM 8.b.31**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions/18.COM/8.B.31) **adopted to inscribe Traditional wooden boatbuilding** **in Carriacou and Petite Martinique on the Representative List.**
17. The delegation of **Grenada** thanked the Chairperson on behalf of the people of Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique. In 2015, a documentary called *Vanishing Sail* by Alexis Andrews chronicled the dying art of boatbuilding in Grenada and the Grenadines. It was a heartfelt attempt to capture and record the skill and beauty of crafting these utilitarian vessels for the generations to come, which were necessary to the foundation of life in these tiny islands. The delegation [in his personal capacity as a historian], valued Andrews’ film, but it was the voice of the master boat builder Alwyn Enoe, who chronicled in the film, that captured and inspired him, making him want to be part of this boat-building journey. Windward is a boatbuilding village in Carriacou, and if boatbuilding is gone from here, then everything is gone. This nomination was a plea to not just keep the tradition alive, but to make sure that as much as possible is done to safeguard traditions that form the core of this heritage, practised by Mr Enoe and the other boat builders of Carriacou and Petite Martinique. The hulls and sails of these wooden vessels are captured in the many journeys and stories of these boat builders, of their families, communities and their fathers before them, and of their sons and daughters to come. It is a proud moment for Grenadians to celebrate their first inscription on the Representative List. The inclusion of Traditional wooden boatbuilding on this List is a testament to its significance, not only in Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique, but in the world, for fostering traditions and preserving invaluable knowledge. It is not merely about crafting vessels, but about honouring the skills, wisdom and stories woven into each boat’s construction, and the inheritance of the ancestors. One of the important aspects of intangible cultural heritage is the community of bearers involved in the process. The delegation was happy to represent the boat builders of these two sister isles of Grenada. Their ancestors left them the tradition that was being honoured in this session, with the proud communities continuing to celebrate the heritage of their ancestors and their island identity.
18. The delegation of **Grenada** [second speaker] expressed thanks to the Chairperson, The Evaluation Body and the Committee, as well as to the government and people of Botswana for the warm welcome. Grenada is a tiny island in the Caribbean of just 133 square miles, with a population of only 113,000 people. The sister islands of Carriacou and Petite Martinique, where the art of boatbuilding mainly takes place, is about 13 square miles, with a population of 9,000. As a result, almost every Carria and Petite Martiniquan is involved in boatbuilding and its celebration. That is why this inscription is highly valued, with a pledge to ensure the continued recognition and celebration of this important tradition. In a world of increasing globalization, the urgent need to ensure the continuity and preservation of cultural heritage was recognized, and these important traditions underpin and support local communities. The delegation thanked all the people who helped put this nomination together, including the families, the communities, and the team in the Carriacou office who worked with the communities, interviewing and collecting all the necessary documents. It also thanked the staff at the Ministry of Carriacou and Petit Martinique Affairs, their Minister, Hon. Tevin Andrews, the Division of Cultural Affairs, and Ms Kisha Gellineau, the Secretary-General of the Grenada National Commission for UNESCO. Gratitude was extended to Ms Eva Kuminková, who provided valuable instruction in the reworking of the nomination.

*[A video of the element was shown.]*

*[A video of the element from Mauritania ‘Mahadra, a community system for transmission of traditional knowledge and oral expressions’ was shown]*

1. The **Assistant Director-General** made some announcements about several side events that were scheduled to take place. The ICH NGO Forum and ICHCAP had organized the launch of the book ‘Storytelling, Sharing Experiences from the Field’[[12]](#footnote-12), along with storytelling and sharing experiences from the field. Estonia, Namibia and Eswatini had organized a seminar on ‘Learning with living heritage in and out of school’. There was another book launch, organized by Brazil, Panama, Paraguay and Peru on the twentieth anniversary of the Convention. The UNESCO Chair on Intangible Cultural Heritage and Comparative Law had organized a seminar on ‘Intangible Cultural Heritage and sustainable development in the Anthropocene era’. Saudi Arabia welcomed delegates to join a culinary side event to taste dishes prepared by chefs from Brazil and Saudi Arabia. Finally, Morocco had organized an exhibition of elements of Moroccan hospitality based on values and knowledge of living heritage.
2. The **Chairperson** adjourned the morning session.

*[Wednesday, 6 December 2023, afternoon session]*

**ITEM 8.b OF THE AGENDA [CONT.]**

**EXAMINATION OF NOMINATIONS FOR INSCRIPTION ON THE REPRESENTATIVE LIST OF THE INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE OF HUMANITY**

1. The **Chairperson** welcomed the delegates, and turned to the next file.
2. The **Vice-Chair of the Evaluation Body** presented the next nomination, a multinational file, **Knowledge, craft and skills of handmade glass production** [draft decision 8.b.29] submitted by **Czechia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary** and **Spain**. The element entails shaping and decorating hot and cold glass to produce hollow glass objects, flat glass and crown glass. It is characterized by the high degree of craftsmanship inherent in the work, and by strong team values due to the need to respect the previous steps performed by other glassmakers. Most practitioners work in small or medium-sized glassworks or studios. Each glassworks develops techniques unique to its catalogue and references. The centuries-old practice has also shaped specific terminologies, festive cultures and religious functions that still retain important cultural and social meanings to this day.
3. The **Chair of the Evaluation Body** added thatthe nomination included a good quality video that features the voices of the communities concerned and explains the initiative of creating an international website to promote the element. The Body noted that the file promoted the active role of museums in safeguarding the element. This element was recommended for inscription on the Representative List.
4. **The Chairperson declared Decision** [**18.COM 8.b.29**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions/18.COM/8.B.29) **adopted to inscribe Knowledge, craft and skills of handmade glass production** **on the Representative List.**
5. The delegation of **France** thanked the Committee for inscribing Knowledge, craft and skills of handmade glass production on the Representative List, commending the Evaluation Body for its review. The inscription was the result of European cooperation involving practitioners and museums, testifying to the importance of safeguarding the varied gestures for human creativity. France shared in the joy of the Czech, Finnish, German, Hungarian and French communities who participated in this nomination and who expressed their thanks and appreciation in the video message shown.

*[A video from the communities was shown.]*

1. The **Vice-Chair of the Evaluation Body** presented the next nomination, **The practice of opera singing in Italy** [draft decision 8.b.37] submitted by **Italy.** The practice of opera singing in Italy is a physiologically controlled way of singing that enhances the carrying power of the voice in acoustic spaces such as auditoriums, amphitheatres, arenas and churches. Singers of all genders are identified by vocal range and colour and divided into several registers (tenor, baritone, bass, soprano, mezzo-soprano and alto). The knowledge and skills related to the practice of opera singing are transmitted orally between a maestro and pupil, through vocal exercises and the gradual introduction of different musical repertoires and styles. The practice promotes collective cohesion and socio-cultural memory, and is closely linked with other cultural elements, such as acoustic places and poetry.
2. The **Chair of the Evaluation Body** added thatopera encourages intergenerational dialogue, the continuity of sociocultural memory and collective cohesion within groups of practitioners. The State Party was reminded to pay close attention to the linguistic quality of files submitted in the future. This element was recommended for inscription on the Representative List.
3. **The Chairperson declared Decision** [**18.COM 8.b.37**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions/18.COM/8.B.37) **adopted to inscribe The practice of opera singing in Italy on the Representative List.**
4. The delegation of **Italy** thanked the Chairperson for his hospitality in this beautiful country. Italy congratulated the Assistant Director-General, the Committee, the Evaluation Body, and the Secretariat for their intense work, expressing thanks for this inscription.
5. [In a video address], the **Minister of Culture, H.E. Mr Gennaro Sangiuliano** greeted the delegates. The art of Italian opera singing in Italy constitutes one of the most significant and distinctive intangible cultural heritage elements of its national identity. Undoubtedly, it was a substantial contribution to the culture of all humanity, a pervasive heritage that harmoniously combines tradition and creativity. The Minister was grateful to the institutions, private entities, academic bodies, scholars and enthusiasts for their efforts to ensure that this heritage is inscribed among the intangible cultural heritage of humanity recognized by UNESCO. Its inscription embodies a collaborative effort that bears testimony to the historical significance of this experience, and he thanked UNESCO for this significant and truly important recognition. The practice of opera singing embodies our entire memory and essence, as it represents a moment of spiritual elevation for anyone who has listened to beauty, combining the arts, music and architecture, of which the practice of opera singing in Italy unquestionably deserves to be acknowledged for its beauty.
6. [In a video address], the **Under Secretary of State, H.E. Mr Gianmarco Mazzi**, thanked UNESCO for recognizing the practice of opera as intangible cultural heritage, which is in the hearts of Italians, but also for those who, over time and around the world, have come to love the art of opera singing. A truly boundless humanity, this heritage reveals the richness of our past and its great potential for the future. Universal expressions, such as singing, music, and choreographic and performing arts, are valuable tools for social cohesion, cultural education and creativity.
7. [In a video address], a representative of the community, **Mr Federico Sacchi**, spoke of the vast and varied community of opera singing, thanking the vibrant interplay of performers, composers, educators, researchers, enthusiasts, illustrious opera houses and networks of institutions that gather in the Committee for the Safeguarding of the Art of Opera Singing, which he chairs. The journey towards inscription had been a unique opportunity for the opera singing framework. It allowed each part to acknowledge its significance, despite the different functions and perspectives, with all the voices blending seamlessly like a well-orchestrated choir. Special gratitude went to the UNESCO Office of the Ministry of Culture as well as to all Italian institutions for their precious guidance.
8. Due to the difference in time zones, the **Chairperson** suspended discussions on agenda item 8.b, as many requests had been received to examine certain nominations later in the afternoon. The Committee would continue with the examination of agenda item 8.c.

**ITEM 8.c OF THE AGENDA**

**EXAMINATION OF PROPOSALS TO THE REGISTER OF GOOD SAFEGUARDING PRACTICES**

**Documents:** [*LHE/23/18.COM/8.c*](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-23-18.COM-8.c_EN.docx)

[*4 proposals*](https://ich.unesco.org/en/8c-register-01326)

1. The **Assistant Director-General** recalled that the Committee was to evaluate the extent to which the proposal best reflects the principles and objectives of the Convention. The purpose of this Register is to select effective safeguarding practices to be disseminated and potentially replicated elsewhere. Before starting the examination of the files, the Committee was reminded of the criteria that would guide its decision. The submitting State Party was requested to demonstrate that an element best satisfies criteria P.1 through P.8. The Committee was also reminded that the Evaluation Body did not apply the former criterion P.9, which had been removed following amendments to the Operational Directives at the ninth session of the General Assembly in July 2022, in line with Resolution [9.GA 9](https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions/9.GA/9).
2. The **Chair of the Evaluation Body** presented the first nomination, **Safeguarding foster care heritage in the merciful city of Geel: a community-based care model** [draft decision 8.c.4] submitted by **Belgium**. The Belgian town of Geel is known for its tradition of hosting people with mental disorders in the homes of foster families. Over time, the practice has evolved into a scientifically and medically supported programme with laws and decrees defining the conditions, responsibilities and rights of foster families, guests and the public psychiatric care centre. Despite its resilience, this tradition is challenged by changes in modern society and mental healthcare. A multi-layered safeguarding programme, it highlights the complementarity of diverse health approaches by nurturing a warm-hearted ecosystem where cultural and healthcare practices and medical institutions merge.
3. The **Vice-Chair of the Evaluation Body** noted that the programme involves a well-established practice of hospitality and care in a wide social and cultural context. The safeguarding programme has generated multiple benefits for all actors involved, such as mentally vulnerable people, foster families and the broader community. The programme was recommended for approval on the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices.
4. **The Chairperson declared Decision** [**18.COM 8.c.4**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions/18.COM/8.C.4) **adopted to select the addition of Safeguarding foster care heritage in the merciful city of Geel: a community-based care model for the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices.**
5. The delegation of **Belgium** expressed gratitude for the examination of its proposal, ‘Safeguarding foster care heritage in the merciful city of Geel: a community-based care model’, an extremely inspiring example of a mental health practice that is deeply rooted in history and had transformed into a professionally supported contemporary care model. It is a shining example of how intangible cultural heritage and mental health care can go hand in hand, positively influencing each other. The delegation [in his personal capacity] had the great pleasure of working with the heritage community of Geel in drafting this proposal, experiencing a warm and caring community open to all. The delegation congratulated the community members on their actions, encouraging them to continue their safeguarding actions and connecting heritage and care.

*[A video of the programme was shown.]*

1. The delegation of **Belgium** [second speaker, a community representative] explained that in Geel, people who are mentally vulnerable feel at home because they are part of a foster family and a community. If you live in Geel, you learn to radically accept mentally ill and vulnerable people. They are supported by medical professionals, but most of the foster carers are not doctors or nurses, but simply people who take care of each other. She thanked UNESCO for acknowledging the tradition, its values, and the knowledge of mental health that is cultivated within the community, and for including the community-based care model on the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices. This gives the community the opportunity to internationally exchange ideas, expand its knowledge on community-based healthcare, and reinforce the foster care tradition with other perspectives and new networks. This selection for the Register is the beginning of many fruitful collaborations. The delegates were invited to a side event the following day to talk about the history and current state of psychiatric foster care.
2. The **Vice-Chair of the Evaluation Body** presented the next nomination, **Nyckelharpa network, an innovative dissemination of a music and instrument-building tradition with roots in Sweden** [draft decision 8.c.2] submitted by **Sweden**. The Nyckelharpa is a bowed instrument, originally built and played by farmers and craftspeople in northern Uppland in Sweden. It was the most common instrument in this region, played at dances and in various ceremonies and rituals. In the early twentieth century, interest in the Nyckelharpa waned, but the traditions were maintained by enthusiasts, amateurs and professional builders and musicians. Identification of the need for cohesive organization in the late twentieth century resulted in the establishment of the Nyckelharpa network. The primary objective of the network is to safeguard living heritage through various safeguarding activities. The informal and non-hierarchical model has enabled the spread and use of an almost extinct local instrument.
3. The **Chair of the Evaluation Body** noted that the file was well prepared and includes a safeguarding model that features innovative and multi-pronged methods of safeguarding. It demonstrates the power of a community to revitalize an element. The network is spread across Sweden and in other countries around the world, and focuses on coordinating regional and international efforts to safeguard the Nyckelharpa tradition. This programme was recommended for selection on the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices.
4. **The Chairperson declared Decision** [**18.COM 8.c.2**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions/18.COM/8.C.2) **adopted to select the addition of Nyckelharpa network, an innovative dissemination of a music and instrument-building tradition with roots in Sweden for the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices.**
5. The delegation of **Sweden** thanked the Evaluation Body for its recommendation to inscribe the Nyckelharpa network on the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices. This is the second practice from Sweden inscribed on the Register and speaks to its firm belief that the Register, and its sharing of safeguarding practices, is indeed at the heart of the Convention. The delegation presented the video taken in snowy Tobo in Uppland, Sweden, to hear from the practitioners.

*[A video of the programme was shown.]*

1. The **Vice-Chair of the Evaluation Body** presented the next nomination, **ICH safeguarding practices program for the cultural and ecologic Sea Turtle Festival of Armila** [draft decision 8.c.1] submitted by **Panama.** The Guna people of Armila, Panama, have lived in harmony with their natural environment and local fauna for centuries. This relationship is embodied in the oral traditions. The nominated programme was developed in response to the decreasing transmission of these oral traditions, and to strengthen the artisanal practices and the ritual expressions, dances and music associated with the element. The four-day event coincides with the arrival of the large leatherback turtles. The safeguarding programme centres around the organizations of an educational festival implemented by local authorities and the communities. It is based on the inclusion of educational elements within cultural festivals and the combination of content related to nature, the universe and oral traditions. The model has influenced festivals and festivities throughout Panama and can be adapted to festivals in other countries.
2. The **Chair of the Evaluation Body** noted that the safeguarding measures include inventorying activities, as well as efforts by schools, formal and informal education workshops, research, promotion and transmission. The safeguarding practices are also associated with wildlife protection. This programme was recommended for approval to the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices.
3. **The Chairperson declared Decision** [**18.COM 8.c.1**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions/18.COM/8.C.1) **adopted to select the addition of ICH safeguarding practices program for the cultural and ecologic Sea Turtle Festival of Armila for the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices.**
4. The delegation of **Panama** was pleased by the approval of the programme of the cultural and ecological Armila Sea Turtle Festival, its first inscription on the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices and the first of Indigenous people in Panama.
5. [In a video message], the **Minister of Culture of Panama, H.E. Ms Giselle González Villarrué**, spoke on behalf of the members of the Armila community and the Vice-Minister of Indigenous Affairs to send warm greetings from Panama to the entire community of nations of the Convention, congratulating the Convention on twenty years of growth for living heritage and cultural diversity. She was delighted that the programme had been added to the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices. Panama was committed more than ever to safeguard its rich heritage. This day will remain in Panamanian hearts and memories. This is Panama’s fourth inscription under the Convention. The programme represents a model practice that inspires others. It tells of an oral tradition that unites the destiny of turtles with the life of the Armila community, with music, dance, crafts, molas and an entire organization, from the youngest to the oldest, to take care of the environment and welcome the leatherback sea turtles. The practice allows communities to learn from and receive the new hatchlings and to pay homage to Mu (the sea) and to this living land. This festival inspired the creation of the ‘intangible cultural heritage green seal’. Today, it is held by Armila and every year we will look for festivals that remind us of this best practice model. She thanked the Committee for the trust, and the Guna Yala for this great gift.

*[A video of the programme was shown.]*

1. The delegation of **Panama** thanked the Committee for this inscription and for what it represents for Panama, which it was hoped would be replicated in different regions.
2. The **Vice-Chair of the Evaluation Body** presented the next nomination, **Program for the safeguarding of the Bandos and Parrandas of the Holy Innocents of Caucagua: nuclei of initiation and transmission of wisdoms and community councils** [draft decision 8.c.3] submitted by **Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela**. The programme refers to street celebrations that take place on the nights of 27 and 28 December. This Afro-descendant festivity is characterized by live music and satirical clothing mocking the styles of slave owners. To address the decreasing transmission of the practice, a safeguarding programme was developed by and for the communities aiming to strengthen oral transmission through weekly programming content. The programme has revitalized the festivity of the Holy Innocents and helped safeguard living heritage through training, community research and seminars. Its bottom-up approach emphasizes community and youth participation, intergenerational exchange and collaboration with national institutions.
3. The **Chair of the Evaluation Body** noted that the programme is a reflection on how communities, groups and individuals can have a primary role in safeguarding their own intangible cultural heritage in alignment with the principles of the Convention. It promotes respect for intangible cultural heritage and encourages its safeguarding among new generations. This programme was recommended for selection on the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices.
4. **The Chairperson declared Decision** [**18.COM 8.c.3**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions/18.COM/8.C.3) **adopted to select the Program for the safeguarding of the Bandos and Parrandas of the Holy Innocents of Caucagua: nuclei of initiation and transmission of wisdoms and community councils** **for the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices.**
5. The delegation of the **Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela**spoke on behalf of the Government and of H.E. President Nicolás Maduro to congratulate the Chairperson on his election and to thank Botswana for its hospitality and excellent organization in an exceptional venue to celebrate the twentieth anniversary of the Convention. With deep emotion and gratitude to the Evaluation Body and the Committee, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela was honoured to receive this inscription to the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices. This inscription, the ninth for the Bolivarian Republic Venezuela, is undoubtedly a model for other Latin American countries. It was hoped that they could interpret and present their cultural histories from a decolonial perspective. The delegation was grateful for the support received by national, regional and local authorities, such as the Ministry of People’s Power for Culture, the government of the state of Miranda, the mayor of Acevedo, and of course the community heritage network, who provided all the necessary support, both to the bearer communities and the focal point, to realize this dream.
6. The delegation of the **Bolivarian Republic of** **Venezuela** [second speaker, bearer of the element] Mr José Ángel Ramírez, president of the Casa de los Bandos y Parrandas de los Santos Inocentes de Caucagua, spoke of Venezuela’s many traditions, a hive of living cultures where safeguarding is mandatory from one region to another, and beyond, in the sense of the common cultural space of Latin America and the Caribbean. The community bears the name of the river that surrounds it, the Caucagua, in the state of Miranda. There, African heritage left its mark, as in so many other regions of America, including in the phenomenon of the Bandos and Parrandas de los Santos Inocentes de Caucagua. The name of his people comes from the rebelliousness of the enslaved, transforming its African songs into new manifestations that are expressed in theatre, dance and in the melody of the choirs. The celebrations come from Africa, in dialogue with the Christian day of the Innocent Saints, and have been ongoing for at least two centuries. The experience of this good practice is based on the goal of revitalizing this expression, and the initiation and transmission of knowledge by community councils for the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage. Bearers and the community have assumed the responsibility to transmit and share knowledge to new generations, giving back to the people what we have learned from them.

*[A video of the programme was shown.]*

1. The **Chairperson** congratulated the States Parties for their successful projects, which completed the examination of files for the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices.

**ITEM 8.d OF THE AGENDA**

**EXAMINATION OF REQUESTS FOR INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE**

**Documents:** [*LHE/23/18.COM/8.d*](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-23-18.COM-8.d_EN.docx)

[*1**request*](https://ich.unesco.org/en/8d-international-assistance-01327)

1. The **Chairperson** turned to sub-item 8.d and the examination of requests for International Assistance, with one request to examine, submitted by Zimbabwe. He recalled the nomination file examined to the Urgent Safeguarding List, to which International Assistance was simultaneously requested, under agenda item 8.a, adding that the criteria for International Assistance requests had thus already been presented. It was recalled that it was not necessary to meet every criterion in order for International Assistance to be granted, and that the Committee had to evaluate the extent to which the request met the criteria for International Assistance *as a whole*.
2. The **Chair** **of the Evaluation Body** presented the International Assistance request for the project **‘Awareness raising on the importance of the UNESCO 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage among traditional leadership and local communities in Zimbabwe’** [draft decision 8.d] submitted by **Zimbabwe**. This two-year project aims to raise awareness of intangible cultural heritage among traditional leaders and local communities in Zimbabwe. The project involves translating a summary of the 2003 Convention into local languages and establishing an information centre that will manage online platforms and share content, information and experiences with communities across the country. The project also entails organizing awareness-raising seminars about the Convention and community-based inventorying. Participants will contribute to the transmission, collection, documentation and safeguarding of their intangible cultural heritage. The project is expected to result in the creation of an intangible cultural heritage policy and to increase financial and human resources for safeguarding efforts.
3. The **Vice-Chair of the Evaluation Body** added that the Body encouraged the implementing agency to consider the results of previous International Assistance granted to the requesting State in order to build on their achievements and to benefit from the lessons learnt. The Body reminded the State Party to use Form ICH-04-Report to report on the use of the assistance granted. This request was recommended for approval to grant International Assistance.
4. **The Chairperson declared Decision** [**18.COM 8.d**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions/18.COM/8.D) **adopted to grant International Assistance to the project ‘Awareness raising on the importance of the UNESCO 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage among traditional leadership and local communities in Zimbabwe’ and grant the amount of US$321,339 to the State Party to this end.**
5. The delegation of **Zimbabwe** appreciated and congratulated Botswana for bringing the eighteenth session of the Committee to Southern Africa, as well as for the unparalleled African hospitality experienced here by the UNESCO family. Congratulations also went to the Chairperson for his excellent work in steering this session, and thanks the Secretariat and the Evaluation Body for their sterling work, which had resulted in this award. This is a twenty-four-month project that involves traditional leaders, youth and people with disabilities from five provinces in Zimbabwe to raise awareness about the Convention and the safeguarding of these communities of living heritage. The project’s steering committee used participatory processes and developed action plans to extend the project life and thus ensure the sustainability of the project’s safeguarding activities. This included having the communities translate the Convention into a summarized version in their local languages, and providing sign language interpretation. It will also inform the government’s intangible cultural heritage policymaking. Zimbabwe reassured the Committee of its commitment to the Convention.

**ITEM 8.b OF THE AGENDA [CONT.]**

**EXAMINATION OF NOMINATIONS FOR INSCRIPTION ON THE REPRESENTATIVE LIST OF INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE OF HUMANITY**

1. The **Chairperson** resumed the evaluation of the nomination files under agenda item 8.b.
2. The **Rapporteur of the Evaluation Body** presented the next nomination, **Practices and meanings associated with the preparation and consumption of ceviche, an expression of Peruvian traditional cuisine** [draft decision 8.b.4] submitted by **Peru.** Ceviche is a traditional dish prepared with raw fish marinated in lemon, seasoned with chili pepper and salt and accompanied with locally grown produce. The dish is consumed both on a daily basis and during festivities. It is associated with moments of celebration and social gathering, as well as with rituals. Its preparation and consumption entail specific practices, knowledge and meanings at each stage, from fishing to cultivating the ingredients and preparing the dish. Bearers see a direct correlation between the quality and flavour of the dish and local and sustainable produce. Therefore, they have developed community measures for the protection and recovery of traditional ingredients.
3. The **Vice-Chair of the Evaluation Body** noted that the nomination included a good quality video that provides a detailed visual presentation of the cultural practices associated with the element. The file featured strong participation of the communities concerned and places the element within its social and cultural context. This element was recommended for inscription on the Representative List.
4. **The Chairperson declared Decision** [**18.COM 8.b.4**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions/18.COM/8.B.4) **adopted to inscribe Practices and meanings associated with the preparation and consumption of ceviche, an expression of Peruvian traditional cuisine on the Representative List.**
5. The delegation of **Peru** spoke on behalf of thePeruvian government to convey its deep sense of gratitude, joy and immense pride. This inscription on the Representative List is an immense reason for celebration and unity for the people of Peru, a country that is characterized by its great cultural diversity. Ceviche is a cultural expression present in the homes of the coast, the Andes and the Amazon. Ready to celebrate both important and everyday events, each dish is prepared with love, ancestral wisdom, respect for nature and, above all, dedication. The practices associated with the preparation and consumption of ceviche constitute a deeply rooted cultural food expression in Peru, which recognizes it as much more than a mere combination of ingredients: it is an expression of identity, a legacy that has been passed down from generation to generation, and that represents the diversity of the country with its regional variations, as well as the role of ingredients that come from and require the sustainable management of all ecological levels. The file involved the bearer communities of Peru, that is, the families of artisanal fishermen, local agricultural producers, cooks of traditional spaces of preparation, sellers of this delicious dish, and consumers across the country. This file thus represents a collaborative and intersectoral project, as well as a commitment to sustainable development, as it identified risk factors that served to formulate the national safeguarding plan. In addition to the commitment to the cultural rights of the bearers, this plan proposes concrete actions to protect the different ecosystems of the rivers, seas and lakes that preserve this cultural manifestation from climate change. This inscription will strengthen the Convention, as it will make visible the importance of the management of intangible cultural heritage based on the sustainable management of natural resources. The important value chain around ceviche will also highlight the importance of native crops, whose management has millenary origins in Peru and which serves as for a source of food sovereignty and security, as well as of the economic sustainability of its bearers. The delegation thanked the Evaluation Body for the recognition and congratulations received in the preparation of this file. It expressed its commitment to continue supporting the Latin American and Caribbean region, and CRESPIAL, which Peru hosts in Cuzco, to promote the safeguarding of our cultural elements in line with the recommendations expressed in the Lima Declaration on the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of the Convention.

*[A video message of the bearer community was shown.]*

1. The **Chair of the Evaluation Body** presented the next nomination, **Ceramic arts in Uzbekistan** [draft decision 8.b.13] submitted by **Uzbekistan**. Ceramic art is one of the oldest forms of applied art in Uzbekistan. The practice is used to create large household items, both glazed and unglazed, for the everyday life of rural populations. Objects include large containers for storing food and water, tandoor ovens, jugs and toys. Traditionally, the knowledge related to creating ceramic art was transmitted informally within families, from father to son and from grandfather to grandson. Today, potters transmit this knowledge to youth from the community and to their daughters and spouses. The practice is also transmitted through community art circles, universities, colleges and art schools, as well as at festivals, craft fairs and exhibitions. The production and sale of ceramics are also sources of livelihood for the communities concerned.
2. The **Vice-Chair of the Evaluation Body** added that it is important, when submitting nomination files in the future, to provide more detailed explanations on the social functions and cultural meanings of the element. It is also important to ensure the widest possible participation of the communities concerned in planning and implementing safeguarding measures. This element was recommended for inscription on the Representative List.
3. **The Chairperson declared Decision** [**18.COM 8.b.13**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions/18.COM/8.B.13) **adopted to inscribe Ceramic arts in Uzbekistan** **on the Representative List.**
4. The delegation of **Uzbekistan**, the first **Deputy Minister of Culture, H.E. Mr Avazkhon Tadjikhanov,** expressed his appreciation to the Secretary, the Evaluation Body and the Committee for presenting another historic occasion of immense pride for Uzbekistan, its people, and especially the bearers of the skills of making traditional ceramics. Ceramic art of Uzbekistan has a thousand-year history. Throughout millennia, this form of art has been enriched and transmitted from one generation to the next. This art has mainly been developed through families who devote their entire lives to ceramic art. The inclusion of the elements of the Uzbek pottery school on the Representative List shows the importance of protecting the heritage of the Uzbek people. Historically, there have been different ceramic art schools that competed with but also complemented each other. Ceramic art has become one of the arts promoting the unique cultural heritage of Uzbekistan, and it will also have a positive effect on increasing public interest and the importance and prestige of the pottery schools. At the same time, the practice increases the sense of respect for the masters, whose knowledge has been passed through the pottery schools from generation to generation.
5. The delegation of **Uzbekistan** was honoured to introduce an extraordinary artist of ceramic arts from Uzbekistan, Mr Alisher Nazirov, a sixth-generation artist from the Tashkent School of Ceramics.
6. **Mr Alisher Nazirov** spoke of his honour to participate in this most important day. As a sixth-generation potter, he had waited a long time for this event. Ceramic art has existed for centuries, but the last ten years had seen a huge revival. His grandfather, a fourth-generation potter, had published a book called *Artistic Ceramics of Uzbekistan,* in which he explained ceramic art. The book was published thanks to the support of the UNESCO Office in Tashkent. The artist added that, of course, we have to improve our skills to show the future generations. Nowadays, there are thousands of potters working in the regions. In an ancient area, called Rishton, there are more than 100 workshops and over 2,000 potters working there. They are all happy because this inscription is the highest level of status bestowed to Uzbek ceramic art, which is great to convey to the next generation.

*[A video of the element was shown.]*

1. The **Rapporteur of the Evaluation Body** presented the next nomination, **Ch’utillos, the Festival of San Bartolomé and San Ignacio de Loyola, the meeting of cultures in Potosí** [draft decision 8.b.24] submitted by the **Plurinational State of** **Bolivia**. As an integral part of the local cultural identity, the festival is characterized by gastronomic fairs, dance performances and a procession to the sanctuary located in the Mullu Punku gorge, a natural site with rock formations. In the city, parishioners and musical groups take part in the Autochthonous and Folkloric Dancing Parade of Ch’utillos and are joined by rural communities wearing traditional clothing. The festival is part of the cultural heritage of the indigenous Q’ara Q’aras nation, marking the beginning of the preparation of the land and a new agricultural cycle, with offerings to *Pachamama*, or Mother Earth.
2. The **Vice-Chair of the Evaluation Body** noted that the element facilitates the active participation of people of all socioeconomic backgrounds, thus serving as a place for gathering, integration and interculturality. The element has been extensively inventoried in its various expressions. It was recommended for inscription on the Representative List.
3. **The Chairperson declared Decision** [**18.COM 8.b.24**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions/18.COM/8.B.24) **adopted to inscribe Ch’utillos, the Festival of San Bartolomé and San Ignacio de Loyola, the meeting of cultures in Potosí** **on the Representative List.**
4. Through a live transmission, **the Minister of Cultures, Decolonization and Depatriarchalization of the Plurinational State of Bolivia, H.E. Ms Sabina Orellana Cruz**, explained that Ch’utillos is a festival of profound religious syncretism between the Catholic faith and the religiosity of the native peoples. The central festivity takes place on the twenty-fourth of August, and attracts the citizens of Potosí, Bolivia and other countries that participate in the ritual practices. A great folkloric entrance integrates all participants, with dances to the sound of musical rhythms. Today, the festival has become a cultural activity that integrates the population and strengthens its identity, giving shelter to a rich production of colourful embroidered textiles and to an exquisite gastronomy. The Minister mentioned the importance that this festival has acquired for Potosí and Bolivia, and expressed her appreciation to the Committee for the inscription of the element, on behalf of the people of Bolivia and Potosí, of H.E. President Luis Alberto Arce Catacora, and of H.E. Vice-President David Choquehuanca Céspedes.

*[A video of the element was shown.]*

1. The **Vice-Chair of the Evaluation Body** presented the next nomination, **Malhun, a popular poetic and musical art** [draft decision 8.b.45] submitted by **Morocco.** Malhun is a popular form of poetic expression in Morocco. The verses are sung in dialectical Arabic and sometimes Hebrew. They are accompanied by music played on traditional instruments, notably the lute, the violin, the rebab and small drums. Popular topics include love, the joys of life, the beauty of people and nature, religious prayer and pleas, pleasure and merrymaking, gastronomy, imaginary journeys, political events and social issues. The practice is transmitted informally, through apprenticeships with vocalists, musicians, transcribers, lyricists and the craftspeople who make the traditional instruments and costumes. It is also transmitted through organizations and music conservatories, as well as through publications containing traditional texts. As a collective art form, it promotes social cohesion and creativity while serving as a historical record of social issues throughout the centuries.
2. The **Rapporteur** **of the Evaluation Body** added that the community representatives had emphasized their willingness to work with public institutions to ensure the safeguarding of Malhun. The Body advised that establishing periodicity for updating inventories may help with understanding the viability of element over time. This element was recommended for inscription on the Representative List.
3. **The Chairperson declared Decision** [**18.COM 8.b.45**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions/18.COM/8.B.45) **adopted to inscribe Malhun, a popular poetic and musical art** **on the Representative List.**
4. The delegation of **Morocco** thanked the Evaluation Body and the Committee, congratulating all the States Parties and communities with inscribed elements during this session.
5. The **Secretary-General of the Ministry of Culture of Morocco** [second speaker] was delighted to represent Morocco and its ancient culture, thanking UNESCO for its recognition of this culture as intangible cultural heritage of humanity, in Botswana, among African friends, and to share common joy at seeing its wealth of cultural heritage take its rightful place in the world. Morocco was convinced, under the high orientation of His Majesty King Mohamed VI, that heritage, in its dual tangible and intangible aspects is our primary wealth, the fruit of the creative work of dozens of past generations and of a slow and patient transmission, reflecting the resilience of culture in the face of crises and historical catastrophes. The art of Malhun symbolizes the strength of culture when it is both popular and scholarly, profoundly democratic and aiming for excellence. Malhun has been practised in Morocco for centuries by all social classes and in almost all cities of the kingdom. The great sung texts of Malhun were composed by sultans, writers, poets, religious figures, but also by artisans and everyday workers, by Muslims and Jews, by rural and even urban people. This shows how Malhun, written in the Arabic language and spoken daily, is the living memory of Morocco and of the African continent. The inscription of the art of Malhun follows a vast and rigorous work of expertise, collection and data processing carried out by musicians, scholars, activists, associations, experts, both Moroccan and foreign. Malhun draws its inspirations, texts and music from diverse backgrounds. It integrates Arab-Andalusian musical art as well as traditional Amazigh musical art from the Atlas and the African Sahel. The texts are inspired by both written Arabic poetic culture and daily improvisation. The Secretary-General remarked on the successful and fruitful cooperation between UNESCO and Morocco, which is both a model and an invitation. It is a long-term model of work aimed at identifying, promoting and protecting African cultural wealth that is sometimes in danger of disappearing and even a victim of marginalization and neglect. It is also an invitation to African youth, to the intellectual forces of the continent, to students, researchers and even simple enthusiasts, to devote part of their time and energy to unearthing, disseminating and transmitting this heritage. She concluded with the recommendation from His Majesty King Mohamed VI, who addressed Moroccans, but which could as easily address all African youth: ‘Culture today constitutes a fundamental lever for creation, innovation, spiritual renewal and the affirmation of the national personality. It is the catalyst that energizes our society, a society as proud of its plural tributaries and its centuries-old civilization as it is attached to its diversity and its openness to the world.’ A Malhun anthology was offered to UNESCO by the Kingdom of Morocco.

