DECISION 7 COM 10.6

The Committee

1. Takes note that Nigeria has requested International Assistance in the amount of US$95,000 for Safeguarding the intangible traditions of Kwagh-Hir (Tiv puppetry theatre) in Nigeria through comprehensive documentation:

Kwagh-hir is a form of puppetry theatre traditionally performed in Tiv communities in the state of Benue, Nigeria.

It provides secular entertainment, education and socialization through the enactment of past and contemporary events by performers using puppets and masquerades. At present, however, only older speakers have knowledge of the main historical narratives and legends.

The aim of the project is therefore to safeguard and reinvigorate Kwagh-hir, and in so doing help to revive intergenerational transmission of the folk arts of the Tiv people, including Tiv craftsmanship and intellectual traditions; preserve and promote the lexicon and grammar of the Tiv language; and reinforce the cultural identity of Tiv people. To this end, the project would organize meetings with clan heads, who function as owners of the various community theatre groups, in order to generate new Kwagh-hir performances.

This would necessitate organization of rehearsals for the orchestra and performers, and the production of props, costumes and other cultural artefacts. The project would also produce audiovisual materials to document historical and anthropological materials, including historical and anthropological stories. The project aims to revive cultural activism in the various communities and promote and inspire more works in the Tiv Kwagh-hir traditions for theatrical presentation.

2. Decides that, from the information provided in file 00684, the request responds as follows to the criteria for granting International Assistance given in Paragraphs 10 and 12 of the Operational Directives:

A.1: Tiv communities have not participated in the preparation of the request nor have they been involved in planning the proposed activities; the request is also not clear as to the mechanisms for involving communities fully during the execution and follow up of the project;

A.2: The request includes a large number of discrepancies between the budget breakdown, the proposed activities and timetable; activities such as the purchase of equipment, fees for resource persons and meetings with the communities need to be further justified; moreover, the budget calculations and totals are not correct;

A.3: The request does not provide a clear description of Kwagh-Hir nor sufficient background, rationale or information concerning its viability and the need for safeguarding it; the objectives are worthy but are far beyond the scope of the project; the activities do not correspond closely either to the objectives or to the budget and timetable; the sequence of activities and documentation methodologies should be further explained as well as the coordination strategy of the different bodies and communities concerned;

A.4: The request does not demonstrate how the proposed project will contribute to ensure the viability of Kwagh-Hir, and the duration of the project is too short to ensure effective follow up and sustainability of the results; the lack of involvement of the communities in the preparation of the request casts further doubt on the sustainability of the project;
A.5: Although the requesting State is committed to provide a substantial share of the overall cost of the project, the specific costs to be supported by it and those to be supported by the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund respectively are not distinguished; moreover, since the budget totals are incorrect it is not possible to determine what will finally be the State Party's share;

A.6: The State Party has not addressed how the capacities of the concerned communities, insufficiently identified will be strengthened through the project; the documentation and preparation of publications and other audio-visual materials, the acquisition of materials and remuneration of participants, while welcome, do not necessarily lead to strengthened capacities for safeguarding the intangible cultural heritage;

A.7: The State Party received financial assistance from the UNESCO/Japan Funds-in-Trust for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage for two cooperation projects, 'Action plan for the safeguarding and promotion of the Oral Tradition of Gelede in Benin, Nigeria and Togo' in 2008 and 'Safeguarding of the Ifa Divination system' in 2011; the work stipulated by the contracts related to these projects was successfully carried out and, following UNESCO's regulations, the contracts were duly completed;

10(a): The project is national in scope and involves national implementing partners;

10(b): The request does not address the question of whether the assistance could have a multiplier effect or could stimulate financial and technical contributions from other sources;

3. Decides not to approve the request, and invites the State Party to submit a revised request responding more fully to the criteria for selection and to the considerations noted in the present decision;

4. Recalls that, in line with the Convention, the aim of documentation should be to ensure the viability of the intangible cultural heritage concerned and should be complemented by associated safeguarding measures such as capacity building of human resources, support for the practitioners and general awareness raising;

5. Recommends that the State Party fully involve the communities, practitioners as well as the audience, in the preparation of the request and ensure that the safeguarding measures fully reflect their aspirations and wishes and that they are active participants in implementing them, and further recommends that it identify additional partners in the domain of documentation of living heritage;

6. Invites the State Party to ensure a rigorous and clear correspondence between the overall objectives and the proposed activities, budget and timetable of the project and to provide clear and transparent details in the presentation of the budget and pay close attention to its accuracy and coherence.