DECISION 14.COM 4.BUR 4.2

The Bureau,

1. **Recalling** Article 23 of the Convention as well as Chapter I.4 of the Operational Directives relating to the eligibility and criteria of International Assistance requests,

2. **Having examined** Document LHE/19/14.COM 4.BUR/4 as well as International Assistance request no. 01536 submitted by Namibia,

3. **Takes note** that Namibia has requested International Assistance for the project entitled *Safeguarding of Okuruuo through community-based capacity building, inventorying and documentation interventions in Namibia*:

   To be implemented by the Namibia National Commission for UNESCO, the proposed thirty-six-month project is aimed at safeguarding Okuruuo. The sacred ritual practice of Okuruuo (meaning Holy Fire) is central to the cultural values and social practices of the communities concerned. However, the current situation – including a rapid increase in urbanization – threatens its continuous practice and sustainability. Awareness-raising, capacity-building and training initiatives have been undertaken, but there is a need to expand this exercise to other regions in Omaheke, Otjozondjupa, Erongo and Kunene where the element is currently practised. In this context, the proposed project is aimed at improving the visibility of the element nationally, promoting and safeguarding it, enhancing national inventorying and documentation capacities, and improving and uploading the inventories and documentation of the element. This is to be achieved through awareness-raising, capacity-building, inventorying and documentation exercises. The project is expected to encourage the viability and continuous practice of the element.

4. **Further takes note** that this assistance is to support a project implemented at the national level, in accordance with Article 20 (c) of the Convention, and that it takes the form of the provision of a grant, pursuant to Article 21 (g) of the Convention;

5. **Also takes note** that Namibia has requested assistance in the amount of US$100,000 from the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund for the implementation of this project;

6. **Decides** that, from the information provided in file no. 01536, the request responds as follows to the criteria for granting International Assistance given in paragraphs 10 and 12 of the Operational Directives:

   **Criterion A.1**: This request was submitted following wide consultations among the communities in the regions of Omaheke, Otjozondjupa, Erongo and Kunene. It foresees the involvement of the communities concerned in the safeguarding activities for Okuruuo, through the existing structures of traditional authorities, regional councils, local development committees, civil society organizations and community meetings. Community members will participate in regional and national consultation meetings, awareness-raising activities, as well as community-based inventorying workshops and fieldwork exercises. The communities will also be fully involved in the final validation of the documented data concerning the element, as well as in the evaluation and follow-up of the project.

   **Criterion A.2**: The budget is presented in a structured manner, reflecting the planned activities and related expenses. The amount of assistance requested may therefore be considered as appropriate for the implementation of the proposed activities. However, the amount of the State Party's contribution, as indicated in
Form ICH-04, needs to be aligned with the amount indicated in Form ICH-04 - Timetable and Budget.

**Criterion A.3:** To contribute to the safeguarding of Okuruuo, the project proposes a set of thirteen activities organized around five main components: awareness-raising, capacity building, inventorying, documentation and evaluation. The sequence of the proposed activities is logical and the proposed timeframe seems to be realistic for achieving the expected results of the project. Regular monitoring and final evaluation activities are also foreseen, with the contribution of implementing partners and the communities concerned.

**Criterion A.4:** The project foresees awareness-raising activities on the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage that may continue beyond the duration of the project. These include community awareness radio programmes and the distribution of promotional materials in the local languages. The capacity-building activities, which are in line with previous efforts undertaken to ensure the continuous practice of Okuruuo, may also be duplicated at the national level through the ‘training of trainers’ approach proposed for these activities.

**Criterion A.5:** The requesting State will share 17 per cent of the overall budget of the project for which International Assistance is requested.

**Criterion A.6:** The project has a broad capacity-building component for communities, implementing agencies and partner organizations through awareness-raising and training workshops that could help to ensure the viability of the element. The communities concerned and the local authorities involved in the project are expected to provide training on community-based inventorying and documentation after the completion of the project. The activities, aimed at enhancing the visibility of the element, could raise awareness among a wide audience, at both the local and national levels, about the importance of safeguarding intangible cultural heritage.

**Criterion A.7:** Namibia has benefitted from Preparatory Assistance from the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund for the preparation of the nomination of ‘Aixan (gâna/ob ‡ans tsîi/khasigu), ancestral musical sound knowledge and skills’, submitted for possible inscription on the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding in 2020 (file no. 01418, 2018–2019, US$10,000). The work stipulated by the contract related to this assistance is being carried out in accordance with UNESCO regulations.

**Paragraph 10(a):** The project is national in scope and its implementation involves national and local partners, including the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture, the Ministry of Local Government, the National Commission for Research, Science and Technology, as well as the traditional authorities.

**Paragraph 10(b):** The request indicates that efforts to enhance the visibility of the element could generate interest among stakeholders, individuals and donors to help safeguard it and provide better funding opportunities for further research on Okuruuo and other elements of intangible cultural heritage. However, the focus on income-generation through the promotion of tourism may raise concerns about the possible decontextualization of the practice.

7. Approves the International Assistance request from Namibia for the project entitled **Safeguarding of Okuruuo through community-based capacity building, inventorying and documentation interventions in Namibia** and grants the amount of US$100,000 to the State Party to this end;

8. Requests that the Secretariat reach an agreement with the requesting State Party on the technical details of the assistance, paying particular attention to ensuring that the work plan and the budget of the activities to be covered by the Intangible
Cultural Heritage Fund are detailed and specific enough to provide a sufficient justification of all the expenditures;

9. **Invites** the State Party to use Form ICH-04-Report when reporting on the use of the International Assistance provided.