*[A live performance of Malhun followed the presentation.]*

1. The **Chair of the Evaluation Body** presented the next nomination, a multinational file, **Midwifery: knowledge, skills and practices** [draft decision 8.b.26] submitted by **Colombia, Cyprus, Germany, Kyrgyzstan, Luxembourg, Nigeria, Slovenia** and **Togo.** Midwives are companions and supporters of pregnant women and their families before, during and after birth. Throughout the course of a pregnancy, midwives make home visits, provide guidance and care, and facilitate birth preparation. They contribute to the protection of fundamental human rights by transmitting their knowledge to mothers and families. Midwifery is based on evidence-based practices and traditional knowledge, skills and techniques. It varies according to the social, cultural and natural contexts of different communities and countries, and sometimes includes knowledge of traditional medicine and of medicinal plants and herbs. Midwifery also entails specific cultural practices, vocabulary, celebrations and rituals.
2. The **Rapporteur** **of the Evaluation Body** added that the communities, groups and individuals in all the submitting States were actively involved throughout the process of preparing the nomination file, providing a good example for multinational files, involving countries from across five of the six Electoral Groups. The well-prepared file and the video highlight gender equality, traditional knowledge, healthcare for women, and the contribution of living heritage to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. This element was recommended for inscription on the Representative List.
3. The **Chairperson** commented on the uniqueness of the file, and an example for the future as multinational initiative. **The Chairperson declared Decision** [**18.COM 8.b.26**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions/18.COM/8.B.26) **adopted to inscribe Midwifery: knowledge, skills and practices** **on the Representative List.**
4. The delegation of **Germany** congratulatedmidwives all around the world, as this was their day and celebration. It was with enormous pleasure and passion that the submitting States thanked the Committee for the inscription of Midwifery: knowledge, skills and practices on the Representative List. Birth is one of the key moments in every human life worldwide. Midwives use intuition, evidence-based research, and empirical and traditional knowledge to assist mothers, newborns and their families, contributing immensely to gender equality and the protection of human rights. Many people can thank a midwife for their start in this world, and many mothers and families can thank them for the transition to a new phase of their life. The delegation thanked and congratulated all those who put their hearts and time into this nomination. Eight countries on four continents had joined forces for several years to remind people of how essential midwifery is to the intangible cultural heritage of humanity. This success is a living example of international cooperation that crosses borders. Midwives, their NGOs, as well as cultural and health experts from Colombia, Cyprus, Kyrgyzstan, Luxembourg, Nigeria, Slovenia, Togo and Germany formed a single and great team. Delegates were invited to an event on midwifery practices organized by Colombia the following day.
5. **Ms Lizeth Quiñones** [second speaker], a traditional midwife and president of the National Federation of Traditional Midwives of Colombia, thanked Botswana and UNESCO for organizing the Committee session. This event will be remembered for recognizing midwives from around the world who share the values, traditions, practices and knowledge that unite them as holders of life and health despite the historical and cultural contexts that differentiate them. The midwives of the eight countries had taken this initial step to position midwifery knowledge as an immense cultural legacy, with the belief that midwifery is a necessary practice to ensure the well-being of the diversities of human communities. In the midst of social conflict, midwives turn to life and its celebration in all its dimensions. As guardians of ancient life and wisdom, they call for ancestral knowledge practices, linked to the intangible cultural heritage of midwifery, to be used as tools to mitigate the effects of climate change. This is derived from the simple way we grow plants and conserve the environment. From our wise elders, midwives have received the ability to listen and to take care of bodies, to help healing, and to guarantee the consolidation of family, community and spiritual networks so that newborns can find the full path of their vital development. Midwives are guardians of an ancestral knowledge built from a practice based on respect, trust and cooperation and that unites scientific and traditional knowledge, both of which are equally important. Through this inscription, midwives celebrate their responsibility to empower women as leaders in all social spheres, starting from their bodies and expanding towards their families. Safeguarding a system of knowledge of women is part of the commitment to gender equity and the elimination of all forms of violence against women. This nomination highlights the ability of intangible cultural heritage to build bridges between the different countries of the world. As a Colombian midwife from Buenaventura, she thanked the colleagues from Cyprus, Germany, Kyrgyzstan, Luxembourg, Nigeria, Slovenia and Togo for their promotion and protection of life, which will continue as we formalize the safeguarding of midwifery. Midwifery is closely linked to its knowledge of medicinal plants, not only in the treatment of health or disease, but also for food sovereignty. To the speaker, being a midwife means being immersed in the knowledge, wisdom and beliefs that gave the speaker her identity as a black woman and provided her with the life skills and tools to empower women’s rights.

*[A video of the element was shown.]*

1. The **Chairperson** announced that all the nomination files under agenda items 8.a, 8b. 8c and 8.d. were now complete. He was delighted to see the vibrancy of the various types of living heritage on display. The Chairperson then thanked all the bearers and communities for celebrating with the Committee.

**ITEM 8 OF THE AGENDA [CONT.]**

**REPORT OF THE EVALUATION BODY ON ITS WORK IN 2023**

1. The **Chairperson** returned to thegeneral debate on the Report of the Evaluation Body under agenda item 8, opening the floor to Committee members.
2. The delegation of **Slovakia** appreciated the work done by the Evaluation Body with the invaluable support of the Secretariat. It acknowledged the increasing workload with the development of the dialogue process, as well as with the changes introduced in the forthcoming cycle. The delegation was grateful to those countries that had withdrawn their files in order to improve their quality, which is a good practice. Moreover, files that had been withdrawn in the past and resubmitted in this cycle had been recommended for inscription. It also welcomed the increasing role of the dialogue process, used in twelve files in this cycle, which sought clarifications on more than one criterion. In this regard, it would therefore appreciate that the questions from the Evaluation Body and the answers from the submitting States be published at the same time as the rest of the documents, and subsequently attached to the respective nomination files after inscription, as they form an integral part of the whole. In this way, the Committee could fully undertake its decision-making role. The delegation asked the Body about the impact this increased use of the dialogue process had on its working methods and calendar, and whether it was a sustainable model in terms of time and capacity for the future. It was also pleased that all nomination files had received positive evaluations, while noting the Body’s observation of the persistent cross-cutting issues presented in the report. It asked the Body how this number of positive recommendations could influence their direction and views in the future implementation of the listing mechanisms of the Convention.
3. The delegation of **Sweden** thanked the Evaluation Body for its thorough report and evaluations, a key factor in the success of the Convention. It supported the points raised by Slovakia and raised two additional points. First, it joined the Chair of the Body in stressing the importance of clearly describing the role of communities, groups and individuals and the safeguarding measures when preparing files. Second, the current cycle has been identified as a ‘family cycle’ where the role of women was highlighted. While it understood the importance of families and saw their settings as spaces where intangible cultural heritage can be safeguarded and transmitted, it underlined that women play many roles in society, which are not exclusively within family settings. It was thus important for States Parties to provide sufficient information on gender roles to show that the practices do not contain any discriminatory elements with regard to gender.
4. The delegation of **Switzerland** thanked the Body for the detailed presentation of the work carried out, welcoming the commitment, time and expertise devoted to the examination of the fifty-nine files in this cycle. The results are tangible and clear, with positive evaluations for all the nominations, a remarkable and gratifying achievement. The delegation congratulated all the communities who worked towards the inscription of their elements. However, it wished to better understand the factors that made it possible to achieve this overall success and what differentiated this cycle from previous ones, while noting the strengthened use of the dialogue process as a notable step forward and a reason for these positive recommendations. *Does the Evaluation Body or the Secretariat have an explanation or analysis to explain this overall improvement in the quality of the nomination files?* *What lessons can be learned from this particular cycle in terms of working methods and the evaluation of nominations?* Furthermore, as emphasized by the Body, it is important to pay attention to the comments concerning the monitoring of elements after inscription. This involves encouraging and supporting communities to implement appropriate measures. Indeed, the inscriptions constitute an important step to improve safeguarding of the elements, strengthen the participation of communities, and increase the visibility of intangible cultural heritage in general.
5. The delegation of **Botswana** commended the Evaluation Body for its excellent work, applauding the submitting States for the high quality of their nominations, as demonstrated by the files meeting all the inscription criteria. It also recognized the excellent work done in revising the nomination forms, which enabled States to submit quality files. The importance of the dialogue process was also highlighted, and the States Parties and the Evaluation Body were commended for using this process. However, the delegation was concerned about the declining number of applications for International Assistance, with only one submission for assistance greater than US$100,000. It therefore encouraged communities to consider using the resources available to safeguard their living heritage.
6. The delegation of **Paraguay** thanked the Evaluation Body for the detailed report, congratulating its members for their excellent and exhaustive work. It also celebrated the full implementation of the dialogue process, which was used to recommend the inscription of all the files that had benefited from this process. The delegation welcomed the overall improvement in the quality of the nomination files and will continue to support capacity-building initiatives in this regard in order to achieve the desired balance in the Lists. It congratulated the countries that had submitted nomination files that were considered as good examples, noting that two of the four files recognized as good practices represent GRULAC countries: Panama and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. The delegation congratulated States that had submitted nominations for the first time.
7. The delegation of **Czechia** congratulated all the States whose elements had been inscribed, noting the diverse range of interesting elements presented, just like the communities behind them. It commended in particular the countries whose first elements had been inscribed, especially those whose files had been previously referred and who had resubmitted this cycle, noting the impressive improvements that better understand the principles of the Convention, while improving internal dialogue in those countries. The referral process used in the past was useful and fruitful in this cycle. Although the delegation did not miss the unfavourable recommendations, the constructive dialogue that results from issues seen in previous nomination cycles was missed. The Committee’s role this year appears to have been reduced to an affirmation Committee. In the past, there were many opposing or diverse opinions among the Committee’s members, which sparked lively discussions. This year, none of the members wished to raise their voice, either in a negative or a positive sense, to comment on concrete aspects of the presented nomination files, probably not to spoil or to postpone the joy of the communities. Although there were some issues raised in this cycle as a whole, which would have been interesting to discuss, the fact that the Committee decided to inscribe all the elements did not imply that it should resign from learning or moving forward, and from improving safeguarding strategies or approaches to community engagement. The recommendations and the reports of the Evaluation Body should still be examined very carefully to avoid mistakes or deficiencies in the future. The delegation considered this to be a transitional cycle, as the next cycle will use the new nomination files, and the experience could be completely different from previous cycles. No doubt it will facilitate the procedure, but it can also bring up new challenges. The delegation congratulated and thanked the Body for its hard work and interesting report, and the Secretariat for its relentless support of the whole nomination process. It was great to see so many elements from Africa being inscribed this year.
8. The delegation of **Brazil** congratulated the Evaluation Body for the work accomplished, and the Secretariat for its support to this mission. It emphasized the importance of the dialogue process undertaken between the Body and the submitting States in order to establish a consensus on the elements presented and to formulate recommendations. The delegation also noted important progress in seeking an adequate balance between the responsibilities of the Committee and the Body, an important measure to preserve the intergovernmental character of the Committee’s decisions. Of all the themes presented in the reports, the delegation noted three points on which it sought additional information. *First, what is the concept of ‘family’ used in the evaluation processes?* The reason for the question was due to the ultra-conservative biases that have gained traction globally so as to ensure that inscription of elements do not present any biases against women and LGBT communities. Second, *have any particular issues arisen with regard to the relationship between intangible cultural heritage, sustainable development and the interests of large economic groups?* The delegation believed that this constitutes one of the main challenges of the Convention, that is, to prevent the economic exploitation of cultural heritage by those who are not its holders and, above all, respect the sovereignty of peoples and communities when choosing development models. The third point is linked to the supernatural aspects cited in the report. The delegation believed it is important to follow evolving discussions about the relationships between humans, non-humans and ‘more-than-humans’ in multi-species societies, as well as the evolution of legal frameworks that recognize the rights of natural beings. Lastly, it supported the legitimate assessment of the technical and textual quality of the files, but expressed concern about requests which, although technically well-founded, risk inscribing cultural practices on the Convention Lists that violate human rights within the dimension of gender, race and the workplace. In this regard, Brazil reaffirmed that cultural rights must always be included within the broader framework of human rights.
9. The delegation of **Mauritania** thanked the Evaluation Body for its detailed and rigorous report and for its remarkable work, which allowed all to see the positive impact made with this new positive approach. It also congratulated the States Parties for the quality of the files submitted, which obviously facilitated the work of the Body. The delegation thanked the Committee and the Body for the support afforded to Mauritania and for its historic inscription of Mahadra on the Representative List. The delegation was also grateful for the substantial international assistance granted from the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund. It was satisfied with the dialogue process established, which had obviously improved the context of the application and nomination processes. Lastly, it wished to see under-represented States benefit from appropriate measures that would allow them to be better integrated, and effectively ensure the safeguarding of their intangible living heritage.
10. The delegation of **Viet Nam** appreciated the Body’s efforts and the comprehensive report, as well as the assistance of the Secretariat. It was also optimistic about the future success of the new Evaluation Body. In the celebratory spirit of the last two days, it was gratifying to note that all fifty-six submissions evaluated by the Committee, subsequent to the Evaluation Body’s assessment, had been inscribed. The successful execution of the dialogue process was acknowledged and appreciated, as it significantly contributed to enhancing the overall efficiency of the evaluation process, culminating in more favourable outcomes. Viet Nam welcomed and supported the continuation of the ‘green cycle’, giving attention to the symbiotic relationship between culture and nature. It also acknowledged the rights and empowerment of women and girls, and the growing role of communities and youth in safeguarding intangible cultural heritage.
11. The delegation of **Morocco** congratulated the Evaluation Body for its exceptional work, which has evolved extremely positively. That is why, as other Committee members had noted, there were no referrals in this cycle. These efforts must be commended, as should all the work done by everyone in a constructive spirit. Indeed, the positive exchanges between the States, the members of the Committee and the Evaluation Body have borne fruit and will no doubt continue in this vein. The delegation also commended the support, the advice and the dialogue processes opened up by the Evaluation Body. This is the beauty of Convention in that it brings joy to the hearts of the communities, which are at the heart of the Convention. Seeing the joy of the communities with inscribed elements convincingly assures us that we are on the right track. This spirit is particular to this Convention, which is a different approach from the 1972 Convention. In this regard, the delegation saluted the Evaluation Body, which has understood this difference very well and whose approach is more open and interactive. These are aspects that go straight to the hearts of every person. It also welcomed the teamwork by the Secretariat. Today, this work has led to a beautiful Convention that must be defended, thanks to all those whose work brings joy to people’s hearts.
12. The **Chairperson** thanked the Committee for their questions, inviting the Evaluation Body to respond, followed by the Assistant Director-General.
13. The **Chair of the** **Evaluation Body** thanked the Committee for its questions, recognizing and appreciating the positive comments as well as the concerns. On the question of ‘family cycle’ posed by Brazil, he recalled the presentation of the overall report, in which he made a reference to an indexing exercise that had been done by the Secretariat around the family concept. That in itself did not influence the evaluation of the files; it was an indexing done post-evaluation. Nevertheless, in his earlier remarks, the idea of family is taken in all its meanings, in all the ways that family can be interpreted. In understanding the context, the Chair made reference to the experience of the members of the Evaluation Body in this particular cycle, that is, it is comprised of persons who have been with the Convention for many years and have been tracking the discussions and advocacy that has been put forward by members of the Committee in successive cycles. These issues were thus part of the thought processes, the deliberations and the debate that occurred within and among members of the Evaluation Body. On the second issue on gender raised by Sweden, the Body members were keen to make assessments on whether or not any particular gender was marginalized, or showed any opportunities for abuse, and so on. These debates did take place and, subsequently, there were no instances where this was determined to be the case. However, the Body embraced the statement that in the future, it should be specifically stated that no part of the element discriminates or marginalizes any gender. This should be a part of the practice and the recommendation is well received. On the issue of the supernatural, and its reference in the overall report, the Body was aware and appreciated that supernatural concepts are part of many of the intangible cultural heritage elements presented in this cycle and in the past. It was also aware that, because of customary practices that may exist within particular communities, certain aspects might not necessarily be shared in the file. However, when it is referenced, it is within the purview of the Body to see it as part of the element submitted for inscription. The Body tried to use that understanding to factor in how the element is understood and why it appears in the overall report. If it appears, it would thus be good for the Body to be able to see the connection as it relates to the element. Those were the parameters under which the Body debated and understood the supernatural issue.
14. The **Chair of the** **Evaluation Body** turned to the question of intangible cultural heritage, livelihoods and big business, noting the Body’s comments on over-commercialization. In the past, many nominations had this issue by which an element appeared to be, or could be, at risk of being over-commercialized. Thus, when evaluating the files, the Body looked to see whether there was a hidden agenda, for instance, that perhaps some business entity might be behind the sponsorship of an element. But the Body can only examine the file based on the information provided. It tries to balance the assessment by looking at how well communities appear in the file or in the presentation of the nomination itself. For example, a submitted video could provide a visual or semblance of over-commercialization, in which case, the Body would look at the nomination process to determine: *What does the nomination process say about the involvement of communities?* *What does criteria R.3 or U.3 say about the communities’ involvement in the development and implementation of the safeguarding measures or plans?* The Body has to evaluate the information that is available to it. The Chair alluded to Chapter VI of the Operational Directives of the Convention, which refers to intangible cultural heritage and its important relationship to livelihoods. Over the past few years, this aspect has appeared in the overall report. Indeed, a guidance note was being developed on this very issue. At the same time, the Body was aware of the importance of not prejudicing or putting at risk communities or elements in terms of this particular risk. Hence the general statements within individual files about mitigating against the risk of over-commercialization. It is assumed that every submitting State understands, as signatories to the Convention, that the primary function of submission is the safeguarding the element itself. These are some of the upfront assumptions.
15. The **Chair of the Evaluation Body** then turned to the question about the overwhelming positive outcomes of the files. As mentioned by Czechia, he himself, missed the debates of the Committee. Indeed, a very paradoxical situation was unfolding in the Convention. Ever since the ratification and development of the Convention, it has advanced from one development to another, from Subsidiary Body to Evaluation Body, to all the working groups and so on, with the aim of increasing the number of inscriptions to the various Lists and Register. Every year, this is an issue. However, in this particular year, the Body called it a transition year because nobody knows what will happen in subsequent years. Describing the conditions that unfolded this year, the Body’s assessment is that States had dealt well with R.1 in the overwhelming majority of files. There were only a couple of instances requiring the Secretariat’s input, such as issues of title changes and so on. With R.2, no State in this cycle was prejudiced based on this criterion, not least because the General Assembly had already approved changes for the new cycle and it would be of no benefit to States to hold them back on the issue of R.2, even though the Evaluation Body did take that approach in the last cycle. In a few instances, the Body was forced to comment on R.2 because of its connection to R.1 in terms of the visibility of the element itself. This year, however, the nuanced change was that no file was prejudiced on the basis of R.2. In the case of R.5 and U.5, the Body also noted that the overwhelming majority of States had understood the concept of an inventory. There were only one or two dialogue questions about inventories, and one comment was about periodicity. As such, there was an overall improvement of the files presented in this regard.
16. The **Chair of the Evaluation Body** furtherexplained that the bulk of the Body’s work, after evaluating the whole file, was spent on evaluating U.3, R.3, U.4 and R.4. Referring to the question posed by Slovakia and Sweden on the role of communities, this is where the Body focused its assessments. The dialogue questions were crucial in this cycle, with the majority of the twenty-two questions based on this topic of the role of communities in developing and implementing safeguarding measures and plans, and their role in the nomination process. There was one caveat to this explanation: there were a couple of scenarios where States deployed a so-called copy-paste scenario in terms of the responses about the development of safeguarding measures, with the same responses appearing in the nomination forms. This, of course, required further questioning. But overwhelmingly, it came down to dealing with R.3 and U.3, and R.4 and U.4, and hence the overwhelming positive response. The Chair encouraged the States Parties to view the analysis of the evaluations in a positive way, and to see what unfolds in subsequent cycles with the introduction of the new forms and working methods. If the Committee sees the trend continue or there are variations of it, it might provide an indication of a new direction to take.
17. The **Assistant Director-General** began by thanking the Chair of the Evaluation Body for his explanations regarding this year’s process. He noted that Member States had done a great deal of work to review the methodology for the coming years, and therefore a new different cycle will begin. Secondly, he underlined that all the delegations and their national experts had read the nominations and the recommendations made by the Evaluation Body with respect to each of the files. The Assistant Director-General recalled the discussions that took place in Rabat at the seventeenth session on the *working* *agreement*. He noted that the idea behind the dialogue was also to discuss the lessons learned. On the question of the ‘family cycle’, the Assistant Director-General explained that the years were defined by the Secretariat and the Evaluation Body. He referred specifically to the tool, ‘[Dive into Living Heritage](https://ich.unesco.org/dive/)’*,* a great instrument devised a few years ago, financed by the Netherlands, that constructs a constellation around the domains. They can refer to a specific cosmos, to gender, family, animals, they can be ‘green’ or anything. This year, most of the references pointed to intergenerational transmission, hence the description of the ‘family cycle’. ‘Dive into Living Heritage’, which was further developed with Saudi Arabia, configured the elements in the Lists to see how they are related to and dialogue with each other.
18. The **Assistant Director-General** took good note of Slovakia’s request [to have the questions and answers of the dialogue process made available], in line with the comments by Bangladesh. The Assistant Director-General surmised that it was probably due to technical issues that this had not been done two years ago, because it was not due to a lack of transparency. He also took good note of the Member States’ appeal for full transparency, and that the evaluation session should happen once the dialogue had already taken place, not least because the dialogue process had been devised by the Committee so that the examination of the files would be about celebrating the elements for inscription, then safeguarding, which is the purpose of the Convention. The Secretariat had now included this request among its tasks, and the Evaluation Body also believed in making the dialogue process as transparent as possible.
19. The **Chairperson** closed the speakers list for the day, to be reopened the next day, allowing Observers to take the floor.
20. The **Assistant Director-General** announced some of the side events, including the ICH NGO Forum General Assembly, a round table by ICHCAP on the Global Higher Education Network, a seminar on the ‘Management of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Spain’, Morocco’s invitation to a musical performance to celebrate the inscription of Malhun, and a project presentation by CRESPIAL dedicated to ‘safeguarding intangible cultural heritage of African descendant in the SICA region and Cuba’.
21. The **Chairperson** adjourned the day’s session.

*[Thursday, 7 December 2023, morning session]*

**ITEM 8 OF THE AGENDA [CONT.]**

**REPORT OF THE EVALUATION BODY ON ITS WORK IN 2023**

1. The **Chairperson** welcomed the delegates, noting the excellent progress made, with the Committee inscribing the twenty-four remaining nominations to the Representative List, accepted four proposals to the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices, and granted one request for International Assistance. The Committee had thus examined all fifty-six nominations in this cycle. He congratulated all the submitting States and the communities. Under agenda item 8, the general debate had been opened and the Evaluation Body had responded to the questions. The Bureau had met earlier in the morning to revise the timetable of the Committee’s work. It was hoped that with the current pace, the Committee would be able to complete the examination of all the items. The Chairperson informed the Committee that an amendment to the draft decision had been received from Czechia, and that consultations and feedback from States Parties had resulted in revisions to the documents under agenda items 6 and 12. The document for item 21, ‘Other Business’, had been published. All the revised documents were available on the 18.COM webpage. The Chairperson reopened the general debate on agenda item 8.
2. The delegation of the **Republic of** **Korea** conveyed congratulations on the new inscriptions. Indeed, the overall positive evaluations had made the meeting a true celebration of human creativity and cultural diversity. However, it was also concerned about the Body’s excessive workload in order to ensure positive evaluations through the dialogue process. In addition, it supported Slovakia’s statement requesting that the content of the dialogue process be uploaded online with other pieces of information.
3. The **Chairperson** opened the floor to Observers.
4. The delegation of **Uganda** congratulated the Chairperson on his election, thanking Botswana for the excellent reception. It also thanked the Committee, the Evaluation Body and the Secretariat for the excellent coordination of activities. The delegation congratulated all the States Parties whose nominations had been inscribed, extending its appreciation to the Evaluation Body for categorizing the nominations under family files, handicrafts and files on women. It was happy that ‘family’ files were above 56 per cent, as family is the first unit of intangible cultural heritage production, implementation and sustainability. However, it was concerned about the low number of nominations submitted by African States, which was even worse for Arab States. In this regard, it called upon UNESCO to continue supporting African States to submit more nominations in the next cycle. The delegation appreciated the financial support to Uganda for an amount of US$98,203 to help raise awareness on the value of intangible cultural heritage and its relevance in the education sector, as well as of US$3,750 for periodic report writing. The delegation was committed to delivering on the use of this International Assistance and to submitting the periodic report on time.
5. The **Chairperson** concluded the general debate and turned to the adoption of draft decision 8 on a paragraph-by-paragraph basis. With no comments or objections on paragraphs 1–4, they were duly adopted.
6. The delegation of **Bangladesh** had a small observation on paragraph 5, in the line, ‘considers that such an overwhelmingly positive outcome indicates a promising direction for the present and future implementation of the listing mechanisms of the Convention’. It was happy to note that the dialogue process had been utilized to a greater extent and had facilitated the work of the Committee, but the language prejudged the future decisions of the Committee. It thus sought the view of the Secretariat on the implications of the language proposed.
7. The **Assistant Director-General** explained that the text alluded to the experience of the Committee over the last three years in that it could be considered a promising direction to have a prior dialogue, rather than having the Committee struggle with a decision, and thus made it the right direction. It was not pre-empting any future decision-making. As discussed with the Evaluation Body, it was clear that there was no guarantee that this process will continue into the new system. This sentence simply makes a comparison with the previous year, when many decisions had been debated. Nevertheless, the Committee was free to change the wording; the Secretariat simply wished to acknowledge that the work had been done to the best capacity, the results of which were evident. It was also important that the reflection was not solely about the dialogue process, because there were in fact thirty-eight files that were well written. The draft decision was a summary of the work accomplished during the cycle, and it was clear that there had been a giant leap forward thanks to the work of the Secretariat in terms of capacity building, in collaboration with the UNESCO Field Offices and with International Assistance. Much of this work had been carried out with the Regular Programme budget and at current staffing levels, which had not changed for four years since three posts were financed from the Fund. These aspects should also be taken into account. The work was not only about the dialogue, but also about the capacity of Member States to build better projects with their experts, taking into account all the recommendations of the Evaluation Body and the discussions that occur every year, and every two years during the General Assembly. As it was a time for celebrating, it was also good to recognize the large work accomplished by Member States, the Evaluation Body and the Secretariat.
8. The delegation of **Bangladesh** thanked the Assistant Director-General for the explanation, which was exactly the reason why in Rabat, in 2022, the Committee had focused on capacity-building and not only the dialogue process. Consequently, elements were inscribed because the Committee felt that there had been adequate capacity in the preparation of the files. The delegation wished to make sure that the draft decision did not in any way prejudge the outcomes of future Committee meetings.
9. The delegation of **Slovakia** aligned with the Bangladesh’s comment but appreciated the response by the Assistant Director-General and the Evaluation Body, the previous day, on the reasons behind this extraordinary situation with only positive recommendations. The delegation suggested that it would help to explain this positive outcome in this sentence, such as by adding that this is the consequence of a broader use of the dialogue process and International Assistance, as well as strengthened capacity-building activities. This addition could perhaps temper any kind of prejudgement of the Committee’s future decision-making process. It thus proposed an amendment, which would read, ‘considers that such an overwhelmingly positive outcome, as a consequence of a broader use of upstream dialogue process and capacity-building activities.’ This would link the use of the dialogue process, capacity-building and the promising direction for the future implementation of the listing mechanisms.
10. The **Chairperson** suggested to change ‘indicates’ to ‘allows’, as this was more active.
11. The delegation of **Bangladesh** agreed to the change, adding that lists should not be closed, and therefore proposed, ‘as a consequence of, *inter alia*, the use […]’. Thus, not excluding other initiatives.
12. The delegation of **Morocco** fully agreed with the amendment proposed by Slovakia and supplemented by Bangladesh. It also considered that it would be useful to add, ‘and encourages the Secretariat and the Evaluation Body to pursue this promising direction’.
13. The delegation of **Peru** had an issue with the understanding of the dialogue process, noting that it had not changed, as foreseen in the Operational Directives. In other words, saying that there had been a greater or more frequent use of the dialogue process implied that it had not been used in the past. Thus, it could not be considered the cause or reason why the elements had received a 100 per cent positive result. Put simply, the dialogue process had been used but rather more frequently. There are years when it is used frequently, and there are other years when it will be used less frequently. The delegation did not believe that this is what was foreseen in the rules.
14. The **Chairperson** suggested to delete ‘broader’, which would read, ‘Acknowledges with appreciation that all files presented by the Committee in this cycle are recommended by the Evaluation Body for inscription, selection or approval. Considers that such an overwhelmingly positive outcome is a consequence of the use of the dialogue process and the capacity-building activities, and encourages the Secretariat and the Evaluation Body to pursue this.’
15. The delegation of **Bangladesh** believed that there was a context to the word ‘broader’, recalling the Committee session in Rabat in 2022 when the Committee members overwhelmingly felt that there should be greater use of the dialogue process under Article 55 of the Rules of Procedure. But it could live without ‘broader’ if it was problematic for others, although that would not really capture a reflection of the reality and the progress that had been made.
16. The **Chairperson** believed that ‘broader’could be removed because the paragraph already acknowledged that the dialogue process was working. With no objections, paragraph 5 was adopted. He turned to paragraph 6, and the amendment proposed by Czechia, Germany, Slovakia, Sweden and Switzerland, which would read ‘Requests the Secretary to make the upstream dialogue process exchange documents available to the Intergovernmental Committee simultaneously with the report of the Evaluation Body, and further requests the Secretariat to publish these documents alongside the entire nomination files on the website of the Convention after the inscription, as the information included is part and parcel of the examination process and provides supplementary information concerning the inscribed elements.’
17. The delegation of **Bangladesh** agreed with the thrust of the paragraph, but with two small amendments. The paragraph would start, ‘Noting the delay in publishing the necessary information on the dialogue process’, and including ‘the Evaluation Body’.
18. The **Chairperson** wondered whether ‘noting the delay’ needed to be put in the decision, placing blame on the Secretariat when it could simply be acknowledged in the report.
19. The delegation of **Bangladesh** remarked that this addition provided the context in which these documents should be made available to the Committee members, as they cannot assess the files without them. But it could live with mentioning this fact in the report. The delegation had another small amendment after ‘the Evaluation Body, which would read, ‘in accordance with paragraph 55 of the Operational Directives’.
20. The **Assistant Director-General** noted, with regard to the second amendment on paragraph 55 of the Operational Directives, that it was not related to the request in terms of dates. The decision must refer to articles that directly answer the question. He noted that the decision should thus serve to reinforce the work of the Committee and assured the Committee that the necessary information will be provided by the Secretariat.
21. The delegation of **Morocco** agreed with the Assistant Director-General concerning the amendment by Bangladesh in that there was an issue of consistency. Indeed, if it is only from this day that the Committee requests the Secretariat to make available the report of the Evaluation Body to the Committee, then the issue of delay cannot be raised as it had no reason to exist. The delegation aligned with the initial amendment.
22. The delegation of **India** thanked the Assistant Director-General for his explanation. However, it wished to hear from the Legal Advisor on the specific rule cited by Bangladesh and to clarify whether the mention of this rule in paragraph 6, as suggested by Bangladesh, would prejudice the paragraph in any way.
23. The **Legal Advisor**, **Mr Santiago Villalpando**, explained that the rule quoted by Bangladesh was paragraph 55 of the Operational Directives, which provides *inter alia* the dialogue process, as mentioned by the Assistant Director-General. The rule needed to be read in conjunction with the prior provision, that is, the timetable and the overview of the procedures that are followed by the Committee with respect to its work. The rule does indeed talk about the dialogue process and the fact that the evaluations of the files need to be included in the dialogue process and shared with the Evaluation Body. But the rule, as it currently stood, did not state that the dialogue process exchange document should be made available to the Committee simultaneously with the report of the Evaluation Body. Although it was not yet canon, it would become so once the Committee decides to make this request, and would thus be requested for the future.
24. The delegation of **India** thanked the Legal Advisor for the clear response, noting that the crux of this paragraph was the word ‘simultaneously’. It also fully agreed with the Assistant Director-General that the Secretariat, with its best intentions, should not be blamed for a delay. Having listened to the Legal Advisor, the delegation wondered whether the Assistant Director-General could accept the addition of ‘simultaneously’ in light of the Legal Advisor’s explanation, not least because it would effectively change the Operational Directives.
25. The **Assistant Director-General** took good note about including ‘simultaneously’ and for the Committee to receive all the documents as a package four weeks before the session.
26. The delegation of **Côte d’Ivoire** aligned itself with the amendment made by Czechia and Slovakia.
27. The delegation of **Czechia** thanked the Assistant Director-General for his explanation, which was exactly how it had understood the situation. The Evaluation Body report had mentioned that the documents would be published, and it was assumed that it would be within Rule 42 of the Rules of Procedures, i.e., four weeks prior to the session. However, following a good exchange with the Secretariat, in which the situation was clarified and the documents were eventually published, the delegation could accept this amendment, and, for the future, the publication of documents can be understood as under Rule 42.
28. The delegation of **Saudi Arabia** supported the proposed amendments.
29. The delegation of **Bangladesh** asked the Secretariatthe date of when the document was published and made available to Member States.
30. The delegation of **India** asked that Bangladesh’s question be answered as it was pertinent to the issue at hand.
31. The delegation of the **Republic of Korea** supported the amendment.
32. The delegation of **India** remarked thatUNESCO is the house of consensus, noting the general satisfaction with ‘simultaneously’.
33. The delegation of **Malaysia** supported the formulation and commended the Secretariat and the Assistant Director-General for being so forthcoming about the entire process.
34. The delegation of **Bangladesh** thanked the Assistant Director-General for his elaborate responses and the information regarding when the report was received and published. Indeed, it is correct to say that, since this report had not been requested, there was no deadline. However, it is generally understood that a document made available to the Committee the day before the meeting will be of little use to the Committee. In this context, the delay was not relative to the deadline, but was still delayed, which should be avoided in the future. Hence its position that it fully associated with the thrust of the paragraph proposed by Czechia and the amendments proposed relating to paragraph 55. It is for that reason that the Committee should receive the documents on time so as to make the best use of the working documents. The Secretariat should not assume that the Committee members do not read the documents. The delegation therefore agreed with the amendment by Czechia and supported by others, if this guarantees that all documents will be made available to the Committee four weeks prior to the start of the meeting from the next Committee session.
35. The **Chairperson** remarked that the point had been well made and accepted into the paragraph for the future. It was also noted in the oral report.
36. The delegation of **India** supported the amendment.
37. With no further comments, the **Chairperson** adoptedparagraph 6, as amended.Paragraphs 7–15 were adopted without objections. **The Chairperson declared Decision** [**18.COM 8**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions/18.COM/8) **adopted**.
38. The **Chairperson** thanked the Evaluation Body for the wonderful work accomplished.

**ITEM 6 OF THE AGENDA**

**TWENTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE 2003 CONVENTION IN 2023**

**Document:** [*LHE/23/18.COM/6 Rev.*](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-23-18.COM-6_EN_Rev.docx)

**Decision:** [*18.COM 6*](https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions/18.COM/6)

1. The **Chairperson** turned to agenda item 6 on the twentieth anniversary of the Convention. To mark the occasion, there were three celebration moments. First, the examination of the statutory part of the item. The second was to take stock of the Convention’s achievements in the plenary session on the same day. Lastly, Botswana had invited all the delegates to an evening celebration reception. Mr Ottone was invited to present the first part of the item.
2. The **Assistant Director-General** recalled that the General Assembly at its ninth session had requested that the Secretariat report on the outcomes of the twentieth anniversary of the Convention for examination by the General Assembly at its tenth session in 2024. This item thus presented the main activities and events undertaken to celebrate the anniversary in 2023. Throughout the year, States Parties, communities and other stakeholders actively participated in the celebration in promoting the objective of the Convention, taking stock of past achievements and exploring the Convention’s future development. Perhaps one of the clearest and most encouraging signs from UNESCO Member States was the [proclamation](https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark%3A/48223/pf0000387021/PDF/387021eng.pdf.multi) of the UNESCO International Day of the Intangible Cultural Heritage on the 17October. The Ambassador of Poland was thanked for his active involvement in this outcome. It was proclaimed with reference to the twentieth anniversary by the 42nd Session of the General Conference that took place in November 2023. Under the slogan, ‘We are #LivingHeritage’, UNESCO organized a global campaign composed of two parts. UNESCO conducted a social media campaign throughout the year, attracting the active participation of approximately 6.68 million people around the world, which enhanced public awareness on the importance of safeguarding living heritage. Furthermore, a dedicated webpage[[13]](#footnote-13) was established to showcase celebration events all over the world, which numbered 122 events, including conferences, festivals, exhibitions, workshops and other activities at national and local levels. The global campaign leveraged the potential of digital tools and enabled the almost universal celebration of the anniversary with the widest participation of stakeholders, especially communities and youth. UNESCO Headquarters hosted a series of events with intangible cultural heritage as the central theme, referencing the twentieth anniversary of the Convention. On 21 June 2023, together with India, UNESCO celebrated the International Day of Yoga with Sadhguru, a globally renowned yoga master, to promote the inscribed element, yoga. The Latin America and the Caribbean week from 19to 23 June 2023 included a conference on safeguarding strategies and experience in implementing the 2003 Convention in the GRULAC region. On 16and 17 September, European Heritage Days was celebrated around the theme of ‘Living Heritage and Sport Heritage’ for its 2023 edition.
3. The **Assistant Director-General** recalled that UNESCO had also partnered with La Poste, the French post office, in releasing a twenty-year anniversary ‘Let’s Celebrate Living Heritage’ stamp in September 2023 for use in France. Another event was the ‘We are Living Heritage’ photo exhibition held during the 42nd Session of the General Conference. This exhibition was made possible thanks to contributions from sixty States Parties who sent photos celebrating our shared humanity. The landmark event for this celebration year was a two-day global meeting under the theme ‘Unleashing the Power of Living Heritage for Sustainable Development and Peace’, which was held in Seoul on the 25and 26 July 2023. The concrete outcome of this meeting, ‘[The Seoul Vision](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/61291-EN.pdf)’ takes stock of twenty years of the Convention and presents a set of concrete actions to unleash the power of human heritage to ensure sustainable development and peace, enhance solidarity and inclusion, preserve biodiversity and oceans, and respond to social and economic crises. The Naples conference on ‘Cultural Heritage in the 21st Century’ was organized by UNESCO from 27to 29 November 2023 with Italy.[[14]](#footnote-14) The conference gathered a diverse array of stakeholders, including thinkers, community leaders, practitioners, site managers and experts. Their perspective inspired an innovative approach to heritage that considered the close relationships between nature and culture, the tangible and intangible, as well as heritage and creativity. The meeting was an opportunity to build on the experiences of the 1972 and 2003 Conventions on their respective fiftieth and twentieth anniversaries. A call for action was presented at the end of the conference, which set out eleven major principles in a prospective vision for safeguarding and protecting heritage. Indeed, a diverse range of events took place in all regions throughout 2023, reflecting the engagement and enthusiasm of stakeholders to raise awareness of the importance of intangible cultural heritage.
4. The **Assistant Director-General** thanked everyone who had participated in this celebration and was able to regenerate the spirit of the Convention, which has always been about people and community, with an inclusivity dynamic. He informed the Committee that the revised working document 6 was published on 6December to reflect the outcomes of the Naples Conference, which took place after the statutory publication date for the documents (6November). This revision also includes adjustment in the draft decision to commend the activities undertaken in all the Electoral Groups at national and regional levels, and to recognize a variety of activities undertaken, including conferences, festivals, expert meetings, exhibitions, publications and awareness-raising campaigns, among others. It also reflected the comprehensive efforts by stakeholders in the GRULAC region who supported the anniversary, such as the extensive meeting of experts organized in Lima, Peru with the category 2 centre CRESPIAL. He took the opportunity to recognize the category 2 centres working in the field of living heritage that are fully implicated in the work of the Convention. Lastly, the publication compiling the outcomes of the regional reflection had been launched the previous day.
5. The **Chairperson** thanked the Assistant Director-General for his presentation, opening the floor for comments.
6. The delegation of **Brazil** remarked that, although Brazil’s intangible cultural heritage safeguarding policy precedes the Convention, the Convention definitely helped Brazil to better implement its safeguarding policies. It was very grateful to have had the opportunity to exchange experiences, whether good or bad, with other States. Twenty years is a relatively short period, and yet the Convention has already succeeded in one of its key objectives, to raise awareness on the importance of safeguarding intangible cultural heritage. At the same time, a lot remains to be done. Living heritage around the world is still under considerable threat, whether due to demographic shifts, economic pressures, environmental degradation or simply changing values and attitudes. To face these challenges, we need to work together in a constructive way towards the integration of living heritage in the sustainable development agenda, as well in the implementation of the principle of culture as a global public good. This includes reinforcing the intergovernmental nature of the Committee and working together to achieve a better geographical balance. In this regard, while the declarations by UNESCO to developed countries were welcomed, they do not really cover some priorities that are crucial for its region, such as the protection of human rights and the promotion of democracy. This is why it fully endorsed the Lima Declaration that includes these elements as standalone principles in the further implementation of the Convention. Brazil is proud to have contributed to the collective and coordinated efforts of the Latin American countries to promote celebratory activities with the aim of reflecting on the legacy and future of the Convention, reiterating its commitment to cooperate with the Secretariat and the other States Parties to unleash the potential of the Convention.
7. The delegation of **Czechia** thanked the Secretariat for its presentation of the anniversary activities, which are always occasions for celebration. If intangible cultural heritage did not matter in our lives, the world would never have accepted the Convention so quickly and on such a large scale, and we would not see so many examples of the diversity of living traditions and good safeguarding practices that have been observed over the past two decades. Czechia had prepared several events to mark this anniversary, bringing together communities and institutions, expert reflections, and expressions of living traditions. It has been delighted and impressed by the evolution of the Convention and its mechanisms during its twenty years of existence, as well as by the importance it has acquired in the world and, above all, by the voice it has given to communities around the world. As shown in the 2022 MONDIACULT Declaration and at the Naples Conference, the interconnection of cultural expressions and future trends of the Convention will play an indispensable role in this regard. Today, we are increasingly aware of the interrelationships between World Heritage sites and living traditions, but also of the roles and contributions of living heritage to the field of sustainable development, such as in geoparks or biosphere reserves. The protection of this common heritage is only possible through communities, local authorities and Indigenous populations, and only by encouraging greater awareness of their importance for future generations. The wish for the next anniversary is to reaffirm the importance of the ‘intangible’ as a natural connectivity of local culture, which has a vital role to play in the management of cultural and natural heritage. Culture is a global public good and concerns us all, and the importance of intangible cultural heritage as an expression of resilience in the face of the challenges facing the world today is evident. The delegation was therefore happy that the Convention had been rewarded with a new international day of Intangible Cultural Heritage, celebrated on the day of the adoption of the Convention on 17 October every year. The proclamation is a further step towards raising awareness of the importance of living traditions in our lives.
8. The delegation of **Saudi Arabia** reported that theSaudi Ministry of Culture, represented by the Heritage Commission, also celebrated the twentieth anniversary. The celebration shed light on the Kingdom’s effort in safeguarding intangible cultural heritage and on the importance of cultural diversity. The celebration lasted three days and was organized with the help of local communities, with exhibitions, workshops, and live performances of culinary arts, traditional sports and handicrafts. It allowed the public to engage with traditional practices and to learn more about their cultural heritage. Since its ratification, Saudi Arabia has played and will continue to play an important role in the region.
9. The delegation of **Sweden** congratulated all actors that celebrated the Convention during 2023 for their successful events. It was impressive to see all the initiatives from around the globe to celebrate the Convention and its impact.
10. The delegation of **Ethiopia** recalled that twenty years ago, on 17October 2003, the 32nd Session of the UNESCO General Conference adopted this Convention, which is of paramount importance to human society. Among the youngest UNESCO conventions in the Culture Sector, it has been ratified by 181 States in just two decades. In its twenty years, the Convention has played a crucial role in broadening the concept of cultural heritage. A considerable number of intangible cultural heritage elements have been saved from extinction. Apart from its principal objectives of safeguarding, the various sessions, events and trainings of the Convention have become places of cultural exchange among States Parties. Ethiopia commended the efforts made by the Secretariat and other stakeholders to make the twentieth anniversary a means to create an impact on a global level, using various events and media platforms, particularly the global campaign ‘We are #LivingHeritage’, which had inspired young practitioners everywhere. The delegation extended appreciation to the Republic of Korea for organizing the global meeting to celebrate the twentieth anniversary, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Italy for organizing a conference on ‘Innovative Approach to Safeguarding Intangible and Tangible Cultural Heritage’ with UNESCO. It congratulated the States Parties, the Secretariat and all stakeholders for their dedication, contribution and global impact in the celebration of the twentieth anniversary.
11. The delegation of **Peru** thanked the Secretariat for its report and the efforts made to celebrate the twentieth anniversary of the Convention. This is one of the youngest culture Conventions, but one it has achieved a lot in a very short time. It congratulated all the States Parties for the various initiatives that came from different points of view and capacities and involved different actors. In this regard, the delegation highlighted the efforts made by GRULAC, mentioned in the report, in organizing a series of colloquiums on the twentieth anniversary of the Convention and sustainable development in the region during Latin America and Caribbean week in June 2023. It also mentioned the publication, *Twentieth anniversary of the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage: Strategies and experiences from Latin America and the Caribbean*, which was presented the previous day at a side event, thanking the Assistant Director-General for his presence at the presentation. In terms of global events, the delegation reported on the realization of the International Forum on the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage,[[15]](#footnote-15) organized by the government of Peru in October 2023 with the support of CRESPIAL and UNESCO. Its objectives were to analyse the progress made and challenges in formulating cultural policies that reinforce the safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage, to identify programmes, projects and activities, both by public and civil society, considered as exemplary practices to be replicated in community contexts, and to consolidate recommendations for the development and implementation of safeguarding policies. The Lima Declaration was the result of this reflection.
12. The delegation of the **Republic of Korea** conveyedcongratulations for the twentieth anniversary of the Convention, which had solidly established itself as an international normative instrument and key mechanism for intangible cultural heritage safeguarding. It extended sincere gratitude for the efforts made by all the States Parties and UNESCO. The Convention had seen an exceptionally rapid rate of ratification compared to other UNESCO Conventions in the culture sector. This is clear evidence of the global interest in the value of intangible cultural heritage safeguarding and its potential for future growth. In particular, a series of online and offline events and activities organized in 2023 by UNESCO, States Parties and NGOS, recalling the significance of the Convention, clearly demonstrated the passion and efforts of stakeholders towards achieving the Convention’s objectives. As part of these efforts, the Korean government held a global meeting in July 2023, ‘Unleashing the Power of Living Heritage for Sustainable Development and Peace’. Thought leaders, policymakers, civil society actors, experts and community representatives from across the world discussed the urgent global challenges and the extraordinary power of living heritage to respond to them. Articulated around four thematic panels, the event explored how living heritage improves livelihoods, creates a more harmonious relationship with nature and the planet, strengthens quality education, and promotes diversity and dialogue in the digital environment. As an outcome, the ‘Seoul Vision for the Future of Safeguarding Living Heritage for Sustainable Development and Peace’[[16]](#footnote-16) was declared, taking stock of twenty years of the Convention and outlining future directions. As a State Party and member of the Committee, the Republic of Korea fully recognizes and celebrates the success of the Convention and will further pursue the continuous success of the Convention as presented in the Seoul Vision.
13. The delegation of **Botswana** was honoured to host the celebration of the twentieth anniversary of the Convention, commending the collaborations and partnerships that prevailed in the implementation of the Convention among States Parties. The University of Botswana’s final year archaeology students celebrated the twentieth anniversary through an exhibition entitled ‘Heritage Unveiled, Celebrating Botswana’s ICH Treasures’ at the university from the 6to 15December 2023. This raised awareness about the Convention in the university community and nationally. Three elements inscribed on the Urgent Safeguarding List were presented, with the practitioners available to showcase the different practices. The exhibition also brought together students and practitioners to discuss issues related to the Convention. It was a highly inclusive exhibition, as it included people living with disabilities, with some exhibits in Braille.
14. The delegation of **Paraguay** noted that, on this twentieth anniversary, the first mechanisms for the protection of intangible cultural heritage had their roots in the protection of popular culture in Latin American and Caribbean countries. It fully supported and welcomed the important recommendations of the Lima Declaration within the framework of this twentieth anniversary celebration. Together with colleagues in Brazil, Paraguay had launched materials for children in order to instil, from an early age, the importance of appreciating their culture based on the traditions we inherit and pass on. The delegation predicted a future full of achievements for the Convention, which will be strengthened in view of the new challenges facing the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage, recalling the importance of not simply preserving culture, but practicing it and keeping it alive.
15. The delegation of **Slovakia** agreed that the twentieth anniversary was a great opportunity to reflect and create new paths for intangible cultural heritage visibility, and for strengthening synergies between institutions and bearers in local, regional, national and international levels. The Slovak Republic commemorated the anniversary throughout the year in a series of activities, with the active participation of different stakeholders, ranging from State administration bodies to educational, research or artistic institutions. It particularly highlighted the activities of NGOs, community bearers and individuals who had independently organized various events related to the twentieth anniversary. The delegation especially welcomed the user-friendly granting of the twentieth anniversary logo. The Slovak Intangible Cultural Heritage Centre prepared online webinars to disseminate information about the logo among the communities, with many bearers successfully applying for its use. It thanked the Secretariat for its great support, as well as colleagues from Finland and Italy, who stand behind the establishment of the European Network of Focal Points for the Convention[[17]](#footnote-17) after the periodic reporting cycle. Their introductory webinar dedicated to the twentieth anniversary, as well as the social media platform for sharing information, were fruitful and inspirational. It was found to be beneficial in linking the ideas related to the Convention with other conventions and initiatives, especially the Seoul Vision, as well as including the theme ‘Living Heritage’ for the 2023 European Heritage Days celebrated in Europe every September. Lastly, it was pleased that the UNESCO Executive Board had established 17October as International Day of Intangible Cultural Heritage.
16. The delegation of **Malaysia** took note that181 States Parties, 676 elements inscribed and 217 accredited NGOs was no ordinary feat. In was in fact an extraordinary achievement over the last two decades. Malaysia fully supported the outcome document, the Seoul Vision, and is committed to continuously contributing meaningfully to the Convention via the widest possible engagement with the community through education and culture. In 2023, it organized a national conference on intangible cultural heritage. Regionally, Malaysia convened an Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) workshop on sustainable heritage food packaging. On the international front, it welcomed the art and cultural communities from Member States to the Living Arts Culture Festival, which was recently held in Kuala Lumpur. Best practices involve sustainability and balance in human engagement with the environment. Culture, including living heritage, is to be recognized not only as a fundamental right, but as a key pillar of sustainability on its own.
17. The delegation of **Panama** wished to celebrate the communities and bearers for these first twenty years of the Convention, as they are the ones who give life to the heritage that is celebrated today. It was pleased that, with the leadership of Poland and the support of countries like Panama, every year 17 October will be a day of commemoration, but also a day to facilitate spaces for reflection and exchange at all levels, whether local, regional or international. In Panama, at the local level, work is being carried out to create publications based on these reflections. In the coming years, it will work to strengthen relations and exchanges between the different actors and, hopefully, use the roadmaps, such as the Lima Declaration, to initiate further reflections and exchanges with the different actors, creating synergies with other areas of interest that are related to intangible cultural heritage. We can see a future direction and how much we can contribute to the scope of the legislation in our countries, and the capacities we have for the construction of public policies that will help to support living heritage into the next twenty years and beyond.
18. The delegation of **Germany** congratulated UNESCO, the Secretariat and the States for organizing the conferences, events and various thematic initiatives to celebrate the twentieth anniversary. Indeed, twenty years of a global standard-setting instrument for safeguarding living heritage is a truly profound reason to be joyous. Germany has a double reason to celebrate, as 2023 marks not only the twentieth birthday of the Convention, but also the tenth anniversary of its ratification. Accordingly, many events and celebrations were organized on political and institutional levels and, importantly, by different the heritage communities themselves. The celebration started with a festive conference organized by the Federal State of North Rhine-Westphalia in cooperation with the German Commission for UNESCO. Two culture ministers, a UNESCO representative, researchers and heritage practitioners discussed the impacts of the Convention in Germany and the challenges of its implementation. Other federal States, like Bavaria and Saxony, had their own celebrations. Moreover, the University of Heidelberg organized a panel discussion on entries to the German National Register, such as hip-hop culture in Germany. The University of Bamberg offered a lecture series on the topic of intangible cultural heritage. Practitioners of modern dance organized a safeguarding symposium on the dissemination and transmission of modern dance, to name just one heritage community of many who organized events. Finally, in November, the German UNESCO Commission held an expert meeting for an evaluation of the last ten years of the Convention’s implementation in Germany, the results of which will be known in early 2024. The Convention is a success story in Germany, with huge public interest in intangible cultural heritage, as can be seen from the 144 inscriptions in its national inventory and numerous press articles. Still, there is work to do, for instance, encouraging more inscriptions of urban and migrant practices. The Convention has proved to be a wonderful tool for assessing the astonishing diversity of intangible cultural heritage practised in Germany, and it was a great chance to connect groups and communities with heritage practitioners from all over the world, harnessing the potential of the Convention for peace building.
19. The delegation of **Viet Nam** applauded the Secretariat for the comprehensive report and for the many activities organized by Member States to commemorate the twentieth anniversary. Viet Nam reaffirmed its commitment to its principles and objectives, holding in high regard the Convention’s role in strengthening capacities to develop and revise policies, strategies and programmes to safeguard living heritage. Ever since 2001, Viet Nam has integrated elements of intangible cultural heritage and the Convention into its legal system. Today, most of the content of the Convention and its Operational Directives have been or are being integrated into its regulations. To date, Viet Nam boasts fifteen heritage elements inscribed on the Representative List and 534 on the National Intangible Cultural Heritage List. All of the national and international lists have comprehensive management plans with the active participation of communities, researchers and government agencies. Viet Nam has proactively implemented multifaceted activities and programmes to integrate intangible cultural heritage into the fabric of contemporary life. This approach aligns with the Convention’s overarching goals of fostering sustainable development through intangible cultural heritage. Viet Nam organized the anniversary ceremony in April, and recently convened a workshop to evaluate the effectiveness of the Convention in safeguarding intangible cultural heritage in Viet Nam. It remained steadfast in its partnership with UNESCO and Member States in the implementation of the Convention and the pursuit of peace and sustainable development.
20. The delegation of **India** joined the celebration of twenty years of the Convention, noting that in a short span of twenty years, the Convention had not only enabled States Parties to streamline and better submit files, but it had collectively contributed to elevating the significance of culture as a public good. The Ministry of Culture commenced the celebrations by conducting capacity-building workshops, intangible cultural heritage presentations and cultural events, starting with the northeastern States in India, for stakeholders, bureaucrats and civil society organizations. It was all the more important that India now has 176 national inventories and continues to add to them regularly thanks to the visibility of the Convention. India conveyed gratitude to UNESCO and the States Parties for the effective upstream dialogue process and continuous, creative reflection in bringing the living traditions to the forefront of humanity.
21. The **Chairperson** opened the floor toObservers.
22. The delegation of **Poland** was happy to follow the twenty-year anniversary in Botswana, on the African continent, which exemplifies cultural diversity and cultural richness. This is both a moment to celebrate, but also to reflect on the achievements so far and the way forward. One of the key achievements is building global awareness about intangible cultural heritage and how to better safeguard it. Another revolutionary step is putting communities at the centre of safeguarding efforts. For the way forward, three important issues were highlighted. First, the need to strengthen actions and reflections aimed at safeguarding intangible cultural heritage in armed conflicts and other emergency situations, such as climate change. Second, the need to develop understanding of intangible cultural heritage in urban contexts, a new topic for UNESCO and one to which Poland was ready to contribute. On the anniversary day in 2023, an international conference on intangible cultural heritage in the urban context was organized in Warsaw under the auspices of UNESCO and of the Polish National Commission for UNESCO. Poland seized the opportunity of the anniversary to organize many conferences and workshops to raise awareness and enhance the visibility of the Convention, and to discuss among practitioners and academia how to improve education on intangible cultural heritage. In this context, the delegation announced that a UNESCO Chair on intangible cultural heritage in public and global governance will be led by Prof. Hanna Schreiber, to be established at the University of Warsaw. The delegation was grateful to Member States for the adoption of the symbolic resolution proclaiming the 17 October as International Day of Intangible Cultural Heritage, thanking Botswana, Bangladesh, Morocco, Republic of Korea, Panama, Rwanda and the Slovak Republic for the initiative. It thanked the Assistant Director-General for his intervention and expressed appreciation for the work of the team in the Secretariat for promoting this Convention.
23. The delegation of **Spain** thanked UNESCO and the States Parties for the many important activities carried out during this year to promote the Convention and which culminated at the Committee in Botswana. Spain also took advantage of the presidency of the European Union to carry out a series of activities. One such activity placed a central focus on the communities to prevent heritage in danger of becoming museified. National museums gave a voice to all the communities that wished to use objects, normally kept in museums, to give them a new life. Spain believes in the centrality of people in this Convention because it is convinced that, as stated in the MONDIACULT Declaration, ‘culture must be a global public good’. Indeed, a further step must be taken, and the Convention is fundamental in this step, precisely because of its inclusive nature. Culture must be an essential public good, a means to reach all people in all parts of the world. For this, it is necessary to develop cultural rights, so that culture will be universally accessible. In the coming years, the Convention will play a fundamental role in achieving one of the main objectives of the 2030 Agenda.
24. The delegation of **Barbados** organized various events to commemorate the twentieth anniversary. In April 2023, it launched, through its Intangible Cultural Heritage Committee, an official public awareness campaign entitled ‘Know Your Culture, Know Yourself’, which showcased and highlighted knowledge bearers from all five domains. Barbados also collaborated with the NGO Pinelands Creative Workshop to host a three-day cultural heritage identification workshop aimed at practitioners to enhance their knowledge of intangible cultural heritage and the Convention, as well as how to document their living heritage. The celebrations were especially significant to Barbados, as it celebrated fifteen years of becoming a signatory to the Convention. Given this milestone, Barbados decided that it was the appropriate time to present its candidacy for the Committee in 2024.
25. The delegation of **Jamaica** congratulated the Botswana delegation for the organization of the session and hospitality, and thanked the Secretariat for its high-quality reporting and guidance. Jamaica was one of the countries that called for the universal adoption of the Convention. Indeed, concerns about safeguarding cultures in a multiracial, multi-ethnic space such as Jamaica were as strong then as they are now. In February 2005, Jamaica was in attendance when Mr. Koichiro Matsuura, former UNESCO Director-General, spoke at the seventh regional meeting on the Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Dominica, stating, ‘Intangible cultural heritage has been too long neglected by international law until the adoption of the 2003 Convention. Only one part of cultural heritage, tangible heritage, was covered by international law, mainly through the 1972 Convention concerning the protection of the world cultural and natural heritage. With the adoption of the 2003 Convention, cultural heritage can now be protected in its entirety at the national and international levels.’ In these past two decades, Jamaica has had two elements inscribed, namely, the ‘Maroon heritage of Moore Town’ in 2008 and ‘Reggae music of Jamaica’ in 2018. It has also benefited from numerous grants to safeguard its elements, as well as capacity-development workshops that have helped both communities and the State. The framers of the Convention could not have foreseen the implications of a global pandemic and the gradual impact of climate change on the processes involved in safeguarding culture, nor could they have taken steps to mitigate against the natural and human-made risks posed to traditions and cultural spaces associated with elements. As such, the next decade of the Convention needs to see further integration of this legal instrument with those of climate change, global trade and multinational partnerships. Indeed, culture as a tool for development should be a recurring theme at global gatherings, such as the annual Conference of the Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). We should contemplate actualizing the promise of culture becoming a sustainable development goal in keeping with the MONDIACULT 2022 Declaration. The power of culture is not an esoteric hypothesis. Reggae music, for example, was used to bring down the ignoble regime of apartheid. Marches and protests associated with the Solidarity Movement celebrated the liberation of Zimbabwe, Angola and Namibia. Finally, the delegation recalled that our cultures are diverse, but we remain indivisible.
26. The delegation of **Armenia** thanked the Chairperson for his work and presidency, and congratulated all the Member States and the global community on the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of the Convention, which had expanded the boundaries of the global framework of the protection of cultural heritage towards a more inclusive and community-centred value system. Armenia ratified the Convention in 2006, which shaped a new vision and agenda for safeguarding policies, focusing on living expressions and practices of cultural manifestations of the millennia-old heritage of Armenia. The twentieth anniversary was a great opportunity to celebrate the wealth of cultural diversity, and Armenia has widely joined the global celebrations by launching a series of events engaging communities, various educational institutions, NGOs and individuals. Cultural communities joined the campaign ‘Wiki Loves Living Heritage’ and the European Heritage Days, and participated in the event in UNESCO Headquarters in Paris. Currently, in the context of sustainable development as an important means of ensuring cultural and economic development and the well-being of communities, the safeguarding and viability of intangible cultural heritage and the implementation of the Convention has become even more relevant. The delegation congratulated the Chairperson on this important occasion, reasserting Armenia’s commitment to accomplishing its role to foster the development of global intangible cultural heritage and enrich the world’s diversity of cultural expressions.
27. The delegation of **Mongolia** thanked the Assistant Director-General and the Secretariat for the detailed presentation of the twentieth anniversary celebrations, thanking the Secretariat and the Member States for the great achievements. Since its ratification of the Convention in 2005, Mongolia has been an active member and takes all necessary measures to safeguard the common values of humanity. Mongolia is a country with a rich and varied cultural heritage, and is deeply committed to safeguarding its cultural treasures, as well as to international cooperation with UNESCO and Member States. Mongolia marked the twentieth anniversary in August with a nomadic World Cultural Festival,[[18]](#footnote-18) welcoming representatives from China, Hungary, Kazakhstan, Republic of Korea, Russia, Türkiye, as well as the UNESCO Office in Beijing, to celebrate the contributions of nomadic cultures and to promote intercultural dialogue. During this festival, the Ministry of Culture of Mongolia organized a consultative meeting with the participation of the UNESCO Multi-Sectoral Regional Office for East Asia and category 2 centres, such as ICHCAP[[19]](#footnote-19), CRIHAP,[[20]](#footnote-20) and IRCI[[21]](#footnote-21), among others. This consultative meeting concluded with the Ulaanbaatar Declaration, a Declaration for the Safeguarding of Nomadic Living Heritage, which is part of the International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists for 2026. The Declaration, which was initiated by Mongolia, was adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2022. The Ulaanbaatar Declaration aims to strengthen cooperation over the next twenty years and to establish effective cooperation mechanisms to safeguard nomadic living heritage and improve synergies between the different culture Conventions.
28. The delegation of **Mongolia** also spoke about the collaboration with various institutions in the country to organize open intangible cultural heritage days in October and an intangible cultural heritage adventure workshop, dedicated to celebrating the twentieth anniversary. These events raised awareness among secondary school students, emphasizing the importance of integrating intangible cultural heritage into the education system in order to guarantee their relevance, transmission and continuity. Mongolia also organized many live television programmes to raise awareness in society of the elements of intangible cultural heritage included in the Lists (16 to date, with more than 200 bearers and practitioners participating). The delegation congratulated UNESCO and all Member States on the twentieth anniversary, which it would celebrate later thanks to the generous hospitality of Botswana. Mongolia will continue to work closely with the Secretariat, Committee members, States Parties, experts, intangible cultural heritage bearers and all stakeholders to ensure that all living heritage is safeguarded and passed on to future generations.
29. The delegation of **Singapore** thanked the Chairperson for his able stewardship and for the warm hospitality in Botswana, extending appreciation to the Assistant Director-General and the Secretariat for their hard work and professionalism. It congratulated all the States Parties for their successful inscriptions in this cycle. Singapore welcomed the celebration of the twentieth anniversary and the incredible progress that the Convention had achieved during this time. Since ratifying the Convention in 2018, awareness and appreciation of intangible cultural heritage in Singapore had grown tremendously. Singapore has adopted many safeguarding efforts and appreciates the sharing of best practices among the network of States Parties, UNESCO category 2 centres and NGOs. As a multicultural society with diverse intangible cultural heritage, it recognizes the importance of intangible cultural heritage for sustainable development, especially in the areas of education, social cohesion and peace. Intangible cultural heritage has the power to unite and bring peoples closer together. Traditional practices, festivals, food, dances, music and crafts serve as a bridge between peoples despite differences in language, geography and history.
30. The delegation of **Finland** thanked the Secretariat and Botswana for organizing the meeting and for the warm hospitality, congratulating the Secretariat on the organization of the anniversary. Finland celebrated its tenth anniversary of the Convention. As a representative of the European Network of Focal Points for the Convention ([ENFP](https://enfp-ich.eu/)), the delegation spoke of the network, which was established in 2021 and now connects over 100 focal points and other key players in the work of the Convention in Europe, from Armenia to Ireland, Croatia to Lithuania. To celebrate living heritage and mark the twentieth anniversary, the ‘Wiki Loves Living Heritage’[[22]](#footnote-22) campaign was launched by the ENFP and the Finnish NGO AvoinGLAM in 2023. The idea was to create a participatory, community-driven initiative calling on heritage practitioners, local Wikimedia volunteers, intangible cultural heritage focal points, facilitators, accredited NGOs and other stakeholders. The common aim was to document and celebrate living heritage, and to work together across a common goal, bringing more awareness and documenting intangible cultural heritage in a participatory manner, both online and at the grassroots level, to enhance the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage.
31. The delegation of **Finland** [second speaker] remarked that the European Network is happy that the campaign found a range of initiatives across continents and over thirty countries, from Finland and Belgium via Singapore to Canada and Chile. More than 100 inventories of intangible cultural heritage had been brought to Wikidata to provide more accessibility to these inventories. There are currently over 5,000 living heritage elements from these inventories described in Wikidata and almost 22,000 Wikipedia articles written about it in 271 different languages. Events and photo contests were also organized in different parts of the world. The European photo contest related to the campaign resulted in 1,700 photos of living heritage. In Singapore alone, the photo contest gathered more than 1,000 photos. All these photos are now openly available in Wikimedia Commons online and on site in various countries. In Europe, cooperation between the focal points was strengthened with European Heritage Day coordinators. Wikimania, the main annual global event of the Wiki community, was organized in Singapore in 2023 with keynote speeches around living heritage and more than 2,000 participants.
32. The delegation of **Finland** thanked all the supporters: the Wikimedia Foundation, the Council of Europe’s European Heritage Days, the Dutch Centre for Intangible Heritage, the Culture Ireland, the Federal Office of Culture of Switzerland, the Workshop Intangible Heritage Flanders, the Flemish Commission for UNESCO in Belgium, and the Finnish Heritage Agency. This year had been a door opener for many fruitful cooperations, and the delegation hoped to further explore these themes. The process of [TAROC](https://creativecommons.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/Towards-a-Recommendation-on-Open-Culture-2-Pager-16_10.pdf), ‘Towards a recommendation on open culture’, led by Creative Commons, was one to follow. The legacy of the ‘Wiki Loves Living Heritage’ campaign is to bring new kinds of communities together.
33. The delegation of **Mexico** recognized the work of the Convention over the past twenty years and the synergies and results achieved for safeguarding and preserving living heritage. For Mexico, safeguarding heritage is a priority, not only because of the wealth of cultural manifestations that exist in the nation, but also because of the responsibility to maintain and disseminate the millenary traditions of all its Indigenous peoples and communities. Mexico joined the twentieth anniversary festivities by carrying out the cycle ‘Mexico Celebrates Living Heritage’ with UNESCO, together with bearer communities, cultural authorities, experts and specialists, the UNESCO Office in Mexico, CRESPIAL and civil society, among others. This resulted in a critical review of the management and safeguarding experiences of intangible cultural heritage in Mexico, as well as the identification of actions to strengthen the safeguarding of elements of living heritage. It was also grateful for the initiative of the GRULAC countries, members of this Committee, for leading regional actions around this celebration. Over the coming decades, Mexico will continue to promote the work of this important Convention, as well as to implement the agreements set forth in the MONDIACULT Declaration to safeguard the cultural identity and heritage of all peoples and communities.
34. The delegation of **Namibia** congratulated the Chairperson on his presidency, expressing gratitude to the people and Government of Botswana for their welcome and hospitality. It thanked the Secretariat for its work implementing the Convention in general and for the excellent organization of the Committee meeting. Since its ratification sixteen years ago, the impact of the Convention is experienced in every region of Namibia. The Convention has served as a fundamental tool, guiding the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage to build a more inclusive, peaceful and resilient society. Living heritage is soon to become a significant component of basic education in Namibia. Namibia expressed commitment to increase awareness and capacities among communities to empower them to safeguard their cherished living heritage. On this note, a bilingual exhibition on the Convention to raise awareness among communities in Namibia was launched in October 2023 and was currently on display during this session. Similarly, the Basic Texts of the Convention had been translated into three Namibian local languages. In addition, a video celebrating the diversity of Namibia’s intangible cultural heritage, dedicated to the anniversary and commissioned by the UNESCO Windhoek Office, would soon be launched.
35. The **ICH NGO Forum**, represented by **Mr Sekou Berte,** expressed gratitude to the Secretariat on behalf of all the accredited NGOs for its implementation of the Convention. The 217 accredited NGOs work at the local, regional and international levels and have celebrated the twentieth anniversary of the Convention with conferences, presentations and seminars. The NGO Forum research working group had been asked to produce a video with messages celebrating the Convention with contributions from around the world. The NGO Forum had organized a symposium and poster exhibition the previous Sunday to celebrate the twentieth anniversary. The celebratory symposium featured collaborations between NGOs, state or government structures, and community organizations, including the private sector, while highlighting multi-stakeholder engagement. The Forum welcomed the continued growth in the number of accredited NGOs and the continued coordination between States Parties and the Living Heritage Entity. The NGO Forum will continue to work to establish a balance in the presence of NGOs in underrepresented regions.
36. The **Chairperson** thankedall the delegations, wishing everyone a happy anniversary. **The Chairperson declared Decision** [**18.COM 6**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions/18.COM/6) **adopted.**

**ITEM 7.a OF THE AGENDA**

**EXAMINATION OF THE REPORTS BY STATES PARTIES ON THE CURRENT STATUS OF ELEMENTS INSCRIBED ON THE LIST OF INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE IN NEED OF URGENT SAFEGUARDING**

**Documents:** [*LHE/23/18.COM/7.a*](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-23-18.COM-7.a_EN.docx)

[*15 reports*](https://ich.unesco.org/en/7a-periodic-reporting-usl-01323)

**Decision:** [*18.COM 7.a*](https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions/18.COM/7.A)

1. The **Chairperson** turned to the fifteen reports under item 7.a, and the examination of the reports on the current status of elements inscribed on the Urgent Safeguarding List.
2. The **Assistant Director-General** proposed to present the reports along the three main topics related to safeguarding: (a) the effectiveness of the safeguarding plans; (b) community participation; and (c) the viability and current risks associated with the element. Also, briefly mentioned, were the requests to transfer one element from the Urgent Safeguarding List to the Representative List. The floor would be open for a general debate after the overall presentation, followed by the adoption of the individual decisions for each report as a whole. All the draft decisions presented for the reports followed a similar structure: a few standard paragraphs, as well as specific ones to appreciate the safeguarding efforts undertaken by the State to address the needs, and to encourage future safeguarding actions for each inscribed element. Once all the individual decisions were adopted, the Committee would adopt the *chapeau* draft decision. Submitting States would conclude by sharing their experiences in safeguarding these inscribed elements.
3. The delegation of **Czechia** thanked the Secretariat for preparing the evaluation of reports and for the extension of the deadline for their submission. It congratulated the countries on submitting reports and on their efforts to safeguard the elements in need of urgent safeguarding. The delegation appreciated the first submitted report on the Culture of Ukrainian borscht cooking one year following its inscription. Indeed, reporting on elements on the Urgent Safeguarding List is very important. It justifies the retention of an element on the List and the increased care for it. The planned harmonization of the ICH-10 Form will be a good opportunity to continue capacity-building, which will result in an increased percentage of the returned reports. It looked forward to the transfer of elements from the Urgent Safeguarding List to the Representative List in the near future.
4. **Ms Fumiko Ohinata of the Secretariat** drew attention to the overview of the reports provided in working document 7.a. It was noted that there were eight first reports on elements inscribed between 2015 and 2022, three second reports on elements inscribed in 2014, and four third reports on elements inscribed in 2010**.** The key points raised in the fifteen reports followed the three topics. The first topic relates to the effectiveness of the safeguarding plans.She noted that safeguarding efforts had incorporated the recommendations of the Committee over the years. In this cycle, documentation, transmission and awareness-raising activities had improved. Several reports also highlighted the potential for elements to secure livelihoods for communities, as in previous cycles. Addressing ecological sustainability continues to be a crucial part of some safeguarding plans. The second topic relates to community participation. Most reports showed an increase in practitioner numbers and addressed gender roles. Women emerged as the most active bearers of certain practices. Bearers were highly active in inventorying, sharing experiences and promoting elements through the media. A wide range of actors, including local authorities and traditional structures, contributed to safeguarding efforts.Community associations and civil society continue to play a vital role.
5. **Ms Fumiko Ohinata** presented thethird topic on viability and current risks.In general, it was observed that inscription led to increased visibility of the elements and respect for bearers. Practices have also adapted to changing trends, but in some cases, this led to potential decontextualization and simplification of the elements. As in previous cycles, the risk of over-commercialization remained present. Besides, threats to the natural environment were also affecting living heritage, such as through waste management or conflict.Finally, in this cycle, several reports mentioned an aspiration of communities to see the transfer of an element from the Urgent Safeguarding List to the Representative List.There is a new procedure for this transfer, which is one of the concrete outcomes of the 2018–2022 global reflection that has now been formalized through the change of the Operational Directives. It can be requested with the use of Form ICH-02 USL to RL.
6. With no forthcoming comments, the **Chairperson** turned to the presentation of the reports and their draft decisions.
7. The **Assistant Director-General** reiterated that the usual practice was to present the reports one by one, followed by the *chapeau* of the draft decision.
8. The **Chairperson** presented the **First report of** **Azerbaijan** on the status of the element **‘Yalli (Kochari, Tenzere), traditional group dances of Nakhchivan’**. **The Chairperson declared Decision** [**18.COM 7.a.1**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions/18.COM/7.A.1) **adopted.**
9. The **Chairperson** presented the **First report of** **Cambodia** on the status of the element **‘Lkhon Khol Wat Svay Andet’**. **The Chairperson declared Decision** [**18.COM 7.a.2**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions/18.COM/7.A.2) **adopted.**
10. The **Chairperson** presented the **First report of** **Colombia** on the status of the element **‘Traditional Vallenato music of the Greater Magdalena region’**. **The** **Chairperson declared Decision** [**18.COM 7.a.3**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions/18.COM/7.A.3) **adopted.**
11. The **Chairperson** presented the **First report of** **Egypt** on the status of the element ‘**Traditional hand puppetry’**. **The Chairperson declared Decision** [**18.COM 7.a.4**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions/18.COM/7.A.4) **adopted.**
12. The **Chairperson** presented the **First report of** **Egypt** on the status of the element ‘**Handmade weaving in Upper Egypt (Sa’eed)**’. **The** **Chairperson declared Decision** [**18.COM 7.a.5**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions/18.COM/7.A.5) **adopted.**
13. The **Chairperson** presented the **First report of** **Kenya** on the status of the element **‘Enkipaata, Eunoto and Olng’esherr, three male rites of passage of the Maasai community’**. **The Chairperson declared Decision** [**18.COM 7.a.6**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions/18.COM/7.A.6) **adopted.**
14. The **Chairperson** presented the **First report of the** **Syrian Arab Republic** on the status of the element **‘Shadow play’**. **The** **Chairperson declared Decision** [**18.COM 7.a.7**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions/18.COM/7.A.7) **adopted.**
15. The **Chairperson** presented the **First report of Ukraine** on the status of the element ‘**Culture of Ukrainian borscht cooking’**. **The** **Chairperson declared Decision** [**18.COM 7.a.8**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions/18.COM/7.A.8) **adopted.**
16. The **Chairperson** presented the **Second report of** **Kenya** on the status of the element **‘Isukuti dance of Isukha and Idakho communities of Western Kenya’**. **The** **Chairperson declared Decision** [**18.COM 7.a.9**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions/18.COM/7.A.9) **adopted.**
17. The **Chairperson** presented the **Second report of Uganda** on the status of the element ‘**Male-child cleansing ceremony of the Lango of central northern Uganda’**. **The Chairperson declared Decision** [**18.COM 7.a.10**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions/18.COM/7.A.10) **adopted.**
18. The **Chairperson** presented the **Second report of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela** on the status of the element **‘Mapoyo oral tradition and its symbolic reference points within their ancestral territory’. The Chairperson declared Decision** [**18.COM 7.a.11**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions/18.COM/7.A.11) **adopted.**
19. The **Chairperson** presented the **Third report of China** on the status of the element **‘Meshrep’**. **The Chairperson declared Decision** [**18.COM 7.a.12**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions/18.COM/7.A.12) **adopted.**
20. The **Chairperson** presented the **Third report of China** on the status of the element **‘Wooden movable-type printing of China’**. **The Chairperson declared Decision** [**18.COM 7.a.13**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions/18.COM/7.A.13) **adopted.**
21. The **Chairperson** presented the **Third report of China** on the status of the element **‘Watertight-bulkhead technology of Chinese junks’**. **The Chairperson declared Decision** [**18.COM 7.a.14**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions/18.COM/7.A.14) **adopted.**
22. The **Chairperson** presented the Third report of **Croatia** on the status of the element **‘Ojkanje singing’**. **The** **Chairperson declared Decision** [**18.COM 7.a.15**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions/18.COM/7.A.15) **adopted.**
23. Turning to the adoption of the draft decision as a whole, and with no comments or objections, the **Chairperson** **declared Decision** [**18.COM 7.a**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions/18.COM/7.A) **adopted.**
24. The **Chairperson** opened the floor to the States Parties wishing to share their thoughts and experiences on their reports.
25. The delegation of **Azerbaijan** thanked the Committee for approving the decision, as well as the Secretariat for the support extended to the Member States. The report was prepared following the request to provide a report on the status of ‘Yalli (Kochari, Tenzere), traditional group dances of Nakhchivan’ inscribed in 2018 on the Urgent Safeguarding List. The report provides information about the measures undertaken by national and local authorities, communities and community organizations on ensuring the safeguarding and transmission of the Yalli dances. Yalli is a group of traditional dances practised by communities and based exclusively on the collective performance of practitioners. Yalli is a marker of identity and cultural belonging of Azerbaijani people. Communities identify themselves mostly with Kochari and Tenzere types of Yalli dances. Overall, the inscription of Yalli has resulted in the enhanced practice and transmission of the dances, drawing attention to the importance of safeguarding the element locally and nationally and raising the visibility of the element.
26. The delegation of **Cambodia** expressed gratitude to Botswana for hosting the eighteenth session. The Lkhon Khol Wat Svay Andet was inscribed on the Urgent Safeguarding List in 2018. It is a traditional Khmer theatrical form, performed by men wearing masks with the accompaniment of Pinpeat, a traditional Khmer orchestra and melody recitation. The current healthy condition of the element is owed enormously to the inscription on the List. The Lkhon Khol Wat Svay Andet is the pride of the community and is recognized as a cultural treasure by the provincial administration. It has also become a symbol of the Kandal Province, the location of Wat Svay Andet. Concerning safeguarding efforts, a new performing stage was built with roughly US$10,000 for annual performances. It also serves as the Lkhon Khol training place. Community members, especially young people, have gained more interest in taking part in training and becoming performers themselves. Numbers have increased from 61 people prior to inscription to 131 by the end of 2022. The troop has also been provided opportunities to increase the number of performances, not only within their community but for other communities across Cambodia. The performance of Lkhon Khol brings happiness and prosperity to the concerned communities. Following the inscription, the number of performances has increased, from two in 2018, to sixteen in 2019, eight in 2020, and twenty-one in 2021, despite the COVID-19 outbreak. There were seventeen performances in 2022. In addition, currently, the Ministry of Culture also supports trainings on mask-making to help the community produce the masks they need. Cambodia was committed to realizing the Committee’s suggestion to continue supporting transmissions and to establish of the Lkhon Khol Centre at Wat Svay Andet to facilitate transmission and raise public awareness about the element. As it stands now, Lkhon Khol Wat Svay Andet did not present the need for urgent safeguarding.
27. The delegation of **Colombia** reiterated its commitment to safeguarding Traditional Vallenato music of the Greater Magdalena region, which has been a vehicle for the transmission of historical memory in the Caribbean region for many generations. It is a tool for strengthening community ties, solidarity, empathy, friendship and reconciliation. It also promotes respect for differences, an appreciation of diversity, teamwork, intergenerational dialogue, coexistence and peace. Colombia had made extra effort to create the platforms needed to achieve the broad participation of practitioners and bearers in the process of updating the safeguarding plan, including a detailed schedule and budget, in order to comply with the evaluation of the first report presented in 2022. As requested by the Committee, the delegation will ensure the timely submission of the second report, which will be elaborated through a rich participatory process that corresponds to the safeguarding plan that it implemented throughout 2023. The second report will also provide a more in-depth follow-up in view of the updates in the regional cycles of periodic reporting of the Convention that will be addressed under agenda item 7.c. Colombia’s commitment to safeguarding Vallenato not only stems from its potential to build bridges between multiple sectors of society, but also from its capacity to foster inclusion, respect for diversity and social cohesion, thus contributing to advancing the government’s purpose of consolidating the culture of peace in the country.
28. The delegation of **Egypt** thanked the Secretariat for its outstanding work, and for its support with Egypt’s periodic report. The element ‘Traditional hand puppetry Al-Aragoz’ was inscribed on the Urgent Safeguarding List in 2018. Since its inscription, Al-Aragoz has received widespread attention in Egyptian society and wide media coverage. This has contributed to raising awareness about the element and about intangible cultural heritage in general. Following inscription, the State quickly engaged in extensive work with the practitioners, often led by NGOs. Egypt initiated the implementation process of proposed safeguarding measures, including organizing the Egyptian Al-Aragoz Festival for three cycles, facilitated by the ‘Wamda Troupe’ in collaboration with Bibliotheca Alexandria. Wamda is also currently presenting a weekly performance in Historic Cairo and has performed in several countries worldwide. The National Center for Child Culture conducted a free training workshop on the art of Al-Aragoz, some specifically designed for children with specific needs. Al-Aragoz performances were held in public parks and for school students in various regions in Egypt, along with a competition for Al-Aragoz players. However, safeguarding measures require additional efforts and activities. Accordingly, the State plans to empower existing performances beside qualifying new performers. This will be achieved by establishing an art centre focusing on: (a) training new Al-Aragoz players, including female performers, currently almost non-existent; (b) creating a sustainable environment for performance in the community by providing scripts and venues; and (c) raising awareness about traditional puppetry as significant living heritage, involving budget and resource allocation for the establishment of the centre.
29. The delegation of **Egypt** remarked on the second report, Handmade weaving in Upper Egypt (Sa’eed), inscribed on the Urgent Safeguarding List in 2020. The report provides information about measures undertaken by the Government of Egypt, local authorities, communities, as well as community organizations and associations aimed at sustaining the viability of the practice and transmitting skills and knowledge related to the traditional craft. The report highlights the main aspects of concrete actions undertaken during the period between 2020 and 2022. It contains a detailed overview of the status of the element as it stands now, as well as an assessment of the effectiveness of the two-year safeguarding plan and how communities were involved. It also presents an updated safeguarding plan based on the experiences gained from the implementation process of the safeguarding measures so far. The inscription of handmade weaving was greatly appreciated by the communities in the State, and particularly in Upper Egypt, for its cultural, social and economic value in safeguarding this element, while recognizing handmade weaving and traditional handloom as part of their cultural heritage. Handloom weaving gives them a sense of identity and pride. Cotton cultivation and traditional loom-makers are strongly viewed as an integral part of the element and an essential component of its practice and cultural meaning. The inscription contributed to raising awareness among the Egyptian people in general and upper Egypt in particular as part of Egypt’s intangible cultural heritage, which has helped revive the element. Akhmim City is well known for producing good quality handmade weaving. Egypt is devoting every effort to face unemployment challenges. It is also planning several activities that require budget allocations for their implementation, such as facilitating capacity-building workshops for community trainers, expanding the scope and amount of training programmes in the Upper Egypt region, providing looms and materials to practitioners, and opening markets for the products. Collaborative work between the Ministries of Culture, Social Solidarity and Agriculture and NGOs is essential to implementing the safeguarding plan and allocating the budget mentioned in the report.
30. The delegation ofthe **Syrian Arab Republic** explained that when Shadow play was inscribed on the Urgent Safeguarding List in 2018, it had been maintained by the unwavering commitment of a solitary practitioner, fighting against the challenges presented after the war. The inclusion of this practice as endangered heritage was part of a global safeguarding plan put in place by the Syrian Ministry of Culture. This plan was carried out successfully thanks to the dedication of civil society organizations and many individuals to revive shadow theatre. Today, Syria was proud to see the fruits of this work. What was once a declining practice is now a source of creativity for nearly 100 young Syrians. Thus, Karakoz and Eiwaz, the original protagonists of shadow theatre, are preserved as historical figures. Further, the younger generation has introduced new characters, such as ‘Souryia’, a majestic woman, symbolizing the resilience of the nation in the face of adversity, and ‘Oleil’, a hybrid being, representing those who tragically lost their lives at sea. The delegation congratulated its youth for having succeeded in channelling their aspirations through the medium of cultural heritage. These advances have been hard won. Indeed, the economic sanctions that persist are enormous obstacles hindering the efforts of the State and civil society organizations and endangering all of Syria’s cultural treasures. Despite these challenges, it remained hopeful that the conditions for safeguarding its heritage will receive continued support through international instruments such as the Convention, which has played a crucial role in furthering efforts to promote the irreplaceable heritage of the nation.

*[A video of the programme was shown.]*

1. [In a video message] the delegation of **Ukraine** expressed gratitude for the assessment of Ukraine’s efforts in the protection of the element ‘Culture of Ukrainian borscht cooking’. By uniting the efforts of all stakeholders, the Ministry of Culture and Information Policy of Ukraine, the bearers of the living culture and public organizations have achieved the best possible results in these difficult conditions. It expressed gratitude to UNESCO for its support in the protection of the element through the implementation of projects under emergency conditions, namely, Russia’s war of aggression against Ukraine. Assessment was made of the needs to preserve living heritage among displaced Ukrainians in five neighbouring countries: Hungary, Moldova, Poland, Romania and Slovakia. The project supported the resilience of Ukrainian school children by raising awareness of their living heritage, supported by the UNESCO Emergency Heritage Fund. These projects have shown the importance of intangible cultural heritage, serving as a source of resilience and inspiring efforts to do everything possible to ensure that this culture continues to develop. Borscht is the national dish of Ukraine and a symbol of Ukrainian culture and identity. Dating back to ancient times, borscht has been a staple dish of the Ukrainian people for centuries. It was cooked for holidays, family dinners and even in the most difficult times. Borscht is not just a dish, but also an important element of Ukrainian culture. It is a symbol of hospitality and Ukrainian values. Various measures are implemented in Ukraine to preserve and promote the culture of borscht cooking, such as educational programmes and initiatives to raise awareness of Ukrainian borscht, the creation of gastronomic festivals and events dedicated to borscht, and the development of training programmes for chefs that teach traditional ways of cooking borscht. The associated knowledge and skills are passed down from generation to generation within families. The preparation of borscht includes the knowledge and skills necessary for growing and preserving vegetables, and for caring for the environment. Borscht in Ukraine is a sign of healthy eating, national identity and sustainability.
2. The delegation of **Ukraine** further explained that it constantly monitors the state of the element, the results of which are presented in the report. Research is being conducted, the result of which is the creation of borscht inventory lists in three pilot regions: Odesa, Kherson and Dnipropetrovsk. These inventories include local varieties as well as those practised and reported by the internally displaced persons and residents who have left the country. The protection plan has also been reviewed, taking into account the current challenges, as the country continues to face threats to its living culture such as military preparation in certain areas of Ukraine. The ingress of harmful substances or thermal effects from explosions had also impacted the environment, plants, water and production methods. The bombing of the Kakhovka hydroelectric power station is a clear example of how destruction forced substitutions and led to a rise in the cost of ingredients. Efforts will be focused on a rapid response to the situation, but also on education, research, cooperation with the media, joint actions between different stakeholders and raising awareness in the country, as well as among the Ukrainian diaspora and displaced persons abroad. Ukraine fully intends to move the element from the Urgent Safeguarding List to the Representative List. It was recalled that ‘Culture of Ukrainian borscht cooking’ was inscribed on the Urgent Safeguarding List in 2022 under a special procedure due to the war. The transfer of the element to the Representative List will require the proper conditions for its protection and transmission to future generations. Ukraine is confident that the Culture of borscht cooking will continue to be an important part of Ukrainian culture and identity in the future.
3. The delegation of **Uganda** took note of the Committee’s positive decision on Uganda’s second report on the ‘Male-child cleansing ceremony of the Lango of central northern Uganda’ inscribed in 2014. The male-child cleansing ceremony is a healing ritual for a male-child who is believed to have lost his manhood because of non-observance of certain norms and procedures in the first days of the child’s life. The element is rooted in the belief system of the Lango people and provides a sense of identity and social cohesion. The child and mother remain in the house for three days and then undergo a series of rituals, involving the family, to cleanse the child, promote reconciliation, and restore its social status. Many bearers of the ritual have aged, however, so the practice is increasingly performed in secrecy for fear of excommunication. Inscription of the element and the safeguarding measures implemented so far has led, to some extent, to the viability of the element, the mobilization of the people of Lango, as well as the propagation of the Shea butter tree, which is key in the rituals. Many media outlets have also been trained on the processes of the performance of the element. Its inscription has brought pride among the Lango people and thus reduced stigma and increased community participation in the male-child cleansing ceremony. The practice has moved from one district to over eight districts in the region. It has also been well appreciated by the diaspora. For example, in 2017, a family based in the United Kingdom brought two adult children, aged 22 and 39, for cleansing. The delegation took note of the areas of improvement, as guided by the community, which include the continued awareness-raising and education with the participation of the bearers, and building the capacity of the community, including the youth, to document their element. Uganda is committed to working together with all the stakeholders in the areas identified. The hope was to transfer the element to the Representative List at the next reporting cycle.
4. The delegation of the **Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela** thanked the Secretariat for its immense work and for its support in the adoption of the periodic report. The approval of the report is a concrete display of Venezuela’s interest in safeguarding its intangible cultural heritage. It fully believed that intangible cultural heritage is the most important resource for the construction of identity for the future. The delegation highlighted the enormous work of the Mapoyo people, an Indigenous group of 400 people who occupy a territory that is at least 3,000 years old. This territory is sacred to them and their daily experiences. They are spaces of special significance which are not anchored exclusively in nostalgia but are experiences that feed into the continuity of the transmission of their knowledge and practices. Capacity building in the community-state relationship has been substantial, particularly the work with young people. The aspiration, after this periodic report, is to eventually transfer this element to the Representative List. Although it is a complex process, Venezuela was working in this direction, and of course the Mapoyo will never renounce the needs and sentiments of its 400 people so as to perpetuate their tradition into the future.
5. The delegation of **China**, represented by **H.E.** **Mr Rao Quan, Vice-Minister of Culture and Tourism** of the People’s Republic of China, thanked the Committee for its recognition of the work done by China to safeguard the three elements presented, and the advice for the future safeguarding work. With free, prior and informed consent, the widest participation of the communities concerned in the whole process of safeguarding was ensured. The responsive safeguarding measures, addressing the risks and threats of the elements, were implemented with the collective effort of the government at all levels, as well with stakeholders from all walks of life. Such efforts, in accordance with the purpose of the Urgent Safeguarding List, had greatly enhanced the viability of these three elements. China will endeavour to ensure the support for all future safeguarding measures for the three elements. China is committed to the Convention and willing to work with UNESCO and other States Parties for intangible cultural heritage safeguarding in the spirit of collaboration, thus contributing to enriching culture, diversity and human activity.
6. The **Chairperson** thanked the delegates and the honourable minister, inviting the Assistant Director-General to make some announcements.
7. The **Assistant Director-General** informed the delegates of some side events: a theatre performance, Mek Mulung ‘Putera Cahaya Bulan’, organized by Malaysia; a musical performance by Indonesia to celebrate the inscription of Jamu on the Representative List; an exhibition discussion on the ‘Route of midwifery, a transnational cultural connection between Colombia, Cyprus, Germany, Kyrgyzstan, Luxembourg, Nigeria, Slovenia, and Togo’, organized by the National Federation of Traditional Midwives of Colombia; and a working group organized by the ICH NGO Forum on legal and policy development. Lastly, UNESCO invited the delegates to the roundtable ‘Culture beyond borders, safeguarding living heritage, examples from Africa’.
8. The **Chairperson** adjourned the morning session.

*[Thursday, 7 December 2023, afternoon session]*

**ITEM 7.b OF THE AGENDA**

**EXAMINATION OF THE REPORTS OF THE REGIONAL CYCLE OF PERIODIC REPORTING ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION AND ON THE CURRENT STATUS OF ELEMENTS INSCRIBED ON THE REPRESENTATIVE LIST OF THE INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE OF HUMANITY BY STATES PARTIES IN THE ARAB STATES**

**Documents:** [*LHE/23/18.COM/7.b Rev.*](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-23-18.COM-7.b_EN_Rev..docx)[*18 reports*](https://ich.unesco.org/en/7b-periodic-reporting-rl-01322)

**Decision:** [*18.COM 7.b*](https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions/18.COM/7.B)

1. The **Assistant Director-General** recalled that periodic reporting is one of the obligations of States Parties, as stipulated in Article 29 of the Convention. States Parties must report on the legislative, regulatory and other measures taken for the implementation of the Convention and include updated information on the current status of the elements inscribed on the Representative List in the country. Once these reports are examined by the Committee, a summary of these reports would be sent to the next General Assembly. The Arab States is the third region to submit periodic reports, following the reform of the periodic reporting cycle on a regional basis. This cycle showed very encouraging results, as all 18 States Parties submitted their report, a 100 per cent submission rate. Thanks to the support of the Sharjah Institute for Heritage in the United Arab Emirates, an in-person training for country focal points was held in English, French and Arabic in March 2022. In addition, the capacity-building approach rolled out by the Secretariat allowed for continuous online support to country focal points throughout 2022. While the reports showed many achievements in the safeguarding of living heritage in the region, reporting States faced different challenges, such as limited financial and human resources, scarcity of readily available data and information, and difficulties in running broad consultations with stakeholders, especially among communities. A short clip was prepared presenting the testimonies of some of the country focal points, and is available on the Convention [website](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tvspHy7oMa8&t=2s).

*[An extract of the video was shown.]*

1. The **Assistant Director-General** explained that the submission of eighteen reports including on the status of forty-six elements inscribed on the Representative List generated a large and rich amount of data. As a first step, the data was processed by a collaborative research team, composed of experienced facilitators from the Global Network of Facilitators,[[23]](#footnote-23) to develop an analytical overview (Annex I of Document 7.b Rev.). This analysis provides an overview of key trends, challenges and opportunities related to safeguarding living heritage in the different countries of the region. Periodic reports show significant state support for intangible cultural heritage, strong regional and international cooperation, and considerable youth engagement (including through formal and non-formal education). While the analytical overview already contains useful observations, an in-depth analytical report will be presented at the nineteenth Committee session in 2024.
2. The **Chairperson** applauded the States Parties in the Arab States region for their solid engagement and spirit of cooperation. The floor was opened to States that had submitted their reports under the 2023 cycle.
3. The delegation of **Saudi Arabia** thanked the Secretariat for the detailed reports and for assisting States Parties in submitting their reports, including training State focal points about the periodic reporting mechanism. It also thanked the States Parties of the Arab region on completing the report, which resulted in a 100 per cent submission rate. The delegation was delighted that the Secretariat considered the Kingdom’s methodology as exemplary. Saudi Arabia had taken extensive measures to complete the periodic report with all stakeholders, wherever they were. Eighty-eight entities participated in the report. Five workshops were held to introduce the report. More than 125 individuals participated in the reporting mechanism and over 4,500 data points were collected, including from over 300 surveys. After examining the results of the reports, it was noted that the practice of some of the elements was affected due to different factors. Some of the elements were also impacted by the pandemic, such as the Majlis element, a social practice where people gather in public open spaces. The delegation encouraged all State Members and the Secretariat to fund scholars and researchers in order to extensively study the impact of the global pandemic, as well as social phenomena and armed conflicts, not only on the practice of elements but also on practitioners’ behaviour. More longitudinal studies would show how the behaviour of the practitioners changes over time. These results would provide a comparative analysis between different regions and countries, providing safeguarding lessons.
4. The delegation of **Czechia** thanked the Secretariat for its successful reform of the periodic reporting, including the online training provided for focal points and other assistance. It congratulated the Arab States on submitting almost 100 per cent of their reports within the ordinary deadline, noting that the particularities in the language of the form were likely the reason some of the reports had been more concise than in the previous regions. ISESCO[[24]](#footnote-24) and UNESCO category 2 centres were instrumental in building capacities, assisting in the creation of transnational nomination files and preparing exhibitions and publications. They could serve as a good example for other parts of the world. It commended Morocco for working on its periodic report while hosting the Committee at the same time. The delegation appreciated the updating of the data output models that allowed a user-friendly visualization of the qualitative data analysis and commentary structured around the SDGs. It thanked the team and collaborators who carried out the analysis of the report and looked forward to an in-depth analysis report in 2024.
5. With no further requests for the floor, the **Chairperson declared Decision** [**18.COM 7.b**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions/18.COM/7.B) **adopted.**

**ITEM 7.c OF THE AGENDA**

**UPDATE ON THE REGIONAL CYCLES OF THE CONVENTION’S PERIODIC REPORTING AND PROPOSAL FOR RELATED AMENDMENTS TO THE OPERATIONAL DIRECTIVES**

**Documents:** [*LHE/23/18.COM/7.c.Rev*](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-23-18.COM-7.c_Rev_EN.docx)

[*LHE/23/18.COM/INF.7.c*](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-23-18.COM-INF.7.c_EN.docx)

**Decision:** [*18.COM 7.c*](https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions/18.COM/7.C)

1. The **Assistant Director-General** presented the calendar for periodic reporting that was adopted by the Committee at its thirteenth session on the basis of a regional rotation. Latin America and the Caribbean was the first region to implement the reformed reporting exercise under the 2021 cycle, followed by States Parties in Europe, under the 2022 cycle. Under the 2023 cycle, Arab States had submitted their reports for the Committee’s examination at its present session. States Parties from Africa and Asia and the Pacific will report under the 2024 and 2025 cycles, respectively. Regarding Latin America and the Caribbean: in 2021, at its sixteenth session, the Committee examined the reports submitted by twenty-eight out of thirty-two States Parties (87.5 per cent) in Latin America and the Caribbean. A comprehensive ‘analytical report’ was examined by the seventeenth session of the Committee. Regarding Europe: All forty-four States Parties from Europe submitted their periodic reports under the 2022 cycle. The ‘analytical overview’ of the reports was examined by the Committee in 2022 and the in-depth analysis is presented as document INF.7.c. Regarding the Arab States: The ‘analytical overview’ of the reports submitted during the 2023 cycle had just been examined under item 7.b. Regarding Africa: Under the 2024 cycle, forty-four States Parties were expected to submit their reports by 15 December 2023. Thanks to the engagement of States Parties, the cooperation with the CRESPIAF,[[25]](#footnote-25) and the support of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the Secretariat had implemented a comprehensive capacity-building programme encompassing activities for facilitators and focal points.
2. ForAsia and the Pacific, the **Assistant Director-General** explained that it was the last region to undertake the periodic reporting exercise in 2024 for examination by the Committee in 2025. Capacity-building activities had already begun to support States, with the support of category 2 centres CRIHAP and ICHCAP. He recalled that the MONDIACULT 2022 [Declaration](https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/unesco-world-conference-cultural-policies-and-sustainable-development-mondiacult-2022) unanimously adopted at the UNESCO World Conference on Cultural Policies and Sustainable Development (MONDIACULT 2022), with the participation of 150 States, called upon UNESCO to produce a Global Report on Cultural Policies on a quadrennial basis as from 2025. This report will be based on information provided by its Member States, notably in the framework of the periodic reports of each culture Convention and Recommendation, as well as related programmes. The report will be produced every four years thereafter, meaning that the next report after 2025 will be in 2029. As a result, adjustments may be needed in terms of how periodic reports are submitted and analysed so as to allow for a transversal understanding of the global context. After studying several options, UNESCO’s proposal was to move towards a single global submission date for all States Parties, covering all aspects of the international cooperation mechanisms of the Convention currently reported on different schedules. As far as the 2003 Convention is concerned (summarized in the Annex of document 7.c Rev.), this proposal will require a three-phase approach. For the first edition of the Global Report in 2025, data will be drawn from the periodic reports submitted by States Parties from Latin America and the Caribbean, Europe, Arab States and Africa. For the Asia and the Pacific region, the Secretariat invited States Parties to submit their entire or partially completed reports by 15 June 2024 so that the information received is considered in the first edition of the Global Report. All the reports received by 15 December 2024 will be reflected in the analytical report for examination by the twentieth session of the Committee in November/December 2025.
3. The **Assistant Director-General** further explained that the second phase will focus on the alignment of the periodic reporting mechanisms, including their periodicity, as requested on several occasions by States Parties in the framework of the Culture Conventions and Recommendations. Thus, the reflection year of the current periodic reporting cycle of the 2003 Convention, as well as capacity-building activities to be organized in 2026 and 2027, will lay solid foundations in preparation for a single global submission system by 30 June 2027 and every four years thereafter. In 2028, the analysis of periodic reports submitted in 2027 by all States Parties will allow for the publication of the Global Report in 2029. Finally, the proposed changes would entail an amendment of the relevant paragraphs of the Operational Directives, which the General Assembly may wish to adopt at its eleventh session in mid-2026 upon the relevant request made by the Committee to the Secretariat for its twentieth session in 2025. The Assistant Director-General also underlined that the aim was to collect, analyse and communicate information more effectively for each Convention and, at the same time, have the information to feed the Global Report in preparation for MONDIACULT 2025. Another issue raised was how to build the report. Currently, the reporting is carried out with one region every year. If States Parties wish to see intangible cultural heritage integrated into public policies or reflected in a Global Report, we have to change the way of working, while building on good practices, including the regional capacity-building approach which has led to positive results. Today, the eight different systems used in the Culture Sector, some of which are manually operated, have been consolidated into four digital systems. Yet, there is no one single data portal containing all the information that any of the Secretariats can enter to extract the information they need, including on intangible cultural heritage. While regional reports are available for two of the Culture Conventions, this portal would allow to generate regional trends and create linkages between the Conventions, something that States Parties have requested for many years. The Secretariat was thus proposing a way forward in line with the MONDIACULT 2022 Declaration and, at the same time, not losing the good practices established in each Convention, but allowing for more opportunities for countries that do not have as many experts working on data collection and the reporting mechanism system.
4. The delegation of the **Republic of Korea** welcomed the achievements of the reformed periodic reporting mechanism on a regional basis, with the improved submission rate, the development of specific roadmaps for individual States’ implementation of the Convention, and the creation of a platform for dialogue within and among countries and peer-to-peer exchange. As witnessed in cases of Latin America and the Caribbean, Europe and the Arab States over the past few years, the reformed mechanism had demonstrated its own merits. Now was the time to replicate the success story in Asia and the Pacific region. A capacity-building workshop was scheduled for the end of February 2024 for country focal points in the region, the last region under the regional periodic reporting mechanism. In collaboration with ICHCAP and CRIHAP, UNESCO will provide a capacity-building training for approximately 100 country focal points and stakeholders in the region and will further support close cooperation and knowledge exchange among focal points for the preparation of the periodic reports. The delegation hoped that intangible cultural heritage will position itself as a key component and driving force for development under the framework of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals.
5. The Delegation of **Slovakia** thanked the Secretariat for the continuing efforts associated with periodic reporting in general, as well as for the support and guidance to States Parties and the subsequent analysis of a wide range of thematic areas covered by the report. The reporting process was an opportunity to improve the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage. In addition, it provides a unique opportunity for States Parties to see their results and efforts in an international context and gives hope to find common solutions. As for the future, it thanked the Secretariat for its patience and creativity in working together to establish the new *modus operandi* within the global reporting on cultural policies.
6. The delegation of **Sweden** thanked the Assistant Director-General for his clear explanation of the process. It looked forward to the first Global Report on Cultural Policies, and was confident that the periodic reporting of the Convention and its documentation of good safeguarding practices will contribute to its results. It was hoped that the periodic reporting can provide an opportunity to enhance the role of civil society, and the Secretariat was asked if it saw a possibility for such an opportunity. As the periodic reporting within the current system was quite time and resource consuming, the delegation wondered whether the new system would seek to lighten this burden on the States Parties.
7. The delegation of **Switzerland** thanked the Assistant Director-General for his explanation and information on the preparation of this new cycle. Indeed, periodic reports are central to the evolution and strengthening of policies for safeguarding intangible cultural heritage, requiring significant commitment. This effort is all the more justified if the reports can be summarized in a comparative synthesis and used in the development of cultural policies. The periodic reporting exercise will now also be part of the outcomes of the MONDIACULT 2022 Declaration, which requests a global report from UNESCO every four years. It was expected that through the synthesis of the various periodic reports, recommendations and Conventions, the interconnection between these instruments will be strengthened to respond to identical and often closely linked challenges. The consequent introduction of a single global submission date for periodic reports for States Parties from 2027 seemed appropriate, albeit ambitious. The mass of information gleaned can only be managed by States Parties and the Secretariat if the questionnaires are targeted around key indicators. It called for an approach aimed at streamlining consultations and supporting the services responsible for preparing reports, considering all possibilities for synergy and avoiding excessive reporting. It was in this spirit that Switzerland supported the establishment at UNESCO of a one-stop shop to monitor normative instruments, the user-friendliness of which the Culture Sector will be the first to experience.
8. The delegation of **Czechia** thanked the Secretariat for preparing the extensive documents on this item and for proposing a long-term timeline to rationalize the reporting cycles. It appreciated that the capacities for Asia and the Pacific had been built earlier than in previous regions, and strongly believed that the States Parties concerned will manage to submit partial reports for the first Global Report on Cultural Policies by the tight deadline. The delegation commended the work of the team members and collaborators who had carried out an in-depth analysis of the reports from the region. It welcomed the idea of aligning the intangible cultural heritage periodic reporting form, the establishment of a common cultural data portal, and the adoption of a common approach to capacity building with possible coordinated training in the regions. It was logical that the Secretariat should carry out capacity-building activities in preparation for the transition to a single global system of reporting for all regions, with the Secretariat incorporating the lessons learned from the year of reflection, as it seemed from the annex to working document 7.c that the deadline for the Global Report had a higher priority. However, the form will have to be simplified to be able to receive it from all States Parties by 30 June 2027. The timetable presented lacks room for a deferral of the submission deadline, which worked well in the last three years. It would also be very challenging for focal points or collaborators of multiple UNESCO Conventions to process multiple reports at once. It wished to hear how the Cultural Sector plans to balance the risk of limited human capacity when this cycle repeatedly highlighted this concern, as well as the lack of financial resources.
9. The delegation of **Germany** thanked the Secretariat for its efforts in the ongoing reform of the periodic reporting mechanism, confident that this will lead to an even better implementation of the Convention, as it enables systematic data collection to promote evidence-based mechanisms for the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage on global, national and local levels. Germany supported the further alignment of the reporting schedule by introducing a Global Report on Cultural Policies, with the first edition released in 2025. It also wished to underline the importance of introducing a simplified reporting form to avoid redundancies and unnecessary work on the part of the reporting States. With regard to the planned common cultural data portal, the delegation wished to know whether States would have to collect new data or whether there would just be a change in the submission of the same data, as reported up to now. Germany wished to hear more details about the functions and requirements of this new portal. It looked forward to the possibilities opened up by the portal for meaningful global analysis of cultural data.
10. The **Assistant Director-General** remarked that this was one of the issues followed by the Culture Sector including with regards to content and capacity-building needed to reach the 100 per cent reporting rates. Indeed, the Culture Sector had been reflecting on this system for many months. Given the number of normative instruments, the Culture Sector proposed to build a system for global reporting that is compatible with UNESCO’s systems, and that reflects the experience gleaned from the five Conventions working under the different operating systems. Secondly, at this moment, the team had analysed more than 800 reports of all the Conventions and Recommendations, with some 500 left to review. The examination includes a thorough review of every question to see where there were possible crossovers. There are ways to help the national experts working in the capitals save time and effort.
11. The **Assistant Director-General** further explained that the unified system would be carried out in phases. First, it would involve working with States Parties and experts, civil society (in this case, with NGOs), and the site managers of many of the Conventions, such as the 2005 Convention[[26]](#footnote-26) and the 1972 Convention, which are key stakeholders. Secondly, it would involve developing a proposal to deliver these tools globally to all States Parties, including by assessing its functionality and usability. The 153 States Parties that have ratified the 2005 Convention know very well what reshaping means, which is the analysis of creativity. The strategy would therefore involve analysing the tool with experts.
12. In terms of costs, the **Assistant Director-General** recalledthat funds had been approved in the 42 C/5 specifically dedicated to this task, in a cross-cutting manner. All the Secretariats have done their best to work on this project, as they know how useful it will be to alleviate the workload of States Parties, creating a methodology that can be replicated in every four-year cycle. Above all, the project will produce an outcome that States Parties have been requesting across all the Conventions. Finally, the normative instruments will interweave information that will lead to a global understanding of public policies regarding culture and heritage. He noted that the Committee members mentioned the importance of the form, and agreed that capacity building on completing the form was key, as well as ensuring that the questions asked are pertinent. These questions should be useful for States Parties, but they should also be valuable knowledge for other Conventions to understand how the intangible cultural heritage around the communities also affects the listed heritage sites. Today, this information is not available because the systems do not allow for cross-referencing. The Secretariat will report on all the progress made, so that Member States can participate in this process. He believed that this exercise would be very useful for National Commissions and the ministries, as they were tasked to gather all this information. This work will change the way the Convention works with statistics. Indeed, UNESCO has, for a long time, worked closely with the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) in Canada, and it has recently reinforced this cooperation to enhance cultural statistics, something that the Culture Sector urgently needed.
13. With no further comments,the **Chairperson** **declared Decision** [**18.COM 7.c**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions/18.COM/7.C) **adopted.**

**ITEM 9 OF THE AGENDA**

**FOLLOW-UP ON ELEMENTS INSCRIBED ON THE LISTS OF THE CONVENTION**

**Document:** *[LHE/23/18.COM/9](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-23-18.COM-9_EN.docx)*

**Decision:** [*18.COM 9*](https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions/18.COM/9)

1. **Ms Fumiko Ohinata of the Secretariat** recalled that this agenda item was requested by the Committee at its seventeenth session in 2022, asking that the Secretariat provide a report in summary form on the information received from third parties concerning elements inscribed on the Lists of the Convention, as well as those under process for possible inscription. This follows the practice started in 2018. Working document 9 provides an overview of correspondence received between December 2022 and October 2023. These were administered using the ‘Guidelines for the treatment of correspondence from the public or other concerned parties with regard to nominations’ adopted by the Committee in 2012. During the reporting period, six cases concerning inscribed elements were the subject of correspondence. Five of these cases related to elements inscribed on the Representative List, with one case concerning an element on the Urgent Safeguarding List. The correspondence addressed various issues that may affect the viability of the element, such as concerns regarding environmental and health issues, community participation in the safeguarding of the element and associated territory, and the financial sustainability of the practice (a summary table was included in paragraph 3 of document 9). Correspondence was received from a range of stakeholders, including individuals, NGOs and other civil society organizations, or directly from community members. Among the cases treated, one State Party provided a response during the reporting period. This response was transmitted to the initial sender in March 2023. In addition, several States Parties responded outside the reporting period. These will continue to be treated within the Guidelines and will be reported to the Committee at its next session. The Committee could thus request the Secretariat to continue this practice of bringing to its attention information received from third parties concerning the status of inscribed elements, which had proven to be a useful for enhancing the follow-up of inscribed elements thus far.
2. The **Chairperson** opened the floor for comments.
3. The delegation of **Brazil** considered that monitoring the elements inscribed on the Lists is as important as the inscriptions themselves. This Convention is not aimed at celebrating cultural intangible heritage, but safeguarding them. Thus, intangible cultural heritage policies must be aware of and linked to other public policies, which aim to safeguard cultural rights within the broader framework of rights guaranteed by the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights. In this sense, the enhancement of cultural heritage, particularly in multi-ethnic societies composed of different groups, must guarantee other fundamental rights, such as the rights to traditional territories and natural resources. The recent strengthening of discourses and movements, under the notion of promoting a supposed national unity, tends to reduce the collective identities adopted by minorities or less visible groups. In some political contexts, such as in Brazil, threats to intangible cultural heritage are increasing, while new demands are being made on heritage management institutions by religious, professional and political groups who have their own demands and prerogatives. To strike the right balance in this world of challenges, intangible cultural heritage policies must not lose sight of the principles that guide the legal texts relating to the subject in favour of technicalities. Policies that consider intangible cultural heritage as a fundamental element of identity, social cohesion and cultural diversity, and as a path to sustainable development, must not only go beyond these technical criteria but also take into account the links between heritage and cultural rights, and the inclusion of these rights in the broader list of human rights.
4. The delegation of **Colombia** was aware of the case presented by representatives of the Arhuaco community regarding their participation in safeguarding the ancestral system of the four peoples of the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta, as well as the petition submitted to UNESCO by citizens of Pasto regarding the potential environmental and health impacts derived from the use of talcum powder in the framework of the Black and White Carnival. In response to the concerns expressed by members of the Arhuaco community, the delegation reiterated its commitment to Article 15 of the Convention to promote the greatest possible participation of bearer communities in the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage. In addition, in compliance with the principles of the Colombian Constitution on the rights of Indigenous peoples, the State respects the right to self-government and autonomy of the four peoples of the Sierra Nevada, especially with regard to the valuation and safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage. Moreover, the governing councils and traditional and local authorities of the four towns of the Sierra Nevada guided and endorsed the safeguarding plan that was developed for the event in question. Nevertheless, Colombia will maximize its efforts to promote dialogue and meeting spaces among the various bearers of intangible cultural heritage. Likewise, regarding the use of talcum powder in the framework of the Black and White Carnival of Pasto, the delegation informed the Committee that, in accordance with the provisions of the National Policy for the Safeguarding of Intangible Heritage, the safeguarding plan for the Black and White Carnival was developed within a broad participatory process and analysed for potential health or environmental risks associated with the event, which at the time had not been identified. In view of these new public concerns, an inter-institutional study was carried out to determine whether the use of talcum powder in the carnival causes environmental or health problems, which had not been proven so far. The delegation highlighted the efforts made by the Pasto municipal mayor’s office to carry out awareness campaigns to minimize the use of talcum powder during the traditional carnival game, as well as to promote the annual issuance of regulatory decrees to raise awareness among citizens for a responsible participation in the carnival without affecting access to or enjoyment by Pasto residents. Colombia is committed to monitoring this situation and promoting the proper development of the traditions and cultural values of the Black and White Carnival. This will be kept in mind for subsequent periodic reporting processes in the coming years.
5. With no further requests for the floor, **the Chairperson** **declared Decision** [**18.COM 9**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions/18.COM/9) **adopted.**

**ITEM 10 OF THE AGENDA**

**REPORT ON INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE FROM THE INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE FUND AND PROPOSAL FOR RELATED AMENDMENTS TO THE OPERATIONAL DIRECTIVES**

**Document:** *[LHE/23/18.COM/10](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-23-18.COM-10_EN.docx)*

**Decision:** [*18.COM 10*](https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions/18.COM/10)

1. The **Assistant Director-General** recalled that Article 24.3 of the Convention provides that, ‘The beneficiary State Party shall submit to the Committee a report on the use made of the assistance provided for the safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage’. Working document 10 covered the reports submitted by States Parties during the period 1 July 2022to 30 June 2023, presenting an overview of the implementation of the International Assistance mechanism. The document also proposed an amendment to the Operational Directives to facilitate access to preparatory assistance in line with Decision [17.COM 7](https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions/17.COM/7), as requested by the Committee in 2022.
2. **Ms Fumiko Ohinata** **of the Secretariat** explained that during the one-year period between 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023, fifty-two projects had been supported by International Assistance in forty-nine States Parties, for a total amount of US$5.8 million, showing a significantly accelerated pace in the implementation of the mechanism. Concretely, the number of requests presented and the assistance granted returned to the level seen for the biennium before the COVID-19 pandemic. This good news would be highlighted under agenda item 14 on the Draft plan for the use of the resources of the intangible cultural heritage in 2024 and 2025. At the present session, twenty-six reports were presented (Annex I of document 10). Ten projects were completed, covering a wide range of activities, such as community-based inventorying in Albania, Cuba, Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Mauritania and Tonga, and the projects that helped to integrate living heritage safeguarding in the educational system in Grenada, Haiti and Malawi. The project in Mongolia aimed to safeguard the practice linked to the ‘Folk long song performance technique of Limbe performances – circular breathing’ and the project in Mozambique supported the creation of local intangible cultural heritage management committees. In addition, Annex II includes a list of twenty-sixprojects, of which reports were still forthcoming. Regarding general trends concerning International Assistance, the Committee and its Bureau approved twenty International Assistance requests for a total amount of US$2.3 millionfrom July 2022 to June 2023. Twelve States Parties were granted assistance for the first time (Bahamas, Belize, Central African Republic, Costa Rica, Ethiopia, Panama, Romania, Rwanda, Slovakia, South Sudan, Thailand and Uzbekistan). The geographical scope of the mechanism has expanded, with forty-nine beneficiary States Parties, including eleven SIDS and seventeen States Parties in Africa.
3. **Ms Fumiko Ohinata** further explained that while all Electoral Groups are represented, except for Electoral Group I, 36 per cent of the active projects benefit States Parties from Electoral Group V(a), representing US$2.1 millionof assistance granted, in line with UNESCO’s Global Priority Africa. It was also observed that International Assistance was granted for projects with various purposes: capacity-building and community-based inventories, projects to safeguard living heritage or elements inscribed on the Urgent Safeguarding List, and projects aimed at including intangible cultural heritage in education programmes and curricula. Four Emergency International Assistance requests were approved during the first semester of 2023 to support intangible cultural heritage in emergency situations in Ethiopia, Haiti, Slovakia and Romania. Furthermore, the Secretariat continued to develop the tools needed to implement the Strategy, with a view to enhancing the mechanism through an evaluation and monitoring system.
4. **Ms Fumiko Ohinata** turned tothe last part of document 10 concerning the amendments to the Operational Directives related to International Assistance. The proposal was a continuation of the global reflection on the listing mechanisms that broadened the scope of preparatory assistance to offer new funding opportunities for States Parties. As stated in paragraph 21 of the Operational Directives, it has become possible to request assistance to prepare transfer requests to move an element from one List to another, and to prepare nomination files of already inscribed elements on an extended or reduced basis. In the same vein, the seventeenth session of the Committee wished to make it possible for States Parties with no national elements on the Representative List to request assistance for the preparations of their first nominations. The Secretariat considered that the only paragraph requiring revision to the Operational Directives is paragraph 21(b). This proposal was made with reference to Article 20(d) of the Convention, which foresees that International Assistance may be granted for ‘any other purpose the Committee may deem necessary’. It is understood that this type of preparatory assistance would be open to States with no national element inscribed on the Representative List, irrespective of whether they have any multinational elements. As indicated in paragraph 13 of document 10, up to forty-seven States Parties could benefit from this new possibility. The Committee may thus consider recommending that the General Assembly, at its tenth session in 2024, revise the Operational Directives accordingly.
5. The delegation of **Slovakia** thanked the Secretariat for the detailed report and for its efforts to implement and improve the mechanism of International Assistance and to increase its availability. As a Bureau member, it particularly highlighted the high quality of requests made by the submitting States, which led to a 100 per cent approval rate, noting the Secretariat’s important work for this purpose. The delegation was pleased with the results in terms of the increasing number of States Parties filing requests for International Assistance, as well as the geographical distribution of the requests and projects. It encouraged the Secretariat to continue undertaking outreach and capacity building, including through region-specific activities, and to continue improving the geographical balance. The delegation supported the proposed amendment to the Operational Directives to enlarge the scope of preparatory assistance in order to enable States Parties without a national element already inscribed on the List to apply to the Fund.
6. The delegation of **Czechia** remarked that International Assistance is an important mechanism of international cooperation, and it congratulated all the States that had benefited from it. It welcomed the significant increase in the implementation of this mechanism and the expanded geographical scope to forty-nine beneficiary States Parties, including eleven SIDS and seventeen States Parties from the Africa region. The delegation was particularly grateful for the implementation of intangible cultural heritage safeguarding activities and measures in emergency situations. It was hoped that this mechanism is effective in implementing sustainable projects. Indeed, reports are essential tools for the effective monitoring of files and to ensure the sustainability of projects. It therefore encouraged beneficiary States to submit their reports as soon as possible. The delegation also noted the Secretariat’s activities to achieve greater visibility for this mechanism, including a series of webinars and the dissemination of the guide for International Assistance requests. It thanked the Secretariat and supported the proposal to amend the Operational Directives to allow States Parties without elements previously inscribed on the Representative List to request International Assistance for their first nomination.
7. The delegation of **Ethiopia** thanked the Secretariat for its report, commending its efforts to provide financial assistance for the protection of intangible cultural heritage while noting that the funds available are meagre compared to the number of requests from States. The Africa Group was, deservedly, the largest beneficiary of International Assistance in 2022–2023. Ethiopia, as a beneficiary of the Fund, thanked the Secretariat for the assistance provided to revitalize the traditional church education in the World Heritage site of Lalibela during an emergency.
8. The delegation of **India** supported the statement made by Czechia and Ethiopia. It referred to paragraph 7 on page 3 of the working document, to note that the geographical scope of the mechanism had expanded, with forty-nine beneficiary States Parties, including eleven SIDS and seventeen States Parties in the Africa region, and with all the Electoral Groups represented except for Electoral Group I. In addition, 36 per cent of the active projects had benefitted States Parties from Group V(a), representing Global Priority Africa. The distributions for the other Regional Groups were also given. However, it noted that the Asia Pacific Group had an allocation of International Assistance of only 20 per cent. The Asia Pacific Region is immense and starts from the Iran-Iraq border on the west, up to the international date line to the east, covering half the surface of the planet, with forty-four member States, of which nineteen are SIDS. Furthermore, 20 per cent divided by the number of Member States meant that the amount available per State was dismally low (about 0.45 per cent per State, on average) compared to other Electoral Groups, or 66 per cent less than the International Assistance given to other Electoral Groups. Moreover, as climate change will increasingly impact the Asia Pacific Group to a greater extent, as it includes a large number of SIDS (India also has many islands), it wished to see more International Assistance granted to SIDS in the Asia Pacific Group. Overall, the delegation commended the work done by the Secretariat and agreed with Ethiopia on the meagre funds available.
9. With no further requests for the floor, the **Chairperson** invited the Assistant Director-General to respond.
10. The **Assistant Director-General** explained that the data in the working document was based on requests received. For the proportions to be greater, it would require that Secretariat receive more projects. Although the Secretariat can facilitate assistance when requests are addressed to the Fund, it cannot influence the demand. Evidently, there are more requests for International Assistance from certain Regional Groups, which is why it is important to have regional group meetings to provide incentives.
11. With no further requests from the floor, the **Chairperson** **declared Decision** [**18.COM 10**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions/18.COM/10) **adopted.**
12. The **Chairperson** gave the floor to the Netherlands that had wished to speak on an earlier point.
13. The delegation of the **Netherlands** had an intervention under agenda item 7 on periodic reporting, remarking that it considers periodic reporting as an effective tool to generate analytic inputs on the State’s implementation of the Convention. Two other goals of the periodic reporting are to develop roadmaps for safeguarding living heritage, and to serve as a platform for dialogue and peer-to-peer exchange within the country. The delegation asked the Secretariat how these two stated goals will be better integrated into the working methods and the reporting form of periodic reporting. The experience in the Netherlands is that the periodic reporting process was especially useful to connect all the stakeholders in the country and to better coordinate intangible cultural heritage safeguarding. It wished to see the reporting form focus more on the processes of dialogue and exchange.
14. The **Chairperson** opened the floor to States Parties that had benefited from International Assistance and had completed their project to share their experiences.
15. The delegation of **Cuba** highlighted the importance of International Assistance, particularly for least developed countries, specifically, SIDS and countries in Africa. Regarding the project ‘Identification, definition and inventory of the ICH in the Cuban province of Guantanamo’, implemented by the National Council for Cultural Heritage of the Republic of Cuba, an amount of US$65,745 was approved. This project was of priority interest to the Ministry of Culture, despite the fact that its implementation took place during the COVID-19 pandemic and that there were delays in obtaining the resources due to measures by the United States. Nevertheless, all the planned activities were carried out and an inventory of this province was established, which has led to greater clarity when working with bearer communities and identifying the way of life of these towns in the southeast of Cuba. Moreover, this work had become an important tool for updating the rest of the nation’s inventories, becoming an example of good practices for other territories. The delegation thanked UNESCO for the opportunity to work with this important project in one of the most remote areas of the country. It also thanked the category 2 centre CRESPIAL for its unconditional support of its project.
16. [In a video message] the delegation of **Albania** presented the project ‘Community-based inventory of ICH in Albania with a view to safeguarding and transmitting to future generations’. The project was mainly developed through trainings and workshops, as well as inventorying of the elements of intangible cultural heritage present in selected regions in Albania, including the intangible cultural heritage of national and ethno-linguistic minorities. The project consisted of establishing a national coordination team composed of representatives from the Ministry of Culture and intangible cultural heritage experts, creating local teams in three pilot regions in the cities of Gjirokastra, Korçë and Shkodër, and drafting the methodological inventorying guidelines. Other activities included organizing consultations with community members and relevant stakeholders during six capacity-building workshops, obtaining final approval from the National Committee of Intangible Cultural Heritage, and ensuring the design, layout and publication of the guidelines, as well as their distribution to relevant stakeholders, including local communities. The project suffered some delays due to COVID-19. However, experts were selected and recruited to complete the national inventory methodological guidelines, which were successfully finalized and approved.
17. The **Chairperson** projected the video of the project, ‘Proud of My Heritage’, presented by **Grenada**.
18. The **Chairperson** projected the video of the project, ‘Capacity-building for safeguarding intangible cultural heritage through creation of community-based intangible cultural heritage inventory for Luang Prabang’, presented by the **Lao People’s Democratic Republic**.
19. The delegation of **Mauritania** thanked the Chairperson, UNESCO and the Assistant Director-General for the International Assistance granted for the project ‘National Oral Traditions (NOT), additional collection component’. The project was established to safeguard and enhance the sound corpus of the Mauritanian Institute for Research and Training in Heritage and Culture (IMRFPC). These sound archives comprise an important reserve of heritage of Mauritania. The recordings were collected from 1974 to 1989. At the end of the digitization of the audio cassettes and cataloguing of the corpus, which were then posted online in recent years, it emerged that certain regions of Mauritania and certain languages were only moderately represented: four of the thirteen regions account for more than 70 per cent of recordings, while 92 per cent of national language media were in Pulaar, compared to 8 per cent for the other national languages, Soninke and Wolof. The project decided to carry out an additional collection campaign of oral traditions among the communities in the targeted regions. The activities of the additional collection component took place following a training seminar, with collection of the oral traditions, sound processing, cataloguing and updating of the project site, and evaluation of the results. During the project period, IMRFPC capitalized on the collection of recordings of at-risk oral traditions through the testimonies of resource people. The information was processed to safeguard this important heritage. IMRFPC’s sound collection can respond to requests for research information. At the end of the training in the seven *wilayas* (districts) of the country, general interest in oral traditions increased. The delegation welcomed the Secretariat’s approach to conduct monitoring and evaluation missions in 2024.
20. The delegation of **Malawi** congratulated Botswana for its warm hospitality. In 2019, Malawi received International Assistance for its project ‘Safeguarding ICH in Malawi through non-formal learning and transmission’ for an amount of US$91,860. The four-month project was aimed at safeguarding Malawi’s intangible cultural heritage by increasing the number of experts trained in safeguarding, updating and developing new intangible cultural heritage inventories, and disseminating the information through non-formal education. The project achieved the following: (a) training of ninety teachers and thirty community-based youth on the elaboration of intangible cultural heritage inventories; (b) inventorying of intangible cultural heritage; (c) an apprenticeship programme conducted by the trained teachers and youth; (d) promotion of the collected intangible cultural heritage elements through local exhibitions; (e) translation of the Convention into four languages; and (f) publication of an intangible cultural heritage inventory of Malawi, volume IV. This project concluded in 2022, achieving all its objectives. Malawi thanked the Committee and the Secretariat for providing the resources and guidance, adding that the project’s results will go a long way towards safeguarding the country’s cultural heritage. It looked forward to continued collaboration on another project, launched the previous month, on safeguarding the ludodiversity of Malawi.
21. The delegation of **Mongolia** presented the outcomes of the project ‘Transmitting and stabilizing the folk long song performance technique of Limbe performers – circular breathing – through the old repertoire to new generations’, expressing gratitude to the practitioners, the Committee, and members of Mongolian associations for Limbe performers. The circular breathing technique is considered a great achievement among nomadic Mongolians and is inseparable from the traditional folk song. When Mongolia submitted the file of this element to the Urgent Safeguarding List in 2010, there were only twenty practitioners and the practice was in decline due to their age and disinterest among the youth. Since its inscription in 2011, the Mongolian government has undertaken several initiatives to safeguard and transmit this element together with community members and related bodies. However, although these initiatives have brought positive outcomes, they were still in their first phase. Thus, to further strengthen the element, safeguarding measures needed to be reinforced and future measures redefined in collaboration with the bearers and practitioners. To this end, the project was intended to strengthen and stabilize the practice, document and inventory the old repertoire, train apprentices and strengthen their skills and knowledge of the old repertoire, support the production of Limbe musical instruments, and raise public awareness. As a result of the thirty-six-month project implemented by the National Centre for Cultural Heritage between 2018 and 2022, field research and an inventory were conducted in seven provinces, and the old repertoire was documented. Apprenticeship training was established in nine areas, with forty apprentices trained by the ten practitioners for two years. Several awareness-raising activities were also conducted. Difficulties were faced due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the period of implementation was extended. The overall objectives were attained. As of 2023, there are a total of 193 practitioners and apprentices, including the 19 Limbe craftsmen registered throughout the country, and distribution of this heritage has extended from 9 to 15 areas. The project significantly contributed to the viability of this element. Mongolia planned to transfer this element from the Urgent Safeguarding List to the Representative List in the coming years, expressing gratitude to the Secretariat on behalf of the practitioners.
22. The delegation of **Mozambique** thanked UNESCO for the assistance received for the successful community inventory undertaken in the community of Chinhambudzi in Manica province. As a follow-up action, a ‘Pilot project to create a local ICH management committee and first steps towards a national strategy for decentralized ICH management’ was implemented with financial assistance from UNESCO. This project has brought many gains. For example, it enhanced the community’s awareness on the importance of safeguarding intangible cultural heritage. The creation and operationalization of the Intangible Cultural Heritage Management Committee allowed for the training of community members in the process of safeguarding and the management of intangible cultural heritage, involving young people and women. These actions are bringing visible changes in the management of intangible cultural heritage, for which Mozambique reiterated its gratitude to the Committee. This experience will be applied to the communities in other parts of the country.
23. [In a video message] the delegation of **Tonga** presented its thanks for the granting of funds for the project ‘Community-based inventorying and transmission of intangible cultural heritage in the island of Tongatapu in Tonga’. The field workers collected information on related intangible cultural heritage found in each village, which was carried out over four months, from June 2020 to February 2021. Following data collection, an expert was hired to transcribe the information into the data system. On 17 November 2022, the new data system was launched to the public; a milestone for the Ministry as this was the first of its kind. In terms of transmission and revitalization activities, after collecting the information on the five domains, the data was analysed, revealing that one of the elements, the Kupesi, requires safeguarding and revitalization. The Kupesi is one of the designs printed and drawn on the *tapa* cloth, with each Kupesi endowed with meaning, history and a place of origin. Today, most people simply paint or draw it, but it is devoid of meaning.
24. The delegation of **Grenada** thanked the Secretariat for its funding, totalling US$99,862 for the project ‘Proud of my heritage’: transmission and safeguarding of the ICH in Grenada through inventorying and education initiatives’. Though granted in 2020, the year-long project did not begin until 2022 due to COVID-19. The project was very extensive and began with capacity-building sessions to train stakeholders in the Convention. With this training, volunteers went out into communities to interview practitioners. A total of forty-three practitioners were interviewed, from twenty-four communities across three islands, and a total of twelve elements were examined. As a result, an intangible cultural heritage resource guide was produced for primary schools. Teachers were trained in how to use these guides in schools and how to train students to interview and collect information on intangible cultural heritage and add it to the inventory. This was the first time that Grenada recorded any of its intangible cultural heritage, so it was a large investment, which it hoped to build on in the next few years.

**ITEM 11 OF THE AGENDA**

**REFLECTION ON A BROADER IMPLEMENTATION OF ARTICLE 18 OF THE CONVENTION AND PROPOSAL FOR RELATED AMENDMENTS TO THE OPERATIONAL DIRECTIVES**

**Documents:** *[LHE/23/18.COM/11](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-23-18.COM-11_EN.docx)*

*[LHE/23/18.COM/INF.11](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-23-18.COM-INF.11_EN.docx)*

**Decision:** [*18.COM 11*](https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions/18.COM/11)

1. The **Chairperson** turned to agenda item 11 and the Reflection on a broader implementation of Article 18 of the Convention and proposal for related amendments to the Operational Directives.
2. Before starting the examination of the item, the delegation of **India** sought clarification on page 8, Annex 1 of working document 10 on the assistance granted to Xeedho, and whether the report was due in July 2023 or had already been received.
3. The **Assistant Director-General** explained that, although the report was received after the date of submission, it was considered as having been received.
4. The **Chairperson** welcomed Mr Martin Sundin to the podium to present his report as the Chair of the Open-ended intergovernmental working group. He is the Director-General of the Institute for Language and Folklore (ISOF) from Sweden.
5. The **Chair of the Open-ended working group, Mr Martin Sundin**,explainedthat the reflection on a broader implementation of Article 18 was a comprehensive process involving expert consultation and intergovernmental discussions. As the entrusted Chair of the Open-ended intergovernmental working group, he expressed his gratitude to all the stakeholders involved in the reflection process for their significant engagement and cooperation, including experts, accredited NGOs and States Parties. He also thanked the five Vice-Chairpersons from Estonia, Peru, the Philippines, Angola and Morocco for their support during the working group meeting. During this session, many praised Mr Tim Curtis for his excellent work as Secretary for the Convention, which he shared. He also praised and thanked Ms Fumiko Ohinata, Mr Julien Nakata, and all the other members of the team for their expert knowledge, skill and commitment. Summarizing the process with which the reflection on a broader implementation of Article 18 took place, the Chair recalled the outcomes of the ‘global reflection on the listing mechanisms of the Convention’. The Committee had decided, in its Decision [16.COM 14](https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions/16.COM/14) in 2021, to launch a separate reflection to explore the full potential of Article 18.[[27]](#footnote-27) The idea was not only to discuss issues raised during the global reflection concerning the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices, but also to pay attention to the implementation of Article 18 of the Convention beyond the Register itself. It was recalled that the governing bodies of the Convention had already accomplished a certain number of improvements for the operationalization of the Register through the global reflection. These includedthe deletion of criterion P.9 and of the set of selection criteria for the Register (paragraph 7 of the Operational Directives), and the possibility for the Evaluation Body to recommend the inclusion of successful safeguarding experiences in the Register in the context of transfers of elements from the Urgent Safeguarding List to the Representative List (paragraph 39.3 of the Operational Directives).Subsequently, the Committee, in its Decision [17.COM 10](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/17.COM/10) at its the seventeenth session in 2022, determined the initial topics for discussion and decided on the establishment of an Open-ended intergovernmental working group to lead the reflection.The working group was able to base its work on the results of an expert meeting that took place from 19 to 21 April 2023 in Stockholm, which included the participation of twenty-one experts from all regions and was hosted by the Ministry of Culture of Sweden, the Swedish National Commission for UNESCO, and the Institute of Language and Folklore. The [final report](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-23-18.COM_EXP-4_EN.docx) of the expert meeting considered that Article 18 has far-reaching potential to fully achieve the purposes of the Convention. Their conclusions focused on: (a) how to include more good safeguarding practices in the Register; (b) the potential revisions to the selection criteria for the Register; and (c) how to better connect the Register, and the sharing of good safeguarding practices in general, to other international cooperation mechanisms of the Convention. The experts also advocated for the progressive creation of a moderated online platform for sharing good safeguarding practices, calling it essential for fully operationalizing Article 18.
6. **Mr Martin Sundin** remarked that the outcomes of the expert meeting led the Open-ended working group to be convened from 4 to 5 July 2023 at UNESCO Headquarters to discuss the following three topics. Topic 1: Improving access to and increasing the visibility of the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices. Topic 2: Towards the creation of an online platform for sharing good safeguarding experiences. Topic 3: Any other issues. The summary records of the working group meeting are referenced in paragraphs 9 of [working document 11](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-23-18.COM-11_EN.docx) and [document INF.11](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-23-18.COM-INF.11_EN.docx).The recommendations made by the working group were also set out in Annex I of working document 11. The oral report would focus on five points. First, the working group was able to address all the reflection topics established by the Committee at its seventeenth session. Second, an overall agreement was reached on ‘general considerations’, including the understanding that Article 18 has the potential to fully reflect the purposes of the Convention, as included in Recommendation 1 of the working group. The working group considered that the further implementation of Article 18 should be explored with reference to existing provisions of the Convention and its Operational Directives, the Overall Results Framework, the [Ethical Principles](https://ich.unesco.org/en/ethics-and-ich-00866#:~:text=The%20safeguarding%20of%20intangible%20cultural%20heritage%20is%20of%20general%20interest,be%20alienated%20from%20their%20own) for Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage, and the 2030 Agenda. It also considered that the implementation of Article 18 should be broadened in relation to other international cooperation mechanisms of the 2003 Convention, notably periodic reporting and international assistance, as included in Recommendations 2, 7 and 14.
7. **Mr Martin Sundin** introduced the third point, namely,that the working group requested the Secretariat to prepare the draft amendmentsto the Operational Directives for recommendations that required them. This was notably the case for Recommendation 3 concerning the selection criteria for the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices, which would entail revisions to paragraph 7 of the Operational Directives. The Committee, following its examination, was asked to consider proposing these amendments for approval to the tenth session of the General Assembly in June 2024. The working group identified procedures to be encouraged, upon validation of the Committee, which aim to further operationalize the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices. It was proposed, for instance, to index, in a searchable way, projects, programmes and activities already selected to the Register (Recommendation 6). Additionally, a call was made to adjust the 2003 Convention’s periodic reporting mechanism to better connect it to the Register (Recommendation 7b). The working group also considered that States Parties and communities shall be further encouraged to request preparatory assistance from the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund for preparing Register requests.
8. **Mr Martin Sundin** reported on the last point related to the creation of amoderated online platform for sharing good safeguarding practices. The working group considered that the creation of such a platform is essential to fully operationalize Article 18. Its main objective would be to provide a space for communities and other stakeholders of the Convention to exchange, follow-up, communicate, collaborate and build capacities around good safeguarding practices. The platform could be a tool to raise awareness about local, regional, national and international events related to the safeguarding of living heritage, with direct inputs from communities around the globe (Recommendation 11). In particular, a wider participation of communities, through an online platform, would highlight the role of living heritage in addressing global challenges (Recommendation 8). Furthermore, the working group advocated for a step-by-step approach for establishing the moderated online platform (Recommendation 12). It also considered that the principle of equitable geographic distribution among participants in the platform must be respected. To this end, low-cost and widely accessible technology should be prioritized in its setup. Ethical considerations were also discussed at length, especially with regard to consent and cooperation with the communities concerned. It was considered that all interactions with community stakeholders on the future platform should be in line with the ‘Ethical Principles for Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage’, and the UNESCO ‘Recommendation concerning the Promotion and Use of Multilingualism and Universal Access to Cyberspace’.[[28]](#footnote-28)
9. The **Chairperson** suspended the discussion of this item and announced that the plenary celebration of the twentieth anniversary of the Convention would begin shortly.

*[Friday, 8 December 2023, morning session]*

1. The **Chairperson** welcomed the delegates, remarking on the plenary celebration and reception the previous evening. The Committee had advanced well and had opened the discussion on the reflection on Article 18 under item 11. He informed the Committee that the Bureau had met that morning to discuss several issues, namely, the revision of the timetable of the Committee’s work, which had been published on the 18.COM website. Based on the progress of work, it was foreseen that all remaining items would be examined on the same day and the Secretariat had made provisions for an extended session, if needed. In addition, working document 17 had been revised to reflect the addition of a candidate from Group V(a) for election to the 2024 Evaluation Body.

**ITEM 11 OF THE AGENDA [CONT.]**

**REFLECTION ON A BROADER IMPLEMENTATION OF ARTICLE 18 OF THE CONVENTION AND PROPOSAL FOR RELATED AMENDMENTS TO THE OPERATIONAL DIRECTIVES**

1. The **Chairperson** thanked the Chair of the working group for his account of the group’s achievements. He turned to Mr Ottone to present a proposal for amendments to the Operational Directives to implement some of the recommendations of the working group.
2. The **Assistant Director-General** recalled that the Secretariat was also tasked by the working group to translate its corresponding recommendations in the form of amendments to the Operational Directives. Recommendation 3 by the working group proposed changes to the selection criteria for the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices, which would require revisions to paragraph 7 of the Operational Directives. Based on the working group’s recommendation, the Committee was asked to consider simplifying the selection criteria, implying the deletion of criteria P.2 and P.8, as well as the merging of criteria P.1/P.3, and P.6/P.7. Changes were also proposed to the chapeau of paragraph 7, with the understanding that the proposals for selection to the Register should satisfy all of the selection criteria. A proposal was made to rename the new set of simplified criteria as G.1, G.2, G.3 and so on (instead of the current P.1, P.2, P.3 and so on). This was to distinguish this new set from the previous system. The Committee was asked to consider proposing these amendments to the General Assembly for approval at its the tenth session in mid-2024. Once approved by the General Assembly, Form ICH-03 (for proposals to the Register) would be adjusted to reflect the revised selection criteria. It would therefore be available for the examination of proposals for the 2026 cycle, for which the submission deadline was in March 2025.
3. The **Chairperson** opened the floor for comments.
4. The delegation of Switzerland congratulated the Secretariat for the preparation and support of this reflection on the broader implementation of Article 18, thanking Sweden for its financial support of this important process and for the commitment of the Chair of the working group, Mr Martin Sundin. Initiated following a Committee decision at its sixteenth session, this reflection was particularly effective and pragmatic. This resulted in concrete proposals to the Committee. The delegation underlined the importance of placing intangible cultural heritage safeguarding at the heart of the Convention and the Committee’s work, as well as the need to promote, collaborate and exchange to strengthen it even further. This is the meaning of Article 18 and, more broadly, the very spirit of the Convention. On the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of the Convention, intangible cultural heritage is clearly recognized, but the projects, strategies and policies for safeguarding still need work. It was therefore important to better explain what safeguarding projects involve, how they are setup and, most importantly, how communities are at the heart of these approaches. The Register of Good Safeguarding Practices is a useful tool, but it is unfortunately still underused. The proposed changes to the criteria, reflected in the amendments to the Operational Directives, are entirely relevant. However, it was appropriate to not stop there but to improve the Register by indexing the projects’ content to ensure better access and monitoring the projects selected to the Register, in particular, through periodic reports. The Register is not a showcase, it is a tool to inspire, but it must also be updated. The establishment of a moderated online platform is an innovative way of creating a tool to exchange safeguarding experiences, particular by and for the communities concerned. The delegation supported this approach, while remaining committed to a progressive approach based on mapping and indexing existing resources and information. As such, it was relevant to promote and interlink the elements and practices inscribed.
5. The delegation of Germany expressed gratitude to Sweden for its support of the reflection towards a broader implementation of Article 18 of the Convention, thanking the Secretariat and category VI meeting experts for their valuable work on this topic thus far. It believed that the creation of an indexing system for good safeguarding practices and the eventual establishment of an online platform could improve understanding among communities and other stakeholders while strengthening international cooperation. Germany encouraged greater use of the international cooperation mechanisms, as it had done with France, Switzerland, Austria and Norway with ‘Craft techniques and customary practices of cathedral workshops, or Bauhütten, in Europe, know-how, transmission, development of knowledge and innovation’ inscribed in 2020 in the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices. Given the lower use of preparatory assistance, the budget allocated for this purpose could be applied to a future programme, of international scope, between practitioners and communities associated with these programmes, projects or activities selected in the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices. This could encourage other communities to submit an application for inclusion on the Register in order to benefit from these exchanges in the future.
6. The delegation of Peru congratulated the governing bodies of the Convention for the improvements made through the global reflection on the listing mechanisms and, more precisely, for the better operationalization of the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices. It recognized that the projects and activities registered as good practices can serve as sources of inspiration and information for our communities, who may seek advice for safeguarding their own intangible cultural heritage. For this reason, the delegation congratulated the thirty-one States Parties that had managed to register thirty-three good practices. It encouraged the Convention’s governing bodies and the Secretariat to continue this reflective work in order to make better use of this Register and to give it greater visibility. The delegation was confident that the best use of Article 18 will help achieve a better balance of representation of the world’s different cultures. It will also better represent the diversity of elements, projects and activities inscribed in the different mechanisms of the Convention. The delegation took note of the results of the working group and the proposals to implement the key recommendations, in particular, on draft amendments to the Operational Directives on selection criteria for the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices in order to motivate and facilitate new registrations. However, it doubted the effectiveness of an online platform for sharing experiences, adding that the financial resources could be used in other areas, as indicated during the working group session. Peru, like others, considered that registering good safeguarding practices is the future of this Convention and should therefore be one of its priorities in the next cycle.
7. The delegation of Brazil thanked Sweden for its support of the reflection on a broader implementation of Article 18. It also expressed doubts about the effectiveness of the online platform. Given the high prices required for its implementation and the need for management and maintenance, it was important to ensure that the communities are consulted on the technological models, legal aspects and content of this platform. In addition, it must be adapted to the capacities of the bearers, including the linguistic diversity of communities. An effective way to engage young people was also considered, who generally prefer other lighter and faster applications for online communication. The delegation took account of the diversity of safeguarding practices in member countries, from the most ephemeral to the most durable. Among the latter, particular attention must be paid not only to practices taking place within the framework of the State, but also to those cultivated within the communities themselves. Although they may not have the objectives or methods required for the Lists, they are the fruits of mechanisms created by the communities themselves to promote the continuity of what they consider important in a cultural practice. It was also important to ensure that the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices does not become a list of primary programmes and projects, intended to be copied around the world, without taking into account local characteristics, thus replicating colonial and neo-colonial perspectives.
8. The delegation of Czechia thanked those who participated in the reflection, especially Sweden for its generous contribution. Both the experts and the working groups have come up with a wide range of ideas that illustrate the immense and varied body of Good Safeguarding Practices, and the many resources that exist, which contain invaluable experiences that have not been fully brought to light. Czechia’s experts participated in formulating the proposals, and aligned with the document as presented, supporting the amendments to the Operational Directives. As for the online platform, it understood that creating a functional system with good management and a user-friendly environment is costly in effort and money and can present many challenges. But the Secretariat was already implementing demanding projects, such as the ‘Dive into Intangible Cultural Heritage’ platform.[[29]](#footnote-29) If capacities are modest and management is well established, then the project, promoted among the communities, can turn out to be a very important initiative, connecting the intangible cultural heritage community globally. People who need it may find answers to their safeguarding challenges, inspiration, or perhaps workable solutions. It should be a lively place where people can meet and where the power of the Convention would be demonstrated. The potential of Article 18 would be fully realized, and the platform could serve as a future model for other UNESCO mechanisms. The delegation also saw an important role for accredited NGOs in the development and management of such a platform, as they are the closest to the field, and work on or even create good safeguarding practices, which is a natural part of their activities, increasing their practical impact on the work of the Convention.
9. The delegation of Côte d’Ivoire congratulated the Secretariat for launching this reflection on the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices and the implementation of Article 18 of the Convention beyond the Register. In this regard, it thanked Sweden for its contribution to this outcome. The progress made is the result of immense, complex work, which required the appropriation of several provisions of the Convention. Côte d'Ivoire gratefully acknowledged the category VI meeting experts and the working group for their contributions towards this progress. It fully agreed with the importance of Article 18 because it best reflects the principles and objectives of the Convention. In reality, this Register invites sharing, solidarity, respect and mutual appreciation of our intangible cultural heritage, and hence it aligned with the proposals made. For example, the expression ‘good practices’ instead of ‘best practices’ was a relevant choice because the proposals in this Register are not in competition, not least because any safeguarding practice is a possible good practice. In addition, among the Convention’s Lists, the Register requires more criteria, some of which were redundant, which made it tedious for communities to access or to be inspired to submit proposals. Merging certain criteria was therefore a notable simplification that would facilitate access to the Register. The delegation looked forward to the online platform, as it was convinced communities wished to share their experiences of safeguarding intangible cultural heritage but were limited by the possibilities to do so. The online platform would therefore be entirely adapted to our times and will continue not only to present proposals for good practices at the international level, but also to facilitate the exchange of experiences between communities at the national level. This reflection was a great step forward in the broader implementation of Article 18. Côte d’Ivoire congratulated all those who had contributed and encouraged States Parties to make greater use of Article 18 following the amendments to the Operational Directives.
10. The delegation of Botswana expressed gratitude to the working group, in particular, the experts who shared their skills and time to work on this important reflection on how to implement Article 18 more broadly and beyond the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices, thanking Sweden for supporting this exercise. Botswana supported the recommended amendments to the Operational Directives, particularly the deletion of criteria P.2 and P.8, noting that the former criterion had placed the burden on the communities to have networks at an international level, which proved difficult, while the latter depended on self-evaluation, which may not necessarily be objective. The amendments to the Operational Directives will further simplify the selection criteria. Botswana understood the financial implications of an online platform, as proposed by the working group. It asked the Secretariat about the modalities supporting the realization of this exercise.
11. The delegation of Paraguay welcomed this effort by the working group. Along the same lines as Peru and Brazil, it stated that the online platform must be 100 per cent inclusive to be effective. In the case of Paraguay, the multilingualism of the bearers would be the first barrier to equal access. Also, the costs of the online platform could perhaps be more effectively used to create strategies of good practices that can guarantee transmission processes. It also agreed on the importance of involving young people. A good strategy was to follow their preferences in the use of applications and social networks. Generating interest and heritage production is key to the institutional, social and sustainable management of cultural heritage, as it impacts the cultural identity of new generations.
12. The delegation of Belgium welcomed the outcomes of the global reflection on the potential of Article 18, thanking Sweden for supporting the process, and the Secretariat for its guidance and work. It was pleased with Annex 2, the proposal to simplify and sharpen the criteria in Operational Directive 7, noting a major improvement in criteria G.1 to G.4. The delegation also found interesting the proposal to establish an online platform for sharing good safeguarding experiences and methods. It will help to realize paragraphs 42, 44 and 45 of the existing Operational Directives. It was also a way to mobilize extra resources and knowledge available in the NGOs, the category 2 centres, and so on. It was hoped that the Secretariat would also find the time and ambition to tackle another similar challenge decided in Windhoek in 2015 in Decision [10.COM 15.a](https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions/10.COM/15.a) in paragraphs 9 and 10. Thirdly, the Recommendations of the working group (in Annex 1) included the important Recommendation 7(a), which reads, ‘The implementation of Article 18 should be broadened to facilitate cooperation […] with reference to Articles 19 and 24 of the Convention’, should be corrected to ‘with reference to Article 19 to 24, that is, including all the articles under chapeau V, ‘International Cooperation and assistance’. This includes Article 20 and, in particular, 20(c), stating that International Assistance may be granted to support programmes, projects and activities carried out on the national, sub-regional and regional levels aimed at the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage. If included, this would also activate Operational Directive 9(c) that makes this support possible, which, although it had not yet been used, was foreseen.
13. The delegation of Belgium also mentioned that all the provisions in Article 21 should be included. It drew attention to suggestion 14 in Annex 1 proposing that specific attention should be paid to ‘the ways in which safeguarding experience identified and shared through a broader implementation of Article 18 can be connected to the 2030 SDGs as well as to the elaboration of the proposed 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda’. This had been discussed earlier during the present session in reference to the periodic reports and the two Global Policy reports that will be drafted in 2025 and 2029. The delegation also drew attention to paragraph 4 of the Operational Directives, adding that at each session, the Committee may explicitly call for proposals characterized by international cooperation, as mentioned in the articles of the Convention and/or focusing on specific priority aspects of safeguarding. It was hoped that the Committee, in forthcoming sessions, will call for interesting and convincing examples for the post-2030 Agenda, given that the provision is available and could be effective. Lastly, there should be ways to indicate whether the programmes and projects included on the Register are still active and if the actors involved are still able and willing to share their experiences and expertise. Some programmes on the Register were registered almost fifteen years ago. People retire or move, and organizations cease to exist, so there should be a way to verify whether they are still active and willing to participate, or to move the project to an archive that would be indicated on the website. It was hoped that this was also one of the suggestions of the working group dealing with this question of updating and housekeeping.
14. The delegation of Finland thanked the Secretariat, the Committee and the participating experts for all the hard work done on Article 18, thanking Sweden for its special efforts on this issue. The sharing of good safeguarding practices is at the very core of the Convention. Establishing an ‘advisory group’ is the first important step, followed by work on the platform. Already, indexing existing materials on the UNESCO intangible cultural heritage website would be a big step forward. Finland supported the involvement of civil society, practitioners and NGOs in this process. It especially supported the role of the ICH NGO Forum in establishing and developing this platform. It could be a real source of inspiration and information for communities and other stakeholders around the world. In its own work with several online platforms in Finland, it noted that online sharing works in many contexts. The Finnish Wiki Inventory of Living Heritage has 240 articles from over 400 contributors. Finland’s inventory is visited annually by 100,000 people from over 150 countries, providing easy access and lighter ways to participate and contribute so that the diversity of cultures, languages and worldviews can be better reflected. It is possible to start with a smaller initiative, gradually widening the network. It also advised looking into regional experiences, such as the [Nordic Safeguarding Practices](https://safeguardingpractices.com/) website. It supported the amendments to the Operational Directives.
15. The delegation of the Netherlands thanked Sweden for organizing the reflection on Article 18 of the Convention. It was confident that the reflection will result in improved methods of promoting and disseminating good safeguarding practices, whether included in the Register or not. The delegation supported the amendments to simplify the criteria in order to share as many good practices as possible. This reflection process is a chance to build towards an effective online tool to share good safeguarding practices from the Register, Lists, periodic reporting and International Assistance. The Netherlands applauded the fact that the platform is intended to become a space for communities and other stakeholders, such as NGOs, to exchange, collaborate and build capacities. This platform should be built around the needs of the communities and the NGOs who help the community safeguard their intangible heritage. It also applauded the advisory group mentioned in the documents. If needed, the Netherlands was willing to explore whether communities and NGOs in the Netherlands are open to being part of it. It was also considering contributing financially to the online platform tool.
16. The delegation of Norway noted that the discussion on Article 18 and the broader discussion on the listing mechanisms had led to new insights to help safeguard and secure the sustainability and legitimacy of intangible cultural heritage beyond the listing mechanism for broader work with the Convention. It thanked Sweden for the initiative and for funding the reflection process. Norway was positive about the proposal for an online platform that can serve as a resource to show the diversity of methods for safeguarding intangible cultural heritage. The platform could also be an important resource for sharing knowledge between the bearers, communities and other stakeholders, and could potentially be used by civil society. Article 18 is at the core of the Convention. The delegation agreed with Finland and the Netherlands on the importance of securing the communities’ involvement and of establishing an advisory group for developing and maintaining the online platform. The accredited NGOs represent qualified expertise in both the practice-based approach to the Convention and the involvement of civil society, as seen in the Nordic Safeguarding Practices platform. It supported the amendments to the Operational Directives.
17. The Representative of the ICH NGO Forum, Mr Sekou Berte, was grateful to Sweden for inviting the Forum to the discussion held in Stockholm, expressing gratitude to the Living Heritage Entity, the Secretariat and the Assistant Director General. The Forum remained committed to continuing its collaboration with States Parties, the Living Heritage Entity and the Secretariat in the context of the implementation of Article 18. Through the mapping exercise on areas of expertise of accredited NGOs, commissioned by the Secretariat, the Forum had conducted a study of more than 200 accredited NGOs, conducting in-depth interviews with 74 of them and identifying a significant number of good practices in several domains. The wide range of good practices included formal and non-formal education, documentation, inventory, traditional art practice, including professional occupations, archiving and, above all, the mediation of domestic violence. There exists a large, relevant database to fuel discussions and build dialogue around Article 18. The mapping project resulted in a report with recommendations on actions to share the expertise available in accredited NGOs – such as through technical assistance, professional support and supervision, and professional development – to implement and share experiences. These exchanges could also be shared in an innovative way. For the online platform, NGOs make up a large number of stakeholders who will be essential for the continuation of work, not only on Article 18 but also for the sustainable implementation of the Convention.
18. The Chairperson closed the debate, inviting Mr Sundin to comment.
19. The Chair of the working group thanked the delegations for the kind words to the Secretariat, the experts and the working group. He noted that there were no real questions about the working process of the working group. On the issues raised regarding the financing and administration of an online platform, he suggested that the Secretariat could perhaps elaborate further. Nevertheless, during the discussions, it was quite clear that this should be a moderated platform, and the working group also proposed a step-by-step approach, which was deemed very important.
20. Ms Fumiko Ohinata took note of all the comments and questions raised, which were valid and consistent with the points raised by experts and in the working group. This platform and the improvement of the Register are timely given the implementation of the Convention for the past two decades. Conditions are ripe to take on this ambitious and necessary initiative. This system will allow all stakeholders to share their safeguarding tools and experiences, bringing to the fore the aspirations of the communities. On the financing of the platform, the working documents made it clear that this part would be considered in a step-by-step approach. In the first instance, the financing will come from the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund, which would be presented under item 14, and had been foreseen in order to kickstart the initiative.
21. With no further comments, the Chairperson declared Decision [18.COM 11](https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions/18.COM/11) adopted.

**ITEM 17 OF THE AGENDA**

**ESTABLISHMENT OF THE EVALUATION BODY FOR THE 2024 CYCLE**

**Document:** [*LHE/23/18.COM/17 Rev.2*](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-23-18.COM-17_EN_Rev.2.docx)

**Decision:** [*18.COM 17*](https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions/18.COM/17)

1. **Ms Fumiko Ohinata of the Secretariat** remarked that agenda item 17 is divided into two parts. Part I concerns the voting to elect new members of the Evaluation Body under the 2024 cycle. Part II is the announcement of the results of the election. Under this item, the Committee was invited firstly to adopt the terms of reference of the Evaluation Body (Annex I of document 17 Rev.2) and appoint three new members of the Evaluation Body. The three vacant seats to be filled were: (a) a seat for an NGO from Electoral Group I; (b) a seat for an NGO from Electoral Group II; and (c) a seat for an expert from Electoral Group V(a). The Committee was also tasked with re-appointing the nine members elected in previous years. Candidates were proposed by States Parties through the Chairperson of each Electoral Group. According to Decision [9.COM 11](https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions/9.COM/11), States were encouraged to ensure at least two candidates were sent by the Chair of the Electoral Group. In addition, a maximum of three candidates could be proposed, according to paragraph 28 of the Operational Directives. Candidatures received per Electoral Group include two NGO candidates for Group I, three NGO candidates for Group II, and one expert candidate for Group V(a) (see the list of candidates in Annex 2 of document 17 Rev.2).
2. **Ms** **Fumiko Ohinata** provided more information on several aspects concerning the establishment of the Evaluation Body for the 2024 cycle. Regarding the terms of reference, the mandate of the Evaluation Body is defined in paragraphs 27 and 30 of the Operational Directives. It continues to include the evaluation of nominations and proposals to the Lists and Register, as well as the evaluation of International Assistance requests submitted together with nominations to the Urgent Safeguarding List. Furthermore, following the completion of the global reflection on the listing mechanisms of the Convention, the proposed terms of reference include the following four tasks assigned to the Body, in line with the new provisions of the Operational Directives. First, the evaluation of transfer requests between the two Lists (paragraph 30 of the Operational Directives). Second, the evaluation of International Assistance requests submitted in the context of a transfer request from the Representative List to the Urgent Safeguarding List. Third, the possibility to include a successful safeguarding experience in the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices, following a transfer request. Four, the evaluation of an element placed under ‘enhanced follow-up’ status. The Committee would proceed with a vote by secret ballot, in accordance with the Rules of Procedure of the Committee, specifically Section B of Rule 39. The Committee would also be asked to determine the sequence in which files would be evaluated and examined, a practice designed to avoid the same order on each occasion. Concretely, a letter will be drawn by lot to determine the sequence in which files would be evaluated.
3. The **Chairperson** first asked the Committee to adopt the terms of reference of the Evaluation Body for the 2024 cycle, after which two tellers would be designated to monitor the election. The members of the Committee would then proceed to vote. Item 17 would then be suspended. With no comments or objections to the terms of reference of the Evaluation Body, they were duly adopted.
4. **Ms Fumiko Ohinata** presented the procedure for voting by secret ballot. The Secretariat distributed two ballot papers to all Committee members, one for each vacant seat for Electoral Group I and II, and an envelope. Each Committee member had to clearly express his or her choice for each vacant seat. The candidate with the highest number of votes would be elected. Each ballot paper lists the names of all candidates for each seat. The names of the candidates voted for should be encircled, the ballots folded, and then placed in the envelope and sealed. The absence of a ballot paper in the envelope would be considered an abstention. Ballots with more names selected than the number of seats to be filled, or no indication of voting intention, would be considered invalid. After a few minutes’ break, Committee members were called upon to place their envelopes in the ballot box in front of the podium.
5. The **Chairperson** soughttwo volunteers as tellers. With the help of the Bureau, two tellers were identified. Ms In-Hwa Kwon (Republic of Korea) and Ms Marta González (Paraguay) joined the podium. The Secretariat performed the roll call of the States, members of the Committee in French alphabetical order.
6. **Ms Fumiko Ohinata** announced the States Parties.Germany voted; Angola voted; Saudi Arabia voted; Bangladesh voted; Botswana voted; Brazil voted; Burkina Faso voted; Côte d’Ivoire voted; Ethiopia voted; India voted; Malaysia voted; Morocco voted; Mauritania voted; Uzbekistan voted; Panama voted; Paraguay voted; Peru voted; Republic of Korea voted; Rwanda voted; Slovakia voted; Sweden voted; Switzerland voted; Czechia voted; and Viet Nam voted. All twenty-four Committee Members voted.
7. The **Chairperson** noted that all the Committee Members had voted, and the tellers collected the envelopes. Item 17 was suspended to count the votes.

**ITEM 12 OF THE AGENDA**

**THEMATIC INITIATIVES ON LIVING HERITAGE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

**Document:** [*LHE/23/18.COM/12 Rev.*](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-23-18.COM-12_EN_Rev..docx)

**Decision:** [*18.COM 12*](https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions/18.COM/12)

1. The **Assistant Director-General** explained that the working document provided an update on the Secretariat’s three thematic initiatives launched in 2021: (a) Economic dimensions of intangible cultural heritage safeguarding; (b) Safeguarding intangible cultural heritage and climate change; and (c) Safeguarding intangible cultural heritage and urban contexts. First, the document presents, in the annex, the ‘Draft guidance note on economic dimensions of intangible cultural heritage safeguarding’. This was the result of the expert meeting held from 27 to 28 September 2023 and on 20 October 2023 at UNESCO. The guidance note suggests a flexible, heritage-sensitive and rights-based approach to responsible and inclusive planning and management for the economic dimensions of intangible cultural heritage and its safeguarding. It does not propose a ‘one-size-fits-all’ approach, but stipulates that it should always be tailored to the specific needs and contexts of the communities concerned, as well as to their intangible cultural heritage. In other words, further work will be needed going forward to identify and develop case studies, tools and methodologies for targeted contexts. Second, the document provides updates on the scoping review and mapping exercise undertaken on the intersections of intangible cultural heritage and climate change. The in-depth review of the current landscape was important to situate the Convention in relation to existing initiatives taking place at global and regional levels relating to climate change, heritage and local and Indigenous knowledge. This included recent processes with other UNESCO Conventions, such as the World Heritage Convention, as well as intersectoral initiatives and emergency frameworks. This was just the first step in the process and will lay the foundation for subsequent consultations in 2024, including the organization of an expert meeting to further refine the approach and draft proposals. Third, the document presents updates on the draft desk review and methodology on incorporating intangible cultural heritage into urban planning processes. This methodology will undergo a peer review process and will be nourished by practical experience from a newly launched project in Latin America and the Caribbean, supported by the Saudi Arabia Funds-in-Trust and in collaboration with the World Heritage Centre.
2. The **Assistant Director-General** recalled that document 12 was revised on Wednesday evening (6 December 2023) so as to incorporate two main additions. The first concerned the section on economic dimensions. A new paragraph 7 was included in the draft decision to give greater visibility to the role of the Evaluation Body, encouraging it to consider the guidance note in its work to identify case studies related to the economic dimensions of intangible cultural heritage, including cases of inappropriate use, such as over-commercialization, misappropriation, dispossession, misrepresentation and decontextualization. Paragraph 8 was also revised to call on the Secretariat to facilitate the process of intersectoral cooperation through the sharing of case studies and pertinent experiences. The second major revision related to safeguarding intangible cultural heritage and climate change. This was to incorporate the insights from recent discussions among stakeholders of the 1972 Convention. Namely, to include a new paragraph 10, which draws on the language used in Resolution [24.GA 8](https://whc.unesco.org/en/decisions/8443/) of the 1972 Convention’s General Assembly adopted in November 2023 in relation to its discussion on the updating of the policy document on climate action for World Heritage. The paragraph thus makes reference to Article 18 of the 2017 UNESCO Declaration of Ethical Principles in relation to Climate Change,[[30]](#footnote-30) which states that no document or declaration on climate change should be understood as an interpretation of any of the principles and provisions of the UNFCCC or the Paris Agreement. The thematic initiatives are an ongoing work undertaken by the Secretariat in response to increasing global recognition of the relevance of intangible cultural heritage to sustainable development, as noted in the MONDIACULT Declaration and the New Delhi Leaders Declaration.[[31]](#footnote-31) This represents the opening up of the Convention into new thematic areas, as it continues to adapt to the emerging challenges faced collectively.
3. The **Assistant Director-General** concluded that, given the complexity of the issues, this would be a step-by-step process that will need to take place, at every stage, in close consultation with all stakeholders, including communities, States, NGOs and experts. Intersectoral collaboration, awareness-raising and information-sharing will be key in advancing these thematic areas and strengthening the Convention’s contribution to an inclusive, rights-based approach to sustainable development. He also emphasized that, on economic subjects, there is an undeniable synergy to be had with the 2005 Convention, which reflects on these same subjects. UNESCO should have a shared position in these Conventions in terms of how these subjects are approached.
4. The **Chairperson** was pleased to hear about the development of these new initiatives, which further highlighted the relevance of living heritage for sustainable development. He opened the floor for comments.
5. The delegation of **Brazil** welcomed the Secretariat’s efforts in the strategic development of the thematic initiatives. Brazil is especially concerned with the case of inappropriate economic uses of the Convention, such as over-commercialisation, misappropriation, dispossession, misrepresentation and decontextualization. It therefore thanked the board of experts that had developed the guidance notes addressing these issues. While the delegation welcomed its content, the Committee should move forward with mechanisms to be implemented by the different stakeholders of the Convention, be it the States Parties, the Secretariat, the NGOs, communities, or the Evaluation Body. It noted in the Evaluation Body’s excellent report, especially in its report of 2022[[32]](#footnote-32) under document [LHE/22/17.COM/7](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-22-17.COM-7-EN.docx), some interesting recommendations that might be useful to give more tangibility to the guidance note. On the initiatives on intangible cultural heritage and climate change, the delegation fully supported the steps undertaken by the Secretariat so far. It has the potential to contribute to reducing the historical and geographical imbalances in both domains: climate change action and intangible cultural heritage Lists. From the discussions of the 1972 Convention’s policy on climate change, it also offered a chance to start from already established common ground. Hence, it encouraged the Secretariat and the States Parties to explore possible synergies between the two Conventions in the field of climate change but, above all, to maintain the focus on safeguarding intangible heritage for the most constructive and fruitful engagement possible of the stakeholders.
6. The delegation of **Sweden** commended the Secretariat on the important initiatives that connect living heritage and sustainable development in general and the effects of climate change on safeguarding in particular. The robust scientific approach taken is key to facing the future challenges that climate change poses to the field of living heritage.
7. The delegation of **Switzerland** thanked the Secretariat for the overview of the three thematic initiatives. Since joining the Committee, Switzerland has actively supported the consideration of the principles of sustainable development for the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage, but also to show how living heritage can constitute a resource for sustainable development. It thus welcomed the progress made on these reflections. On the economic dimensions of safeguarding intangible cultural heritage, the reflections carried out went beyond the observation of the risk of over-commercialization, which was frequently highlighted, to better contextualize and consider the economic potential as a component of safeguarding. While these recommendations are relevant, they still remain relatively abstract. The delegation therefore supported the proposal to identify examples of good and bad practices. It sought to hear how the Secretariat planned to disseminate and promote this guidance note to give it appropriate scope. On the issue of climate change, it believed that living heritage and, in particular, the knowledge and skills linked to cultural resources, can provide responses to climate change. Living heritage shows capacities for adaptation and creativity in the face of environmental and natural risk. This theme is very important for Switzerland, and it wished to contribute to the reflection through its experiences in the field of intangible cultural heritage and climate change, that is, the expertise of research centres active on this subject, such as the UNESCO Chair on Natural and Cultural Heritage for Sustainable Mountain Development at the University of Bern, associated with CETRATD in Kenya.
8. The delegation of **Germany** emphasized the important role of intangible cultural heritage for inclusive social, economic and environmental development, congratulating the Secretariat and all the stakeholders involved so far for the progress made on the three thematic initiatives, which were both well reflected upon and cross-cutting with regard to the existing guidance, not dealing with the economic dimensions of intangible cultural heritage. The delegation encouraged the Secretariat to include this guidance note in future capacity-building workshops or to further disseminate it through its various communication tools. Regarding the initiative on intangible cultural heritage in the urban context, it drew attention to the newly established UNESCO Chair on cultural heritage and urban development at Aachen University in Germany, who is working intensively on this topic and can incorporate experiences into the further implementation of this initiative.
9. The delegation of the **Republic of Korea** welcomed the significant progress made in implementing the thematic initiatives on intangible cultural heritage safeguarding in relation to economic dimensions, climate change and urban contexts. It recognized the urgent need to address many issues that intangible cultural heritage has faced or will be facing in the future in order to ensure the sustainability of intangible cultural heritage and the communities. The International Organization for Migration predicts that there will be approximately 216 million climate refugees by 2050. Against this backdrop, traditional knowledge and practices are expected to serve as critical tools to prepare for and adapt to the looming climate disaster. As part of these efforts, the Korean government, through ICHCAP, hosted an expert meeting on building resilience for intangible cultural heritage safeguarding and responding to climate change in West and Central Asia. The meeting took place on 18–19 October in cooperation with the Regional Research Centre for Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage in West and Central Asia. The meeting provided a platform for exchanging regional experiences on climate change and developing future initiatives. In addition, the ongoing global call for case studies until 30January 2024 by the UNESCO Office in Beijing and category 2 centres in the Republic of Korea, China and Japan, along with the integrated research on disaster risk, will all provide important momentum to identify the threats to intangible cultural heritage posed by climate change and to explore how to respond to climate change through intangible cultural heritage. This initiative will further contribute to the development of a guidance note on intangible cultural heritage safeguarding in the context of climate change. Such cases will be disseminated in a more visible way online and offline through publications to be supported by ICHCAP. The Republic of Korea extended gratitude for the Secretariat’s effort to develop a guidance note on intangible cultural heritage safeguarding in the context of climate change. It was hoped that intangible cultural heritage safeguarding will be integrated into cultural policies and planning in the States Parties in response to the growing climate threats, leading to enhanced capacities of relevant stakeholders.
10. The delegation of **Botswana** agreed to the new development of living heritage and its relationship with climate change and sustainable development, which should consider the needs and contexts of different communities when implementing the safeguarding plans of intangible cultural heritage. Each community experiences intangible cultural heritage differently according to the socio-economic dimensions of their specific localities. For example, Botswana conducted a study on the contribution of the sector to the national economy, and new insights indicate its importance relating to other traditional economic sectors. The synergy between culture Conventions was welcomed, as it will contribute to strengthening the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage. It was also important to have case studies related to different settings in the implementation of the Convention.
11. The delegation of **Mauritania** thanked the Secretariat for its excellent report and for its important initiatives relating to the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage and sustainable development. It also welcomed the new methodology adopted, and called for the strengthening of intersectoral cooperation, which will undoubtedly promote the sharing of relevant experiences. Mauritania was also satisfied with the progressive and inclusive process integrating all stakeholders.
12. The delegation of **Morocco** welcomed the Secretariat’s initiative on the thematic reflections, which are global issues on which everyone will have to weigh in and try to provide transversal responses that can bring us all together, whatever the social and cultural contexts. Regarding the economic dimension, the delegation agreed that there had been many misunderstandings and disagreements in the past on questions related to commercialization. This was also an important dimension with regard to sustainable development, and one which should be leveraged with realistic and objective monitoring and that serves as a good practice, which is important for many communities. It was hoped that this reflection would continue to move forward with the help of the Secretariat and experts. The delegation also hoped to have a roadmap and points for reflection in relation to the economic dimension. On the issues of urban contexts and climate change, it seemed that everyone fully agreed to act together, as these are issues of common concern affecting our future and those of future generations.
13. The delegation of **Panama** brought the Committee’s attention to the fundamental work of intangible cultural heritage related to the massive migration that is taking place in the jungles and regions of Darién, connecting to Central America, where rivers and jungle areas were being destroyed. Panama is a country that is greatly committed to migrants. It is concerned because of the very significant devastation taking place, to the point that many of the Indigenous people are moving out of the jungle to other areas to look for natural resources as a result of the environmental damage. The intangible cultural heritage of the Indigenous areas, without the elements that represent them, is also a point that must be taken into account.
14. The delegation of **Belgium** welcomed the report of the thematic sessions and thanked all involved for their hard work. Elaborating on the policy situation in Flanders on these themes, the delegation reported that the Flemish intangible cultural heritage policy note, inspired by Belgium’s periodic report adopted in June 2022, found one of the main challenges listed to be the development of policies enhancing intangible cultural heritage within broader cultural policies. It firmly believed that an optimum interaction between intangible cultural heritage and other policy areas is crucial to giving intangible cultural heritage policy more potency. The possible links are numerous. The Flemish intangible cultural heritage policy note opts to first prioritize more interaction with immovable heritage policies, tourism policies, and education policies. Tourism forms an important pillar with regard to the economic dimensions of safeguarding intangible cultural heritage. There are large, well-known crowd-pullers like parades and processions, or smaller ones like shrimp-fishing on horseback in Oostduinkerke; these elements are already on the radar of tourism policy and its policymakers. With the initiative ‘Travel to Tomorrow’, Flanders and the Flemish Tourism Agency sought to concentrate more on sustainable tourism through a strong collaboration with local communities and actors. This strongly aligns with the principles of sustainably safeguarding intangible cultural heritage. Moreover, NGOs, researchers and heritage communities have been actively engaging on the subject of sustainable intangible cultural heritage tourism development, collaborating on the ICH NGO Forum’s web dossier on intangible cultural heritage and sustainable tourism. In 2024, the European-funded project ‘ICH Journeys’, with five partnering countries, including five UNESCO-guided safeguarding practices and listed heritage elements from Croatia, Italy, Sweden, Poland and Belgium, will explore this challenging subject in the field. Intangible cultural heritage and sustainable development are inextricably connected. Intangible cultural heritage itself can be a resource for sustainable development, such as the multinational file ‘Traditional irrigation’, which was inscribed during this Committee session. It demonstrates deeply rooted knowledge of our natural environment and surroundings. This ancient and practical wisdom may be a valuable and inspiring resource to address the many challenges of climate change we face. The primary regulatory framework for sustainable development worldwide is the UN 2030 Agenda with its Sustainable Development Goals, as it joins forces with all stakeholders. The challenge for the coming years is to work concretely with these goals in intangible cultural heritage policy. In the Flemish policy, collaborating with other policy areas is necessary, for example, in sustainable tourism, but also in a more integrated synergy with the 2005 Convention.
15. The delegation of **Finland** thanked the Secretariat and all participating countries for the work on sustainable development and the thematic initiative. The issue of sustainable development is of utmost importance. No matter how busy we are in our everyday work, the issue of the future of the planet simply cannot wait. It demands all our efforts to change our everyday practices, mindsets and the ways we work. The focal points and many key players in the work of the Convention need to be challenged and we must ask difficult questions. The delegation called for even greater efforts in anchoring these results into the everyday work of key stakeholders in the form of more online events and workshops. This would help to disseminate the learnings. The results of these initiatives are strong only when they are put to use. The MONDIACULT Declaration underlined that culture, including living heritage, must be recognized, not only as a fundamental right but as a public good. In Europe, it was happy to see Spain take the next important step as part of its presidency on the Council of the European Union. There is a strong cultural dimension in sustainable development, a dimension that promotes the sustainable transformation needed to realize the objectives of the 2030 Agenda. It was time for all States Parties to recognize culture as the fourth pillar of sustainable development and to mainstream culture across the global development agenda. Finland is also keen to share experiences in bringing sustainability and intangible cultural heritage together in its work on the project LIVIND-Creative and Living Cultural Heritage as a resource for the Northern Dimension. In the last two years, Finland had organized several online events, gathering more than 800 colleagues from 40 countries, for whose cooperation it was grateful.
16. The **Representative of the** **ICH NGO Forum,** **Ms Janet Blake,** wished to highlight the work conducted on mapping the NGOs, which showed the great breadth of expertise among the accredited NGOs of the Convention. In particular, NGOs are not only operating on safeguarding intangible cultural heritage but also in areas such as social development, which is essential to the whole notion of sustainable development. The Representative mentioned the sub-regional meeting ‘Safeguarding ICH and building resilience to climate change and its impacts in Western and Central Asia’ with a special focus on the role of non-governmental actors, which was co-organized by one of the accredited NGOs based in the Islamic Republic of Iran, and which had a strong focus on the role of NGOs.
17. The **Assistant Director-General** agreed that these issues were undoubtedly some of the most challenging and observed how the discussion on the subject of commercialization had moved forward. The Assistant Director-General believed that the step-by-step approach adopted would build something solid over time. He also agreed, as mentioned by some members of the Committee, that the Convention cannot just rely on internal documents; they must be communicated and elaborated with the States Parties that are working on these specific issues. Indeed, work had just started on a compilation of case studies, with the intention of publishing it soon. The Assistant Director-General took note of the already established cooperation with UNESCO Chairs, as mentioned by Germany, adding that the Secretariat was indeed already working with them.
18. In terms of planned actions, the **Assistant Director-General** explained that there exists an interagency mechanism of United Nations agencies that meets every two months, where the Food and Agriculture Organization, the World Intellectual Property Organization and others share ideas. The plan was to introduce these topics. Every two months, the Secretariat will put certain issues on the table so that all the agencies can share how they plan to work on these issues. This approach was already planned for the next meeting in January 2024. Another project proposed, and which was discussed with the ICH NGO Forum in Rabat in 2022, was to hold online meetings in 2024 with both accredited NGOs of the 2003 Convention and the 2005 Convention, as well as the focal points of the creative cities. Bringing these stakeholders together would allow us to see the discussion on these topics from different perspectives, thus setting up a dialogue with civil society organizations and benefitting from the viewpoints of experts. Obviously, the States Parties would be welcome to participate. The Assistant Director-General believed that these interlinkages were necessary and achievable by working on these issues in a more holistic way, a point raised by Brazil. The Republic of Korea mentioned the work of ICHCAP, a great partner that was already working on very specific cases with several countries. Indeed, some of the category 2 centres have learned experiences that could be taken to other regions. Even though it is not in their mandate, they work within a regional scope, and have extraordinary experience that the Secretariat would want to share even more with other regions. The Assistant Director-General thanked all the States Parties for their positive comments, congratulating them for having been part of this reflection, which was still at its starting point. Other issues may appear, and more in-depth work will follow based on the experiences learned.
19. With no further requests, the **Chairperson declared Decision** [**18.COM 12**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions/18.COM/12) **adopted**.

**ITEM 13 OF THE AGENDA**

**INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE FUND: VOLUNTARY SUPPLEMENTARY CONTRIBUTIONS AND OTHER ISSUES**

**Document:** *[LHE/23/18.COM/13](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-23-18.COM-13_EN.docx)*

**Decision:** *[18.COM 13](https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions/18.COM/13)*

1. The **Chairperson** turned to agenda item 13onthe Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund: voluntary supplementary contributions and other issues.In accordance with Articles 25.5 and 27 of the Convention, it is the Committee’s responsibility to approve the voluntary supplementary contributions to the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund provided by States Parties over and above their annual assessed contributions.Voluntary supplementary contributions are primarily intended to support the funding priorities approved by the Committee at its sixteenth session in 2021 for the period 2022–2025, namely to: (a) strengthen capacities to safeguard intangible cultural heritage using multi-modal approaches and contribute to sustainable development; and (b) safeguarding intangible cultural heritage in formal and non-formal education.
2. The **Assistant Director-General** explained that, in accordance with Decision [17.COM 12](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/17.COM/12), the Secretariat was requested to report on progress in the implementation of any voluntary supplementary contribution to the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund received since its last session. Furthermore, in accordance with Decision [7.COM 20.1](https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions/7.COM/20.1) the Secretariat was requested to report at each session on all forms of voluntary contributions received since the Committee’s previous session. Working document 13 provided an overview of the support received from 1 January to 30 June 2023.
3. **Mr Julien Nakata** **of the** **Secretariat** further explained that the first eighteen months of the biennium were marked by a sharp drop in voluntary supplementary contributions. The total amount received from 1 January 2022 to 30 June 2023 was US$330,248,against US$757,267for the same period during the previous 2020–2021 biennium. During the first half of 2023, two voluntary supplementary contributions were received, for a total amount of US$48,528. Under Funding priority 1:Capacity-building programme, only one contribution was made to the Fund by the Republic of Korea through ICHCAP to support the development of a ‘Practical handbook on periodic reporting’ with a self-learning tool on the Overall results framework for the 2003 Convention. Since the beginning of the biennium, a total of US$196,046was received in support of this funding priority (as described in the annex of document 13). This represents 4 per cent of the US$5 million mobilization target set for the 2022–2025 quadrennium. In addition, Priority 1 continues to receive significant support, with twenty-nine projects financed by contributions in the form of Funds-in-Trust or additional contributions under UNESCO’s Regular Programme from governments, category 2 centres, NGOs or the private sector. Under Funding priority 2: Intangible cultural heritage in education, no voluntary supplementary contributions were made during the reporting period to support projects aimed at integrating intangible cultural heritage into formal and non-formal education. However, five projects and activities received support from category 2 centres for initiatives in Asia, and from a State Party for a project in Africa. For both funding priorities, a detailed list of contributions could be found in working document 13.
4. **Mr Julien Nakata** informed the Committee that only one new voluntary supplementary contribution was made to the Sub-fund for strengthening the human resources of the Secretariatduring the first half of 2023. This contribution was made by Slovakia for an amount of US$8,528. In addition, the Government of China continued to support the Secretariat with a loaned staff member. Since January 2022, the total amount of contributions to the Sub-fund was US$134,202, representing 7 per cent of the biennial target set by the General Assembly. Finally, various contributions made to the Convention by governments, category 2 centres, United Nations agencies and the private sector had helped to implement thirty projects that were currently ongoing in all regions. They covered a wide range of projects and themes, such as safeguarding cultural heritage in urban contexts, supporting the safeguarding of Indigenous knowledge, safeguarding living heritage through the development of cultural and creative industries and entrepreneurship, and promoting heritage-sensitive tourism. As the reporting period covered ended in June 2023, the Assistant Director-General wished to bring to the Committee’s attention some recent developments concerning voluntary contributions.
5. The **Assistant Director-General** underlined that, while the Convention received significant support through tightly earmarked modalities such as Funds-in-Trusts, targets for both funding priorities are continuously not reached in terms of voluntary supplementary contributions. The situation is very similar for the Sub-fund for the human resources of the Secretariat. The Committee might therefore wish to encourage donors to support the Convention through voluntary supplementary contributions to enable the Secretariat to continue implementing projects to safeguard living heritage and develop new initiatives, with the proper means to achieve the objectives set for the quadrennium. He was pleased to inform the Committee of several recent positive developments after the reporting period. In October 2023, France contributed €75,000 and Monaco €10,000 to the Sub-fund to enhance the human resources of the Secretariat. In November 2023, the Netherlands contributed €75,000 to support the integration of intangible cultural heritage into formal and non-formal education in the Caribbean. The Secretariat was grateful to the States Parties for their generous and renewed commitment in support of the Secretariat’s work.
6. The delegation of **Brazil** remarked on the ambitious agenda, which went beyond the celebratory nature of inscriptions and the valorization of intangible cultural heritage as a vector for sustainable development, a shared commitment for all States Parties. For this reason, Brazil is attentive to the sustainability of the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund with its several contributions, even during difficult times, such as during the pandemic. In addition to the ordinary contributions, Brazil also contributed to two important thematic projects. First, it contributed to the original meeting of African focal points for periodic reporting held in Algeria on 25–29 April 2023. The focal points were supported to undertake the periodic reporting exercise in their countries in line with the reform of the reporting mechanism. This included training on participatory methodologies for data collection, stakeholder participation in the reporting process, and the use of the online form. Thanks to the support of the Government of Brazil, interpretation and translation of training materials in the Portuguese language, the most spoken in the southern hemisphere, was made available for the entire eight-month capacity-building process, benefiting the African Portuguese-speaking countries. The second project sought to foster synergies between the Convention and the International Day of Indigenous languages, involving research aimed at valuing the intangible cultural heritage of Indigenous groups in different regions of the world, and highlighting the techniques and knowledge of Indigenous populations and their contribution to sustainable development. Brazil looked forward to seeing the results of this important research at the next General Assembly of the Convention in June 2024.
7. The delegation of **Slovakia** thanked the Secretariat for the report, which, indeed, presented a mixed picture. Nevertheless, it was grateful to the countries that voluntarily contributed to the Fund after the publication of the report. It specifically drew attention to the Sub-fund, which is intended to sustainably enhance the human capacities of the Secretariat, and to enable it to respond to the needs expressed by States Parties. Slovakia renewed its pledge to support the Secretariat through the Sub-fund.
8. The **Chairperson** noted a slight amendment on paragraph 4 of the draft decision.
9. The **Assistant Director-General** remarked that it was not an amendment but rather a technical addition to introduce the Netherlands as a contributor.
10. With no further comments, the **Chairperson** **declared Decision** [**18.COM 13**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions/18.COM/13) **adopted.**

**ITEM 14 OF THE AGENDA**

**DRAFT PLAN FOR THE USE OF THE RESOURCES OF THE INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE FUND IN 2024 AND 2025**

**Documents:** *[LHE/23/18.COM/14](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-23-18.COM-14_EN.docx)*

*[LHE/23/18.COM/INF.14](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-23-18.COM-INF.14_EN.docx)*

**Decision:** [*18.COM 14*](https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions/18.COM/14)

1. The **Chairperson** turned to the examination of agenda item 14 on the Draft plan for the use of the resources of the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund in 2024 and 2025’. It was recalled that the Committee’s functions are laid out in Article 7 of the Convention. One of these functions is to propose to the General Assembly of States Parties a draft plan for the use of the resources of the Fund. As the present Committee was meeting in the year before the next General Assembly, it was asked to examine the spending plan for the next two years, as proposed by the Secretariat. This is an important subject for the Committee and for the Convention as a whole, as many of the achievements over the past two years have been possible thanks to the **Intangible Cultural Heritage** Fund.
2. The **Assistant Director-General** explained the two documents of agenda item 14. The document INF.14 includes the narrative and financial reports on the implementation of the Fund from 1 January 2022 until 30 June 2023, as well as the financial statement on the use of the Fund issued by the Bureau of Strategic Planning. Working document 14 is made up of two main sections. The first section presents the recent trends in the implementation of the Fund and provides a detailed analysis of expenditures and incomes of the current biennium. The second section concerns the future;it proposes a draft plan for the use of the resources of the Fund for the next biennium (2024–2025) and the first six months of 2026. To this end, a draft plan for the use of the resources of the Fund was annexed to the working document.
3. **Ms Fumiko Ohinata of the Secretariat** presented the recent trends. During the 41 C/5 biennium, the total income of the Fund remained relatively unchanged, increasing slightly by 2 per cent compared to the previous biennium for the same period. Meanwhile, the expenditure rate increased, reaching 60.4 per cent as of 30 June 2023. In comparison, this rate was at 32.4 per cent as of 30 June 2021. According to the latest forecast, the expenditure rate at the end of the biennium may reach as high as 82 per cent, which would represent the highest expenditure rate of the Fund since 2010 and will surpass, in nominal terms, the level of expenditure reached prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. It was noted that, should the level of expenditure continue at such a high level, the total budget of the Fund – and therefore the financial resources available – will diminish in the future. It was also interesting to note that the expenditures exceeded US$5.2 million, whereas the compulsory assessed contributions for 2022–2023 represented US$3.6 million. Such an increase in expenditure reflected the fact that States Parties had significantly made greater use of the International Assistance mechanism. It also showed that the Secretariat was able to respond to the growing needs of the States Parties and advance in many areas that are important for the life of the Convention, as presented under agenda item 5 (Secretariat’s report). Looking at International Assistance in more detail, the expenditure rate for budget lines 1, 1.1 and 2 reached 56 per cent, with another six months remaining in the current biennium, whereas it represented 44 per cent for the entire 2020–2021 biennium. This increase can be attributed to: (a) the increased number of International Assistance requests approved (twenty-five requests against twelve for the same period in the previous biennium); (b) the upstream work of the Secretariat and the technical support provided to States Parties to elaborate their requests; (c) the increased use of technical assistance by States Parties to develop and revise their requests (nine States Parties received the support of experts, against three in the previous biennium); and (d) actions to promote the objectives of the International Assistance mechanism.
4. **Ms Fumiko Ohinata turned to the future** plan for the implementation of the Fund (summarized in the annex of working document 14). The draft plan covers a period of twenty-four months (2024–2025), as well as the first six months of 2026. The proposed budget for the first six months of 2026 corresponded to one-quarter of the total budget approved for the period 2024–2025. If endorsed by the Committee at the present session, the draft plan would be submitted to the tenth session of the General Assembly in June 2024 for approval. The draft plan was based on an estimated amount available for the next biennium, approximately US$7 million (in comparison, the budget of this biennium amounted to US$8.7 million). However, the tenth session of the General Assembly will approve the plan for the use of the **Intangible Cultural Heritage** Fund on the basis of the real amount available as of 31 December 2023. As regards the overall budget of the Plan, all budget lines were maintained. However, the Secretariat wished to propose some adjustments.
5. **Ms Fumiko Ohinata** explained that, in line with the priorities of the Fund, the Secretariat proposed that the majority of the resources continue to be allocated to International Assistance (Budget Lines 1, 1.1 and 2) for a combined percentage of 65.1 per cent. Budget Line 1 (International Assistance) would be again assigned the majority of the allocation of the Fund (50 per cent). Budget Line 1.1 (Safeguarding Implementation and Monitoring team) will be assigned 12.3 per cent. Budget Line 2 (Preparatory Assistance) would slightly increase from 2.6 per cent to 2.8 per cent. This increase was proposed in light of the potential additional costs that may result from the extension of the preparatory assistance mechanism to States Parties with no national elements inscribed on the Representative List, as recommended by the Committee, endorsed by the General Assembly, and presented in agenda item 10. This line currently covered preparatory assistance to nomination files and the provision of technical assistance to States Parties for preparing international assistance requests. Budget Line 3 (Other functions of the Committee) would be maintained at 20 per cent of the total budget approved and dedicated to the capacity-building programme and the integration of **intangible cultural heritage** into development plans, policies and programmes, as well as to improve the management of knowledge, information and monitoring of the Convention, and awareness-raising and outreach.
6. **Ms Fumiko Ohinata** further explained that the proposed Plan includes a percentage breakdown in terms of Expected Results (ER), in line with the Outputs approved in the C/5. The Secretariat therefore proposed to divide budget line 3 into two ERs (instead of four ERs in the present biennium) to better align the activities with the two performance indicators defined in the 41 C/5 and 42 C/5. The proposed allocation per expected result would remain unchanged, with 52 per cent for the new ER1, combining current ERs 2 and 3 (respectively 33 per cent and 19 per cent), and 48 per cent for the new ER2, combining current ERs 1 and 4 (respectively 25 per cent and 23 per cent). As in preceding plans, the present draft decision proposed that the Committee authorize the Secretariat to make transfers between activities included within the specific proposals for budget line 3 (Other functions of the Committee) up to a cumulative amount equivalent to 5 per cent. Budget lines 4, 5 and 6, covering the participation of **intangible cultural heritage** experts representing developing States Parties in statutory meetings, was proposed to be slightly decreased to 2.5 per cent, 2.7 per cent and 2.7 per cent from 3.1 per cent, 3.3 per cent and 3.3 per cent, respectively. This would still allow the Fund to respond to all the requests from Committee Members, and most, if not all, requests submitted by States Parties not members of the Committee and accredited NGOs. Budget line 7 was also proposed to be decreased from 7.7 per cent to 7 per cent to cover the cost of the advisory services. In addition, in line with the discussion under agenda item 11 (on the implementation Article 18 of the Convention), this budget line was foreseen to cover the costs associated with the initial setup of an online platform for sharing good safeguarding experiences to fully implement Article 18 of the Convention. Finally, the present draft decision proposed that the Committee continue to authorize the Secretariat to operate transfers between budget lines 4, 5, 6 and 7, up to 30 per cent of their initial total allocation. The Secretariat would inform the General Assembly and the Committee at their next respective sessions of the exact amount transferred between budget lines 4, 5, 6 and 7.
7. The **Chairperson** thanked the Secretariat for the detailed presentation of the Plan for the use of its resources for the next 2024–2025 period, opening the floor for comments.
8. **The delegation of Brazil** returned to an earlier point raised by the Latin American region under the discussion of best practices on the implementation of the online platform. It asked the Secretariat to elaborate further on how the development of this platform would be planned with the resources of the Fund, and what the next steps would be to follow up on this initiative. It was also noted that category IV meetings were sponsored by the **Intangible Cultural Heritage** Fund.
9. **The Assistant Director-General** explained that category IV meetings had not been financed from the Fund up to now, although this could change in the future.
10. **Ms Fumiko Ohinata clarified that the issue concerned the** initial setup of the moderated online platform in relation to Article 18 that the Committee discussed under agenda item 11. Its initial cost was estimated at around US$300,000, as presented in working document 11. The Secretariat’s idea was to allocate funds under budget line 7 as well as budget line 3. The funds would essentially cover for mapping, IT developments, content preparation, initial testing, establishing of case studies and the network that the experts proposed, as endorsed by the Open-ended working group. The Secretariat understood that the Committee was also happy to go along with the plan, adding that the funds would not impact any other normal operations of the Convention.
11. **The Assistant Director-General added that the Committee could consider taking into account the debate that had just taken place in view of the meetings with the internal administration services. Thus, in light of the debate, it was important to see how technology, data or digital platforms can help realize the project. This reflection must also happen at the Secretariat level so that it may present a more interactive tool in relation to the instruments available. Following this internal reflection, the Secretariat will keep the Committee informed of the proposal before incurring any expenses. Indeed, the issue was not about creating pages or platforms but rather how to maintain them. The matter will thus be discussed internally so that proposals can be formalized to see how best to move forward. The Committee was therefore asked at this stage to agree with the principle.**
12. **With no further comments, the Chairperson declared Decision** [**18.COM 14**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions/18.COM/14) **adopted.**

**ITEM 15 OF THE AGENDA**

**REPORT OF THE NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS FORUM**

**Document:** *[LHE/23/18.COM/15](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-23-18.COM-15_EN.docx)*

**Decision:** *[18.COM 15](https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions/18.COM/15)*

1. **The Assistant Director-General recalled that since** 2020, the Committee has examined a ‘Report of the NGO 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)). This is the fourth consecutive session where the Committee **examines** the ICH NGO Forum report, in recognition of the important role they play in the implementation of the Convention. The annex to document 15 contained the report submitted by the ICH NGO Forum to the present session of the Committee. Mr Sekou Berte, representative of the **accredited** NGO ‘Agence du patrimoine culturel du Mali’ and current chair of the Executive Board of the ICH NGO Forum, would present a brief overview of the report. Mr Ottone invited the Secretariat to first report to the Committee on the results of the collaboration between the Secretariat and the Forum.
2. **Ms Fumiko Ohinata of the Secretariat** wished to bring to the Committee’s attention the results of the mapping exercise. In 2021, the Secretariat commissioned the ICH NGO Forum to initiate a mapping of the domains of competence of accredited NGOs, pursuant to the Committee’s Decision [14.COM 15](https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions/14.COM/15). For practical reasons, and as a first round, it was decided that the mapping exercise would first cover sixty-five accredited NGOs: one-third of the total number of accredited NGOs at the time the mapping started. The exercise had been completed and, as a concrete outcome of the mapping, individual pages showcasing the information gathered for each of the NGOs covered during this pilot phase were now available through the [webpage](https://ich.unesco.org/en/accredited-ngos) of the Convention. When scrolling through the list of accredited NGOs, those covered by the mapping are now indicated with their corresponding logo. Taking the accredited NGO [Association Île du Monde](https://ich.unesco.org/en/accredited-ngos/accredited-ong-01151) as an example, the statutory references for its accreditation could be seen on the right side. Here, the areas of expertise and competence of the accredited NGO are presented in a concise and visual manner based on the information gathered through the mapping exercise in consultation with the NGO concerned. At the bottom of the page was a link to the home page of the NGO. An individual [brochure](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/ngo/01151-en.pdf) was also produced by the Forum and was available for download. If the Committee so wished, it was planned to continue working with the Forum to map the remaining NGOs.
3. The **Chairperson** congratulated the Secretariat for its first round of the mapping exercise, which would help highlight the expertise among the NGO networks.
4. The **Chair of the Executive Board of the ICH NGO Forum[[33]](#footnote-33), Mr Sekou Berte**, spoke on behalf of the ICH NGO Forum to thank the host country and Sweden, his peers and colleagues, and the Committee for the opportunity to present the highlights of the Forum’s activities. Over the past year, the Forum had launched a number of new initiatives, while providing advisory services to the Convention, in accordance with Article 9. The Forum is the leading representative of civil society, representing 217 accredited NGOs, and more in the future. In addition to community practitioners, it includes organizations operating at regional and international levels that have extraordinary expertise on promoting policies that are consistent with the Convention. The NGOs are proactively responding to the concerns raised by the Committee regarding the serious geographic imbalance among NGOs. In the four months preceding the 30 April accreditation deadline, the Forum held workshops, information sessions and capacity-building sessions in Asia and the Pacific, Africa and Latin America, as well as sessions co-sponsored by category 2 centres. These events introduced the Convention and the Forum as a growing structure, highlighting the benefits of accreditation and presenting step-by-step instructions on how to complete the accreditation forms. These activities generated numerous new accreditation requests, including thirteen new requests from Latin America and the Caribbean. In the future, the action plan for equitable geographic representation will include the creation of a database of non-accredited NGOs to join those that have been accredited, to ensure regional balance. Every NGO in under-represented regions was tasked with recruiting new NGOs, as well as with collaborating with States Parties to identify new NGO candidates. Recruitment focused on new applications from entities such as cultural organizations, libraries, and archives involved in **intangible cultural heritage**, for the development of a toolbox of short videos, awareness leaflets, and recommendations for user-friendly revisions to accreditation forms.
5. **Mr Sekou Berte** explained that the Forum maintained an inclusive governance structure within the Executive Board, which includes representatives of the six UNESCO Electoral Regions. It had expanded opportunities for Forum members from all regions to participate in its activities. Orientation sessions were held every year in French and English for new NGOs joining the Forum. The purpose was to discover how NGOs can participate in the Forum’s working group initiatives. The main platforms for participation are the working groups, including new groups for policy instrument development, conflict- and disaster-affected communities, living heritage and climate change, research, the global results framework, ethics and more balanced geographical representation. The new bi-weekly virtual café space offers all members the opportunity to learn more about and discuss Forum issues and policies, in addition to its website and newsletter. All regions are represented in its annual online magazine [#HeritageAlive](https://www.ichngoforum.org/heritage-alive-news/), which discusses issues such as traditional musical instruments, storytelling, culinary traditions and traditional medicine, which drive the volume of its activities and initiatives. The Forum also launched a strong partnership with the World Heritage Centre, which brings together tangible and intangible cultural heritage in projects commissioned by the Centre. In 2023, the Forum produced a report containing case studies and recommendations on **intangible cultural heritage**, crafts and sustainable tourism in and around World Heritage sites, which was carried out by NGOs from Latin America, Asia, Europe and Africa. This report covered culturally appropriate presentations to tourists, hands-on activities, information transmission and certification of artisans, educational programmes, and challenges to tourism sustainability. It included recommendations for joint working groups to share information and create collaborations, videos and posts on living heritage, technical assistance and mentoring for **intangible cultural heritage** professional development for the tourism industry, case studies and future research opportunities, as well as a website on **intangible cultural heritage**, intangible heritage and tourism, and the World Heritage Centre. The ambition with these activities was to be able to expand the work undertaken by the Forum, and it would also be desirable to have professional contracts. The mapping exercise made it possible to identify dozens of good safeguarding practices from more than eighty accredited NGOs, and these include formal and non-formal education programmes, throughout the life cycle, from the training of community members in inventorying, documentation, the use of equipment, digital technologies and video production practices, to organizational development, training and financial management, and the creation of sustainable business models for NGOs.
6. **Mr Sekou Berte** wished to suggest to the Committee how the Forum could participate more actively in the work of the Convention. There could be more opportunities to speak during the sessions. Moreover, he thanked the Committee for the opportunity offered to the Forum to get involved in all the initiatives and aspects of the implementation of Article 18, such as technical assistance, professional development initiatives, and representation on the Convention’s communications platforms. With their field experience and extensive expertise, the 217 NGOs, and growing, are able to provide information on the status and impacts of safeguarding **intangible cultural heritage** elements, conduct field visits, and provide advisory services, including the monitoring of inscribed elements. They could also provide additional information on requests for elements submitted for inscription. The NGOs were ready and willing to assist and advise States Parties on other aspects of the Convention. Likewise, it would be timely, relevant and realistic for the Forum to be given the chance to produce alternative periodic reports on the status of the implementation of the Convention, which would give communities the opportunity to express their views regarding activities to implement the Convention. Lastly, the Forum had prepared a draft declaration, which would be ready by the next General Assembly.
7. The **Chairperson** thanked Mr Berte for his presentation on behalf of the ICH NGO Forum. The report clearly demonstrated the important role played by the Forum in coordinating the work of the accredited NGOs and in providing advisory services to the Committee, whose reflections, included in the report, were very welcome. He opened the floor to the Committee members for their comments.
8. The delegation of **Germany** expressed gratitude for the Forum’s important and responsible work. The participation of NGOs and their advice to the Committee contributes to the community-based character of the Convention and is a prerequisite for its successful implementation. It welcomed the work of the Forum on diversifying its membership and appreciated the Forum’s engagement in the broader implementation of Article 18, as well as its efforts to develop a Declaration on the safeguarding, promotion and mobilization of **intangible cultural heritage** in the face of climate change. Moreover, the collection of good safeguarding practices on how to incorporate **intangible cultural heritage** into educational curricula or with regard to **intangible cultural heritage** and sustainable tourism, or the links between **intangible cultural heritage** and environmental sustainability, were all essential activities for the fruitful implementation of the Convention. Germany especially acknowledged the collaboration of the Forum with the World Heritage Centre on overcoming the prevailing gap between intangible and tangible cultural heritage. Not only have investigations and advice on this topic been long awaited, but the Forum also anticipated the call for action that was recently adopted at the Naples Conference on Cultural Heritage in the 21st century. This call encouraged greater synergies between the 1972 and the 2003 Conventions, and acknowledged the intrinsic interdependence between intangible cultural heritage and tangible cultural or natural heritage as human heritage. The delegation was of the view that the Forum is an appropriate and suitable body to help achieve this because it is comprised of experts with multifaceted and broad competence, working at different local and regional scales. Germany therefore welcomed a deeper involvement of the Forum in the Committee sessions, as well as in the overall development of the Convention.
9. The delegation of **Sweden** thanked the Forum for its well-written report and the important activities that took place during the past year, particularly the mapping of competencies of accredited NGOs, showcasing the wealth of ideas and experiences in safeguarding living heritage that exist around the world. It also appreciated the inspiring endeavour to achieve equitable geographical representation among the accredited NGOs, and it looked forward to the results. The Forum has a central role to play in the broader implementation of Article 18 and has the relevant experience to contribute to the proposed online platform and other tools to share good safeguarding practices. The delegation shared the notion, mentioned in the report, that NGOs, as representatives of civil society, play a key role in achieving the objectives of the Convention. It welcomed their continued and expanded participation.
10. The delegation of **Slovakia** thanked the Forum for its comprehensive report, highlighting its wide range of activities. The role of NGOs as a driving force for the implementation of the Convention may also be crucial in the development of Article 18 activities. It strongly supported all the activities included in the Forum’s Action Plan to achieve a more equitable balance, and it encouraged outreach to those NGOs not primarily specialized in **intangible cultural heritage**. The number of newly accredited NGOs in this cycle was evidence of the effectiveness of these activities. In particular, the strengthening of the Forum’s structure and the activities of the individual working groups was highlighted, which responded to new challenges, such as climate change, **intangible cultural heritage** in crisis situations, intellectual property, relationships between tangible and intangible cultural heritage in cooperation with the World Heritage Centre, **intangible cultural heritage** in urban areas, and ethics. The work on the important issue of sustainable tourism was noted, as was the translation of the inspiring web dossier on sustainable tourism into other languages. It also commended the activities of the Forum in relation to the twentieth anniversary of the Convention, which included launching a dedicated web page and supporting awareness-raising by reaching out to NGOs worldwide, irrespective of their accreditation status with UNESCO.
11. The delegation of **Czechia** remarked that when the role of accredited NGOs was embedded in the Operational Directives, nobody could expect the massive impact they would make in a rather short time. The report presented by the NGO Forum this year is even more impressive, as it features real contributions from civil society working towards the goals of the Convention and the Committee. They naturally follow the needs of the Convention and explore important subjects on its behalf. They frequently present information and new impulses even before they are asked. The entire Forum, and especially its leadership, deserve to be commended and thanked, not only for what they do but also because of their ability to mobilize voluntary human capacities. Czechia acknowledged the partner role that accredited NGOs play on behalf of the Committee, as well as their collective contribution to the work of the Convention. That is why it was in favour of intensifying the formal engagement, as currently expressed in the Operational Directives, in the future. This would be an acknowledgement of the work accomplished, with the perspective of a stronger advisory role, as has unfolded in recent years.
12. The delegation of **Botswana** commended the Forum for its informative report, detailing its extensive work over the 2022–2023 period. It had demonstrated its willingness to vigorously support the Convention’s governing bodies and thematic initiatives, showing synergies between the preservation and safeguarding of both tangible and intangible cultural heritage. The delegation supported the recommendation to accredit the fifty-seven listed NGOs, which will act in an advisory capacity to the Committee, increasing the capacity of NGOs globally. Furthermore, Botswana encouraged the sixteen NGOs which were not successful in their applications to review their documents and reapply, as each of them were needed in the safeguarding journey of living heritage. It also applauded the eighty organizations that had worked hard to maintain their accreditation status. Botswana commended the collaboration of the Forum with literary and documentary heritage institutions. It also agreed that the geographical distribution of accredited NGOs needs to improve, and it requested the Secretariat to enhance the facilitation of capacity-building activities, which will encourage more NGOs from Africa to submit requests for accreditation. This is an aspect that Botswana was also urgently addressing.
13. The delegation of **Peru** thanked the Forum for the presentation and development of the NGO mapping. It believed in the importance of collaborating with NGOs on thematic issues. In Peru, there were no accredited NGOs associated with the Convention, but it would return home with the task of identifying links with them and inviting them to participate. Nevertheless, Peru benefits from a good relationship with UNESCO Chairs for cultural heritage developed by several universities, and it believed that it would be interesting to consider a collaboration between UNESCO Chairs and NGOs.
14. The delegation of **Mauritania** congratulated the Chair of the Forum for the excellent and detailed report, which gives a clear idea of the support of the Forum in relation to the commitments of the States Parties and the effective implementation of these commitments. In Mauritania, a network of NGOs has been established, constituting an organized framework that already has an active presidency. The delegation was also satisfied to note the existence of two NGOs recognized by UNESCO, and which are active in promoting and safeguarding **intangible cultural heritage** in Mauritania. Moreover, they are involved in activities carried out at the executive level in Mauritania and they constitute an essential element in the promotion and safeguarding of **intangible cultural heritage**. Indeed, the support and involvement of these NGOs had enabled the Mauritanian government to carry out many important activities, now and in the future, within the framework of an ambitious partnership.
15. **Mr Sekou Berte** remarked on the feedback, observations and recommendation to continue the Forum’s sustainable work, assuring the Committee that this resonated with its own determination to never fail. The Forum must move forward by redoubling its efforts and maintaining the expectations, not only at the community level but also at the level of the States Parties, the Committee, the Living Heritage Entity, the Secretariat and the General Directorate of UNESCO. The Forum was happy to leave this session knowing that higher expectations were expected of the NGOs. Mr Berte closed by thanking the Committee for the challenge and guaranteeing that the Forum will meet the expectations.
16. With no further comments, the **Chairperson declared Decision** [**18.COM 15**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions/18.COM/15) **adopted.**

**ITEM 17 OF THE AGENDA [CONT.]**

**ESTABLISHMENT OF THE EVALUATION BODY FOR THE 2024 CYCLE**

1. The **Chairperson** returned to item 17 and the count of the secret ballot for the establishment of the Evaluation Body for the 2024 cycle. He thanked the tellers Ms Inhwa Kwon of Korea and Ms Marta Gonzalez of Paraguay.
2. The **Assistant Director-General** announced the results of the secret ballot. Twenty-four Committee Members were present and voted for Electoral Groups I and II. Two ballots were considered invalid for Electoral Group II. The candidates received the following votes. Electoral Group I– Seat for one accredited NGO, with two candidates. **Conseil québécois du patrimoine vivant** received seventeen votes and was elected. Finnish Folk Music Institute received seven votes. Electoral Group II – Seat for one accredited NGO, with three candidates.Interdisciplinary Art Group SERDE received six votes. Development Centre ‘Democracy through culture’ received five votes. The **Czech Ethnological Society** received eleven Votes and was elected. Electoral Group V(a) – Seat for one expert.**Mr Herbert Chimhundu (Zimbabwe)** was the sole candidate and was elected.
3. The **Chairperson** congratulated the three new members of the Evaluation Body, as well as all the other candidates. The Committee then decided on the order of nomination files to be dealt with by the Evaluation Body and the Committee. A letter was picked from a box containing the letters from A to Z.
4. The **Assistant Director-General** remarked that the most experienced member of the Secretariat would select this year’s letter. **Mr David** **Martel** drew the letter P.
5. The **Chairperson** informed the Committee that the evaluation and examination process of the files under the 2024 cycle would start with the letter P. He proposed that the same letter P be used for the seating arrangements for States Parties non-members of the Committee during the next session as well as during the General Assembly.
6. **The Chairperson declared Decision** [**18.COM 17**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions/18.COM/17) **adopted.**
7. The **Assistant Director-General** announced some side events taking place during the lunch break. Malaysia organized a theatre performance, Mek Mulung Putera Cahaya Bulan. Belgium organized a seminar entitled ‘A Community of Care, Unveiling Geel’s Psychiatric Family Foster Care Heritage’. The working group meeting of the ICH NGO Forum would also take place, as well as an exhibition, titled ‘Harmony of ornament and form perfection’, on Uzbekistan’s ceramic tradition inscribed during this session.

*[Friday, 8 December 2023, afternoon session]*

**ITEM 16 OF THE AGENDA**

**ACCREDITATION OF NEW NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS AND REVIEW OF ACCREDITED NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS**

**Documents:** [*LHE/23/18.COM/16*](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-23-18.COM-16_EN.docx)

[*73 requests*](https://ich.unesco.org/en/accreditation-of-ngos-01300)

[*91 reports*](https://ich.unesco.org/en/review-of-ngos-01301)

**Decision:** [*18.COM 16*](https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions/18.COM/16)

1. **Ms Fumiko Ohinata of the Secretariat** explained that under Article 9 of the Convention, the Committee is responsible for recommending to the General Assembly, the accreditation of NGOs with proven competence in the field of **intangible cultural heritage**. Section III.2.2 of the Operational Directives provides the criteria and modalities for the accreditation process. Seventy-three accreditation requests were submitted by 30 April 2023, the statutory deadline, with the following geographical distribution:twenty-seven from Group I; nine from Group II;sixteen from Group III;eleven from Group IV; three from Group V(a), andseven from Group V(b).As per its assessment described in document 16, the Secretariat considered that:fifty-seven NGOs appeared to satisfy all the accreditation criteria as set out in the Operational Directives;sixteen NGOs did not appear to satisfy the criteria based on the information received by the Secretariat.With regard to the organization ‘O.R.S. Social Research Observatory. Centre studies, policies and social researches – APS’ (Italy), based on the documents originally submitted by the NGO, the Secretariat found documents were missing and therefore it did not meet all the accreditation criteria, in particular criterion e(iii). However, following the publication of document 16, the NGO submitted an English translation of a legal document demonstrating that the NGO was established in 2009 and therefore fulfilled criterion e(iii). The Secretariat thus proposed that this NGO be included in the list of NGOs recommended for accreditation, as reflected in the draft decision.
2. **Ms Fumiko Ohinata** turned to the review of already accredited NGOs. In accordance with paragraph 94 of the Operational Directives, the Committee was called upon to review the contribution and commitment of accredited NGOs every four years from the date of their accreditation. The Committee was requested to review ninety-one accredited NGOs initially accredited in 2010, 2014 and 2018. Following the review of the reports submitted, eighty NGOs were considered as having sufficiently demonstrated their commitment to the work of the Committee since their accreditation. One NGO was considered as not having sufficiently demonstrated its contribution and commitment. Consequently, the Committee could decide to terminate the accreditation of this NGO. The accreditation of ten NGOs could also be terminated by the Committee for not having submitted any quadrennial reports. Ms Ohinata mentioned that following Resolution [9.GA 7](https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions/9.GA/7) adopted by the General Assembly in 2022, the Secretariat involved UNESCO Field Offices in the review of newly submitted accreditation requests and quadrennial reports. The list of NGO accreditation and renewal requests was made available to six Field Offices, and a dedicated form was created to collect their responses, thereby providing complementary information concerning NGOs having submitted requests. This procedure enabled the Secretariat to receive additional information about the concerned NGOs, thereby strengthening its recommendations to the Committee.
3. The **Chairperson** opened the floor for comments.
4. The delegation of **Brazil** was honoured to note that it was the country with the greatest number of NGOs in this accreditation cycle, with five institutions with diverse and relevant trajectories of action in the safeguarding of Brazilian Intangible Cultural Heritage, including their collaboration with the National Historic and Artistic Heritage Institute in supporting the implementation of the national safeguarding policy in various parts of the Brazilian territory. The delegation was also pleased with the representation of fifteen organizations from Latin American and Caribbean countries. The joy was not only about numbers, but mainly about the possibility of greater participation of Latin American and Caribbean NGOs in the implementation of the Convention. This also contributes to a better geographical distribution of the diversity of practical safeguarding experiences. In this regard, it highlighted the relevant work of CRESPIAL (the Regional Centre for the Safeguarding of Intangible Heritage in Latin America) and its fundamental role in the dissemination of and guidance to NGOs in the region regarding the accreditation process. CRESPIAL’s outreach workshop on this process resulted in a request for accreditation from thirteen NGOs in the Latin American region. Indeed, the Brazilian NGOs had much to contribute given their experiences.
5. The delegation of **Panama** wasproud of the organizations that were already registered, such as Fundación Bahía de Portobelo and the Fundación INDICRI, and the two new NGOs that will join in this session. It also thanked CRESPIAL for guiding them along the right paths in the accreditation procedures. The delegation welcomed the NGOs Accíón Cultural Ngobe and Fundación Casa Taller, which are committed to Indigenous peoples and Afro-descendant peoples’ heritage, and to all culture in Panama.
6. With no further comments, the **Chairperson declared Decision** [**18.COM 16**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions/18.COM/16) **adopted.**

**ITEM 18 OF THE AGENDA**

**DATE AND PLACE OF THE NINETEENTH SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE**

**Document:** *[LHE/23/18.COM/18](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-23-18.COM-18_EN.docx)*

**Decision:** *[18.COM 18](https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions/18.COM/18)*

1. The **Chairperson** turned to item 18 and the date and place of the nineteenth session of theCommittee**,** adding thathe had beeninformed that Paraguay had some good news to share.
2. The delegation of **Paraguay** thanked Botswana for having organized this meeting in this natural sanctuary, which had shown the delegates a lesson, teaching them that big and small things can coexist in harmony, from elephants to turtles. Paraguay, on behalf of its President, H.E. Mr Santiago Peña, through its Secretariat of Culture and the delegation, expressed interest in holding the nineteenth session of the Committee in Asunción. Paraguay would be honoured to welcome all the delegates to its red soil. Amidst a thousand fascinating images, between the poetry of the Guarani souls, the one-way journey of the rivers, the glittering abundance of the fields, and the candid modesty of the cities; it was a country of traditions and emotions, of astonishing stories of the steely muscles and feelings of its *moreno* people, of whirlwinds and calmness, armoured by ancient courage, and tendered by relentless melancholy. A gallantly mixed race and proudly sovereign, this country of living heritage welcomed the Committee in 2024.
3. The **Chairperson** was delighted to hear Paraguay’s proposition to host the nineteenth session in 2024. He asked the Committee to accept Paraguay’s kind offer by acclamation [applause]. He warmly thanked Paraguay for its offer, knowing that all the delegates would look forward to visiting the country and experiencing its kind hospitality.
4. The **Assistant Director-General** recalled that Rule 4.1 of the Rules of Procedure stipulates that the Committee shall determine at each session the date and place of the next session, in consultation with the Director-General. It was confirmed with the authorities of Paraguay that the nineteenth session can be held from 2 to 7 December 2024 in Asunción. The Secretariat amended the draft decision accordingly.
5. The **Chairperson** noted the clear proposal as to the date and place of the next session, and with no objections, the **Chairperson** **declared Decision** [**18.COM 18**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions/18.COM/18) **adopted.**

*[A video of Paraguay was shown.]*

**ITEM 19 OF THE AGENDA**

**ELECTION OF THE MEMBERS OF THE BUREAU OF THE NINETEENTH SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE**

**Document:** *[LHE/23/18.COM/19](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-23-18.COM-19_EN.docx)*

**Decision:** *[18.COM 19](https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions/18.COM/19)*

1. The **Chairperson** turned to the election of the next Bureau of the Committee.
2. The **Assistant Director-General** recalled that, in accordance with Rules 12 and 13 of the Rules of Procedure, the Committee shall elect its Bureau, consisting of a Chairperson, one or more Vice-Chairs and a Rapporteur, who shall remain in office until the end of the next ordinary session. In electing the Bureau, the Committee, shall have due regard for equitable geographical representation and, to the extent possible, a balance among the various fields of **intangible cultural heritage**, in accordance with Rule 13.4. The members of the Bureau also needed to be members of the Committee. It was customary that all Electoral Groups be represented in its Bureau through the Chairperson and Vice-Chairs. In such cases, the Rapporteur should not express an opinion or vote in his/her capacity as Rapporteur in order to respect the principle of equitable geographical representation pursuant to Rule 12.1 of the Rules of Procedure. His/her role is to validate the decisions that the Committee and its Bureau will take, after preparation by the Secretariat.
3. The **Chairperson** explained that it was customary that the Chairperson of the Bureau comes from the host country. He therefore proposed that the Committee elect H.E. Ms Nancy Ovelar de Gorostiaga (Paraguay) as Chairperson of the nineteenth session by acclamation [applause]. The Chairperson congratulated H.E. Ms Ovelar de Gorostiaga on her election. He then invited a proposal for the Rapporteur.
4. The delegation of **Slovakia** proposed Ms Ľubica Voľanska as the Rapporteur.
5. The **Chairperson** understood that there were proposals for the Vice-Chairs.
6. The delegation of **Switzerland** proposed **Germany** from Electoral Group I.
7. The delegation of **Slovakia** proposed **Uzbekistan** from Electoral Group II.
8. The delegation of **Bangladesh** proposed **Viet Nam** from Electoral Group IV.
9. The delegation of **Botswana** proposed **Angola** from Electoral Group V(a).
10. The delegation of **Saudi Arabia** proposed **Mauritania** from Electoral Group V(b).
11. **The Chairperson** congratulated all the new members of the Bureau. **The** **Chairperson** **declared Decision** [**18.COM 19**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions/18.COM/19) **adopted.**

**ITEM 20 OF THE AGENDA**

**REPORT BY THE COMMITTEE TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON ITS ACTIVITIES (JANUARY 2022 TO DECEMBER 2023**)

**Document:** *[LHE/23/18.COM/20](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-23-18.COM-20_EN.docx)*

**Decision:** *[18.COM 20](https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions/18.COM/20)*

1. The **Assistant Director-General** explained that the Committee was asked to submit a report of its activities to the tenth session of the General Assembly of the 2003 Convention in mid-2024. The same report shall also be brought to the attention of the next session of the General Conference of UNESCO in 2025, in accordance with Article 30 of the Convention. According to [Resolution 6.GA 5](https://ich.unesco.org/en/Decisions/6.GA/5) of the General Assembly, the Committee’s reporting period should follow a biennium calendar year in order to align with UNESCO’s reporting cycle with reference to the C/5. This time, the period covered by the Committee’s report is from January 2022 until December 2023. The published version of the report covers the work of the Committee from 1 January 2022 until October 2023, reflecting the decisions and discussions that the seventeenth session of the Committee or its Bureau, the fifth extraordinary session of the Committee, and the Bureau of the eighteenth session adopted for that period. Following the present session, the Secretariat will update the report to reflect the decisions taken during this session by the Committee. It is proposed that the Rapporteur review and submit these revisions in the working document. Since the reporting period is up to 31 December, theoretically, there was a slight possibility that the Committee or its Bureau undertake certain activities. In this unlikely event, and if the Committee had no objections, the Secretariat would update the report, in consultation with the Rapporteur, before publishing it for the attention of the General Assembly of the Convention.
2. With no requests for the floor, the **Chairperson declared Decision** [**18.COM 20**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions/18.COM/20) **adopted.**

**ITEM 21 OF THE AGENDA**

**OTHER BUSINESS**

**Document:** *[LHE/23/18.COM/21](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-23-18.COM-21_EN.docx)*

**Decision**: [*18.COM 21*](https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions/18.COM/21)

1. The **Chairperson** explained that an item had been brought to the Committee’s attention under ‘Other business’concerning the change of the name of an inscribed element.
2. The **Assistant Director-General** presented this item under ‘Other Business’ as a special request by Namibia for the Committee to examine the modification of the name of an element inscribed in 2020 on the Urgent Safeguarding List. In a letter sent on 27 November 2023, the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture brought to the Secretariat’s attention the need to modify the spelling of the element ‘Aixan/Gana/Ob#ANS TSI //Khasigu, ancestral musical sound knowledge and skills’, inscribed in 2020 on the Urgent Safeguarding List for Namibia (Decision [15.COM 8.a.4](https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions/15.COM/8.A.4)). Following extensive consultation with the communities concerned, it was established that a modification of the name would better reflect the cultural and linguistic nuances of the element. In accordance with paragraph 41 of the Operational Directives, Namibia therefore wished to modify the name to: **Aboxan Musik ǀŌb ǂÂns tsî ǁKhasigu, ancestral musical sound knowledge and skills**. Correspondingly, the Committee was asked to approve the French translation, as proposed by the Secretariat: ‘**Les connaissances et les savoir-faire musicaux ancestraux d’Aboxan Musik ǀŌb ǂÂns tsî ǁKhasigu’**. Namibia also wished to modify any reference in the text of the element stating ‘Nama-stap’ (referring to the dance associated with the music) to be changed to ‘Nama≠Nāb’ which has the same spelling in the English and French versions. It was recalled that the same procedure had previously been applied for the first time in 2015 with an element from Guatemala (Decision [10.COM 11](https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions/10.COM/11)), a second time in 2019 for a good safeguarding practice from Sweden (Decision [14.COM 11](https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions/14.COM/11)), and most recently in 2021 for an element on the Urgent Safeguarding List from Peru (Decision [6.COM 8.20](https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions/6.COM/8.20)). The Secretariat will modify the spelling of the element in all communications related to the element.
3. The **Chairperson** noted that this was an administrative matter that did not require debate. **The Chairperson declared Decision** [**18.COM 21**](https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions/18.COM/21) **adopted.**

**ITEM 22 OF THE AGENDA**

**ADOPTION OF THE LIST OF DECISIONS**

**Decisions:** [*LHE/23/18.COM/Decisions*](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-23-18.COM-Decisions-EN.docx)

1. The **Chairperson** recalled Rule 43 of the Rules of Procedure of the Committee, by which the Committee shall adopt the report of this session in the form of a list of decisions. The Secretariat had compiled the decisions adopted during this week, which had been sent to all Committee members by circular message. He asked that the responsibility of validating the decisions concerning the items examined today be delegated to the Rapporteur, for incorporation in the document before its publication online. As per usual practice, the Secretariat may undertake linguistic corrections. With no comments or objections, the Chairperson approved the list of decisions. The final version would be published online at the end of 2023.

**ITEM 23 OF THE AGENDA**

**CLOSURE**

1. The **Chairperson** had reached the end of a productive session and an eventful year for the Convention. The strong commitment of the States Parties and their willingness to work together had made his work as Chairperson particularly rewarding. He conveyed gratitude to the Vice-Chairs and the Rapporteur of the Bureau for their support throughout the year, which had resulted in a memorable conclusion to the twentieth anniversary of the Convention. The Chairperson also thanked the Director-General of UNESCO, the Assistant Director-General for Culture, Mr Ottone, and the Secretariat for their support and tireless work. He concluded by thanking the interpreters, technicians, and other personnel who supported the session.
2. The **Assistant Director-General** thanked the Chairperson and the Minister of Youth, Gender, Sport and Culture of Botswana on behalf of UNESCO and the Secretariat. Everybody will take home unforgettable memories of the work, the discussions, and the warm welcome of Botswana and all its natural and living heritage. He thanked the entire Botswana team, the Minister’s team and the technicians for solving all the issues. The Assistant Director-General paid tribute to the Secretariat and the UNESCO team, who work tirelessly behind the scenes and who he named one by one, as well as the interpreters.

*[A behind-the-scenes video was shown].*

1. The **Chairperson** opened the floor for closing remarks.
2. The delegation of **Brazil** congratulated the Secretariat, adding that this was Brazil’s last year in the Committee, a cycle that concluded happily and would certainly contribute to the implementation of the Convention. It was an honour for Brazil to serve the Committee. The delegation was also happy to go to Paraguay in 2024 to discover its culture, heritage and hospitable people at the next Committee meeting. Paraguay is a complex country, the summit of the Guarani civilization where different cultures merge, and one of the cultural jewels of Latin America. The delegation thanked the Ambassador for Paraguay’s generous gesture of welcoming the delegates to the country. This gesture brought pride to the entire continent, assuring States Parties that UNESCO is committed to the geographic balance necessary for the development of the Convention. After receiving the most cordial welcome in Rabat and Kasane, it will undoubtedly be a great responsibility for Paraguay, but it was certain that the country will step up to the task with the same capacity and efficiency. The delegation thanked Botswana and the people of Kasane, adding that the delegates return with a suitcase of emotions and pride.
3. The delegation of **Sweden** spoke for the last time as a Committee member, adding that it would be hard to imagine a more suitable and pleasant place to close its tenure of four years than in warm and friendly Botswana. Under the Chairperson’s successful leadership, the Committee had made great progress in this session to safeguard the living heritage of humanity. There were fruitful discussions, joyful celebrations, important decisions, with great examples seen of the world’s **intangible cultural heritage**. The delegates had exchanged knowledge and inspired each other. The delegation thanked the Chairperson, the Committee members, States Parties, Observers, NGOs, and the Secretariat, led by the Assistant Director-General, for its four years in the Committee.
4. The delegation of **Morocco** spoke of the mixed emotions of ending a session with the experience and joy of having completed the job, but sadness in leaving a country filled with wonderful moments. The delegation thanked the people of Botswana, its President, the government and the authorities for the wonderful welcome, with special thanks to the Chairperson for his commitment and passion for UNESCO that brought the Committee here, opening this wonderful country and beautiful people to the delegations. It gave many people the opportunity to experience the safari, making the small technical difficulties encountered pale into insignificance. Indeed, it was right to organize this session in this magnificent natural site despite the challenges. It had been a priceless experience. The delegation thanked the Assistant Director-General, recalling their collaboration during the seventeenth session in Rabat in 2022, and the feeling of being part of the UNESCO family, with its sense of eternal fraternity and friendship. It thanked all the members of the Secretariat for the work behind the scenes, as well as the interpreters and the technicians for enabling this great experience. The delegation thanked Paraguay for inviting the Committee to the country in 2024. Morocco will leave the Committee in 2024, but conveyed to Paraguay, its government and people, its delight for a happy future session.
5. The delegation of **Slovakia** spoke of having learnt the symbolism of Botswana’s flag: the black and white stripes representing equality and peoples of different colours, and the blue representing the sky and the water, precious resources of life uniting all elements. This unity among people and nature has transpired throughout this session and throughout the entire stay in this beautiful country. The delegation was deeply touched and immensely grateful for this lesson of life and humanity. It expressed deepest gratitude to every member of the Secretariat, to the organization team, to the people of this beautiful country, and to the Chairperson for this memorable experience.
6. The delegation of **Panama** remarked that this was its last meeting as a member of the Committee, adding that it was a pleasure working and contributing to the Convention over the past four years. It congratulated the Secretariat and the Assistant Director-General, who had significantly contributed to the region this year, thanking him for his support, and thanking every member of the Secretariat for putting together this meeting, but also for every day it works on behalf of the Convention. The delegation thanked the communities, those present and those watching from afar, as well as the experts who contribute to the foundation of the Convention through debate to enrich its work. In this family cycle, it had been a joy to be part of the twentieth anniversary of the Convention. Botswana had been a joy, from the quality of its welcome to the attitude of everyone present and their never-ending smiles. These memories will be carried in everyone’s hearts. It thanked the Chairperson, who was the heart of this meeting, for his investment and dedication, not only in this session but throughout his leadership. As a member of GRULAC, it was proud to congratulate Paraguay for opening its doors to the world. It will no doubt take up this immense responsibility with aplomb, and the delegation offered its support. It also thanked all those who contributed to the success of this meeting and the Convention.
7. The delegation of **Rwanda** reiterated its thanks to the government and people of Botswana for their warm hospitality and exceptional welcome. This excellent session saw the inscription of all the elements proposed this year, the result of the extra efforts made by Member States to submit excellent dossiers and, of course, of the high-quality work of the Evaluation Body. It commended the States that accepted the recommendations of the Body by deciding to present their elements at a subsequent session. These recommendations demonstrate our collective commitment to the preservation and promotion of **intangible cultural heritage**. The bold vision to strengthen the implementation of Article 18 of the Convention reflected the shared desire to make the most of this powerful instrument. In this session, the potential of the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices was recognized, and ways to increase its usefulness and accessibility were identified. The revisions to the selection criteria and the proposed changes to the Operational Directives represent crucial steps towards safeguarding that is more inclusive and tailored to the needs of our communities. These decisions will have a concrete impact on the preservation of **intangible cultural heritage** around the world. Our actions today will help shape a lasting legacy for future generations. This year marked Rwanda’s last participation in the Committee, and it congratulated Paraguay on its election as host country for the next session, wishing it success and offering Rwanda’s unwavering support. The delegation congratulated all the countries that have inscribed elements this year and commended the commitment of each nation to the preservation of **intangible cultural heritage**.
8. The delegation of **Paraguay** thanked the Chairperson and Botswana for welcoming the Committee and embracing the delegates with their hospitality, joy, colour and rhythm. It thanked the Assistant Director-General, for his excellent leadership in this meeting, as well as the Secretariat and the Legal Advisor. The serenity that reigned in this meeting was a reflection of the personality of the Chairperson, who led with wisdom and harmony. The delegates will return with wonderful memories, as Paraguay begins to prepare its spirit and hearts to welcome everyone to the country. The delegation thanked all the delegations for their kind words, hopeful for an excellent meeting in Asunción.
9. The delegation of **Czechia** congratulated the Chairperson on the excellent conduct of this session and Botswana for its immense hospitality, thanking the Committee members for their commitment and spirit of cooperation, the entire Secretariat team for their continued support, as well as the organization team for their efficiency and kindness. The delegation highlighted the commitment of NGOs, and particularly the Evaluation Body for its dedication. Czechia’s term on the Committee was coming to an end, and although this would take place during the General Assembly, it took the opportunity to say that it was happy to have been part of this Committee. It had acquired a wealth of experience within the Committee, and felt enriched by the diversity of living traditions around the world. Czechia will continue to work for the proper implementation of the Convention and follow the work of the Committee closely.
10. The delegation of **Germany** thanked Botswana and all its people for their wonderful hospitality in Kasane, a truly outstanding cultural and personal experience for everybody in the German delegation. Heartfelt gratitude was conveyed to the Chairperson for his great leadership and passion, thanks to which the delegates were able to have an exceptional experience. The delegation also thanked the Secretariat and all the experts who had worked so hard to make this a very fruitful and successful meeting. It was especially happy for the three multinational nominations of which Germany was part, recalling the Chairperson’s warm words concerning the nomination of Midwifery in particular. The delegation invited all States Parties to join this initiative and to broaden the nomination even further. The delegation was very honoured to be serving on the next Bureau of the Committee, congratulating Paraguay.
11. The delegation of **Saudi Arabia** thanked the Government of Botswana for hosting the Committee, as well as the people of Botswana, the organizers and volunteers for their warm hospitality and welcome. It thanked the Chairperson for his wise leadership that had led to fruitful discussions and constructive debates, and resulted in wonderful outcomes. The delegation thanked the Assistant Director-General and the Secretariat for their dedication and hard work on developing the synergies between the Committee, the Convention and the different culture Conventions. As this was the last term for Saudi Arabia, despite the sadness, the Committee could count on its support in the future in terms of its experience and expertise. Lastly, it congratulated Paraguay, wishing it success.
12. The delegation of **Ethiopia** congratulated the Chairperson for his successful leadership, extending gratitude to the government and people of Botswana for their hospitality, and to all who contributed to the success of this eighteenth session. It underlined the two aspects that made this session historic. The first was the inscription of ‘Midwifery knowledge, skills and practices’, which was the first nomination to have brought together countries from different regions and electoral groups – a direction that must be encouraged in the future. The second aspect was that eight files from the Africa Group were inscribed – compared to only one file in 2022 – and more than ten if one considered the African continent, narrowing the gap in terms of elements inscribed. The delegation extended gratitude to the Chairperson, the Bureau and the Secretariat, and spoke of its appreciation of the safari ride planned the following day.
13. The delegation of **Malaysia** spoke of the interesting week in Kasane, with the exchange and interaction having achieved its objective in the spirit of the Convention. It congratulated all the States Parties that had successfully inscribed their elements, including Malaysia, as well as the newly elected Bureau members. The delegation appreciated the Committee members for their contributions in the spirit of solidarity and cooperation. It congratulated the fifty-five newly accredited NGOs, which included three from Malaysia, recognizing PENA, Malaysian Crown Council and Pusaka. The delegation thanked the Chairperson for his wisdom, manner and thorough preparation that led to a successful meeting, and for his work with all his team who had shown the true spirit of Kasane hospitality and culture, leaving an indelible mark on all. Malaysia expressed its appreciation to the Assistant Director-General, to Ms Ohinata and the entire Secretariat, to the Evaluation Body, to the interpreters, and to everyone behind the scenes who had worked tirelessly to make this session possible.
14. The delegation of **Uzbekistan** thanked the stakeholders for their valuable contributions that led to the success of the session. It added that the Secretariat, led by the Assistant Director-General, deserved consideration for their hard work in organizing this session, thanking them for their help and contributions. It was grateful to the Evaluation Body, its Chair and his team for their noble endeavours. The delegation thanked Botswana, the government and the people of Botswana for their hospitality, and the Chairperson for his brilliant chairmanship.
15. The delegation of **Switzerland** remarked that this was the last session for Switzerland under its current mandate as a member of the Committee. It had been a great honour and pleasure to work with the other members of the Committee, the States Parties and the NGOs, until now, in extraordinary Botswana, that was warmly thanked for its incredible welcome. The delegation thanked everyone for the rich and fruitful cooperation over the past four years. Switzerland will continue to support the ongoing evolution of the Convention, the development of its governance, and its working methods. Faced with the digital reality invading our physical and mental spaces, the safeguarding of living traditions is more important than ever for our societies, whose sustainable and peaceful development must be based on respect for diversity and the wealth of its cultural exchanges. The delegation commended the Secretariat for its mastery, the interpreters for their tenacity, the technicians for their know-how, and all those who worked during this session over the last few days, including the volunteers and the Botswanan youth. The delegation thanked the Chairperson for his welcome and congratulated him for the good conduct of the Committee’s work.
16. The delegation of **Viet Nam** joined the other States in expressing thanks to the government and the people of Botswana for the warmest hospitality, applauding the Chairperson for his excellent chairmanship. It was happy to have experienced the culture and natural beauty of Kasane. Viet Nam also thanked the Assistant Director-General, the Secretariat, the Evaluation Body, Committee members, Observers, NGOs, interpreters, technicians and everyone behind the scenes for their amazing work in facilitating the Committee session. It congratulated all the States Parties for the elements inscribed, and Paraguay for hosting the next section. Viet Nam thanked colleagues from the ASPAC Group for their belief in its capacity to act as its representative in the Bureau in 2024, and it looked forward to working closely with other Member States and UNESCO during its tenure. Viet Nam joined colleagues in celebrating the twentieth anniversary of the Convention, reiterating its commitment to the successful implementation of the Convention in the future.
17. The delegation of **Bangladesh** remarked that this was its first time as an elected Member of the Committee, and the second year of its term. The Committee meeting is a celebration of diversity, showing the colours of culture and heritage of the entire world. It was with joy that it concluded the session in beautiful Kasane, though it sad that it was over. It congratulated the Secretariat, led by the Assistant Director-General, and all those working behind the scenes, thanking them for the excellent video that acknowledged their contributions. The delegation noted the personal commitment of the President of Botswana, H.E. Mokgweetsi Masisi, and H.E. Minister Tumiso Rakgare, whose presence had inspired the delegates. The Chairperson’s leadership guided the Committee to a fruitful conclusion and the celebration of twenty years of the Convention. It noted the improvements to the Operational Directives, and celebrated the inscription of the elements, congratulating all those involved. The delegation acknowledged the people of beautiful Botswana, congratulating and thanking them for their warmth, hospitality and support.
18. The delegation of **Peru** expressed gratitude to the Chairperson, and to the government and people of Botswana, for the excellent leadership and for conducting this Committee in the best possible manner. It thanked the Assistant Director-General for his enthusiasm for the Convention and for being its driving force. The delegation thanked the Secretariat for its excellent work in the preparation of the documents and the session in general, and the Evaluation Committee for its hard work and comprehensive reports. A special thanks went to the interpreters, and especially to Spain for providing the Spanish translation to allow the delegation to express their ideas and emotions in a better way, as well as all the staff for this titanic task of organizing a meeting such as this one. For Peru, it was its last session as a member of the Committee. It was hoped that it had contributed in the best way on behalf of GRULAC over the last four years. It was delighted that Paraguay had proposed to host the next session, which would take place in a sister country in Latin America. Peru has accompanied this Convention in its first twenty years and will continue to do so in the many years ahead.
19. The delegation of **Mauritania** reiterated thanks to the government and people of Botswana for their warm welcome and generous hospitality in the beautiful town of Kasane. The presence of His Excellency the President of Botswana during the opening ceremony demonstrated the great interest that Botswana places in safeguarding living heritage. The delegation reiterated its congratulations to the Chairperson for his wise and inclusive conduct during these days of intense, highly enriching exchanges, and for the success of the work of this session. Thanks also went to the Assistant Director-General, the Secretariat, the Evaluation Body, the working group, the experts, the technicians and the interpreters for their remarkable work. Mauritania reiterated its full commitment to supporting and accompanying all stakeholders to ensure the objectives of the Convention. It called for the strengthening of international multilateral cooperation in the safeguarding of **intangible cultural heritage** and the exchange of relevant ideas and experiences around means of safeguarding living heritage. The delegation congratulated all the States for the success of this session.
20. The delegation of **Angola** thanked the Chairperson for his hospitality and for the unique experiences, for which there were not enough words of thanks, and which demonstrated the warmth and hospitality of the people of Botswana. It thanked the Chairperson for his wisdom, congratulating him on the good conduct of the work. The eighteenth session marked history, as Angola inscribed its first element, the Sona, on the Representative List, serving as a catalyst for future inscriptions and making known the vast Angolan cultural mosaic to the world. With this inscription, Angola reaffirmed its commitment to the Convention. The session celebrated cultural diversity and saw its impact on communities. Africa was also reinforced with a significant number of inscriptions, walking towards a more balanced representation in the Lists. The ongoing efforts of the Secretariat and Member States had resulted in the visible evolution and scope of the Convention. It commended the Secretariat for its great job, and the Assistant Director-General for his commitment. The delegation also recognized the work of the Evaluation Body for its rigour and improved communication, which was key to some of the inscriptions, recommending that it continue to work on improvements without compromising the rigour and quality of the evaluation process. It congratulated Paraguay as the host of the next session, and the Ambassador for her election as Chairperson of the nineteenth session of the Committee, adding that it was honoured to be learning more about Paraguay and its rich culture.
21. The delegation of the **Republic of Korea** appreciated the Chairperson’s competent leadership, which resulted in a meaningful and productive meeting, thanking Botswana for its hospitality and the Secretariat for its professionalism. It was honoured to have participated in the various discussions as a member of the Committee between 2020 and 2024. Over the past four years, there had been more opportunities and crises than ever before in implementing the Convention. Although the overall environment for the practice and transmission of **intangible cultural heritage** was severely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Convention not only overcame the limitations but further strengthened itself thanks to the digital transformation led by the Secretariat’s efforts with communication and outreach strategies. Through diverse activities over the past four years, the Republic of Korea had facilitated the transition to a new environment amid the global crisis. Although its four-year term had come to an end, the delegation will continue to do its best to safeguard and promote **intangible cultural heritage** at the national, regional and international levels, wishing an even greater success for the Convention and to the Committee members.
22. The delegation of **Mexico** spoke of the long road for the inscription of Bolero on the Representative List, which was inscribed with Cuba, culminating in a very special end to this week in Kasane. The delegation thanked the Chairperson for his leadership, and Botswana for its warm welcome, as well as all the members of the Committee for their work and, of course, the Secretariat for preparing this meeting. It looked forward to the upcoming session in Paraguay, wishing the organizers every success.
23. The delegation of **Zimbabwe** thanked the people of Kasane and Botswana, the Secretariat, the Chairperson, and all those who made the eighteenth session a success. As a Southern Africa nation, it thanked Botswana for giving the UNESCO family a home away from home, adding that delegates will return to the region again to enjoy the African hospitality that Botswana had aptly demonstrated. It wished Paraguay a successful nineteenth session.
24. The delegation of **Barbados** thanked the Chairperson for the excellent manner in which he had steered the meeting, thanking the Committee and the Secretariat for their hard work. Thanks also went to the government and people of Botswana for their hospitality. The delegation was particularly delighted that this year’s accredited NGOs included the Barbados Museum and Historical Society, a civil society partner with whom it worked closely. Barbados reiterated its commitment to the Convention.
25. The delegation of **Cuba** congratulated the Secretariat, especially Ms Ohinata and her team, the Assistant Director-General and all at UNESCO. It thanked Botswana and all those who made sure the delegates felt at home, as well as the Government of Botswana and the Chairperson, for sharing experiences and elements to help keep this living heritage Convention moving forward. The delegation congratulated all the Member States on this twentieth anniversary of the Convention, with special congratulations to Paraguay, a Latin American country that will represent the region with honour.
26. The **Chairperson** invited to the front all his fellow compatriots. On behalf of the Government of Botswana, the people of Kasane and his colleagues, he reiterated how honoured he and all the staff had been to welcome the delegates to Kasane and to Botswana. He sincerely hoped that everyone enjoyed their stay and would return home with great memories of their visit. The Chairperson declared the eighteenth Session of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage officially closed.

*[Close of the eighteenth session of the Intergovernmental Committee
for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage]*

1. . Find all the forms online: <https://ich.unesco.org/en/forms>. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. . Read more about the Conference [here](https://www.unesco.org/en/wccae2024). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. . Read more about the project on community-based needs identification in Ukraine [here](https://ich.unesco.org/en/news/community-based-needs-identification-underway-for-living-heritage-among-displaced-communities-from-ukraine-13403). [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. . The Seoul Vision: <https://ich.unesco.org/en/seoul-vision-01330> [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. . International Information and Networking Centre for Intangible Cultural Heritage in the Asia-Pacific region. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. . SDG Academy: <https://sdgacademy.org> [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. . Read more about the UNESCO Conference on Cultural Policies and Sustainable Development [here](https://www.unesco.org/en/mondiacult2022). [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. . Read more about the UNESCO World Atlas of Languages [here](https://en.wal.unesco.org/world-atlas-languages). [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. . Read more about the Declaration [here](https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/g20-new-delhi-leaders-declaration-reaffirms-culture-transformative-powerhouse-sustainable?hub=424). [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. . Local and Indigenous Knowledge Systems (LINKS): <https://en.unesco.org/links> [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. . Read more about the Naples Conference [here](https://ich.unesco.org/en/events/naples-conference-on-cultural-heritage-in-the-21st-century-00977). [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. . <https://www.ichngoforum.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/Storytelling_Website.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. . Consult the 20th Anniversary website for all the activities and events that took place: <https://ich.unesco.org/en/anniversary> [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. . Read more about the Naples Conference [here](https://ich.unesco.org/en/events/naples-conference-on-cultural-heritage-in-the-21st-century-00977). [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. . Read more about the Conference [here](https://ich.unesco.org/en/activities/international-forum-latin-american-living-heritage-00400). [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. . Read more about The Seoul Vison [here](https://ich.unesco.org/en/news/the-seoul-vision-outlining-the-future-of-safeguarding-living-heritage-13485) [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. . Read more about the ENFP Network [here](https://enfp-ich.eu/) [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. . Read more about the Festival [here](https://unesco-iicas.org/press-office/News/The%2BWorld%2BFestival%2Bof%2BNomadic%2BCulture). [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. . International Information and Networking Centre for Intangible Cultural Heritage in the Asia-Pacific Region. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. . International Training Centre for Intangible Cultural Heritage in the Asia-Pacific Region. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. . International Research Centre for Intangible Cultural Heritage in the Asia-Pacific Region. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. . Consult the Wiki site [here](https://meta.wikimedia.org/wiki/Wiki_Loves_Living_Heritage/About). [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. . Intangible Cultural Heritage Global Network of Facilitators: <https://ich.unesco.org/en/facilitator> [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. . Islamic World Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. . Regional Centre for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage in Africa. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. . The 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. See the dedicated webpage [here](https://ich.unesco.org/en/reflection-on-a-broader-implementation-of-article-18-01302). [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. . Read the official text of the Recommendation [here](https://www.unesco.org/en/legal-affairs/recommendation-concerning-promotion-and-use-multilingualism-and-universal-access-cyberspace). [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. . Browse the platform [here](https://ich.unesco.org/en/dive). [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. . Read more about the Declaration of Ethical Principles in relation to Climate Change [here](https://www.unesco.org/en/ethics-science-technology/climate-change). [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. . Read more about the G20 New Delhi Leaders’ Declaration [here](https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/g20-new-delhi-leaders-declaration-reaffirms-culture-transformative-powerhouse-sustainable?hub=424) [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. . Read the 2022 Evaluation Body’s report [here](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/LHE-22-17.COM-7-EN.docx). [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. . Consult the ICH NGO Forum website: <https://www.ichngoforum.org> [↑](#footnote-ref-33)