Recent developments under the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage

12 March 2026

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Intangible Heritage
Convention

Overview

In this joint presentation, the following topics will be covered:

1. Overview
2. Listing at the 20.COM
3. New funding priorities for quadrennium
4. Periodic reporting: reflection year of 2026
5. Platform for sharing good safeguarding experiences
6. Global capacity building programme
7. Online training programme for the facilitator’s network in 2026

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Listing mechanisms

- 67 inscriptions on the Lists (11 USL, 52 RL, 1 GSP, 2 transfer from USL to RL)
- For the first time, 2 successful safeguarding experiences (transfer requests from USL to RL) included into GSP
- First-time inscriptions for 7 countries: Barbados, Chad, Comoros, El Salvador, Gabon, Libya, and Sao Tome and Principe
- 9 multinational files involving 28 States Parties for effective international cooperation

20.COM New Funding Priorities 2026–2029

Overall goal

Refine safeguarding approaches across thematic fields,
facilitate the exchange of knowledge and experiences amongst communities, and
promote deeper integration of living heritage in national development plans and heritage policies

Funding Priority A

Enhancing capacity-building approaches for safeguarding intangible cultural heritage with a focus on inclusion (ref. 174 Operational Directives)

Funding Priority B

Refining approaches for safeguarding intangible cultural heritage

20.COM New Funding Priorities 2026–2029

Funding Priority A	Funding Priority B
• **Develop and pilot capacity-building tools** aligned with statutory priorities and evolving safeguarding contexts.	• **Develop guidance and policy frameworks**, based on statutory priorities and evolving safeguarding contexts.
• **Expand multi-modal learning resources** for diverse stakeholders.	• **Expand thematic initiatives**, including research, the development of networks of practice and case studies, and the conduct of intersectoral consultations.
• **Train and support peer learning of facilitators** network, enabling them to refine technical, pedagogical and advisory capacities in line with the Convention's latest guidance and thematic expansions	• **Collaborate with strategic partners** to refine the Convention's thematic initiatives and ensure the broad dissemination and uptake of materials.
• **Co-design content with partners** to ensure wide dissemination and uptake	• **Accompanying** the further development of the online **platform for sharing good safeguarding experiences**
• **Support capacity building towards** the move to the single global submission system for periodic reporting	• **Accompanying** the move to the single global submission system for periodic reporting

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Other progress

- Re-confirmed the move towards a single global submission system for periodic reporting
- Preliminary platform for sharing good safeguarding experiences (Art.18)
- New guidance notes on safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage in urban contexts

Highlights from the statutory calendar for 2026

- **28-30 April:** Reflection meeting on the periodic reporting mechanism of the 2003 Convention
- **17-18 June:** 11th General Assembly (UNESCO headquarters)
- **19 June:** 14th annual coordination meeting of Category 2 Centres active in the field of intangible cultural heritage (UNESCO headquarters)
- **19 June:** First coordination meeting of UNESCO Chairs and UNITWIN networks active in the field of intangible cultural heritage (UNESCO headquarters)*
- **17 October:** International Day of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (third edition)
- **30 November- 5 December**: 21.COM (Xiamen, China)

*non-statutory

Periodic reporting: reflection year of 2026

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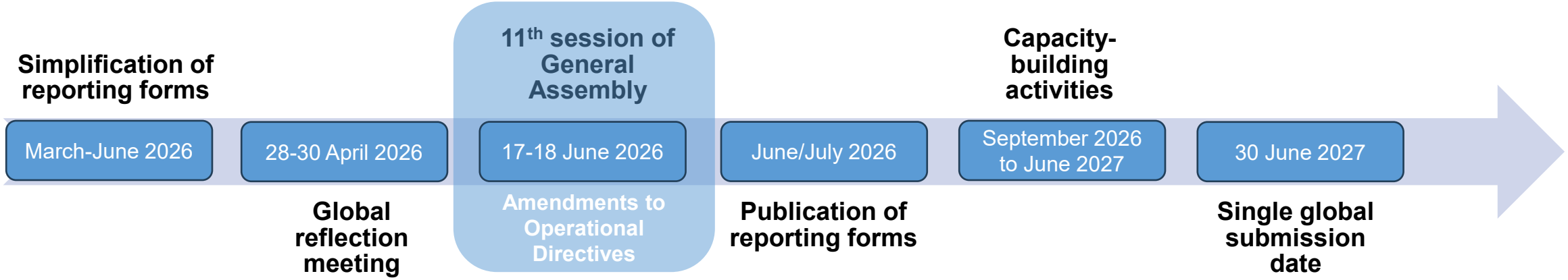
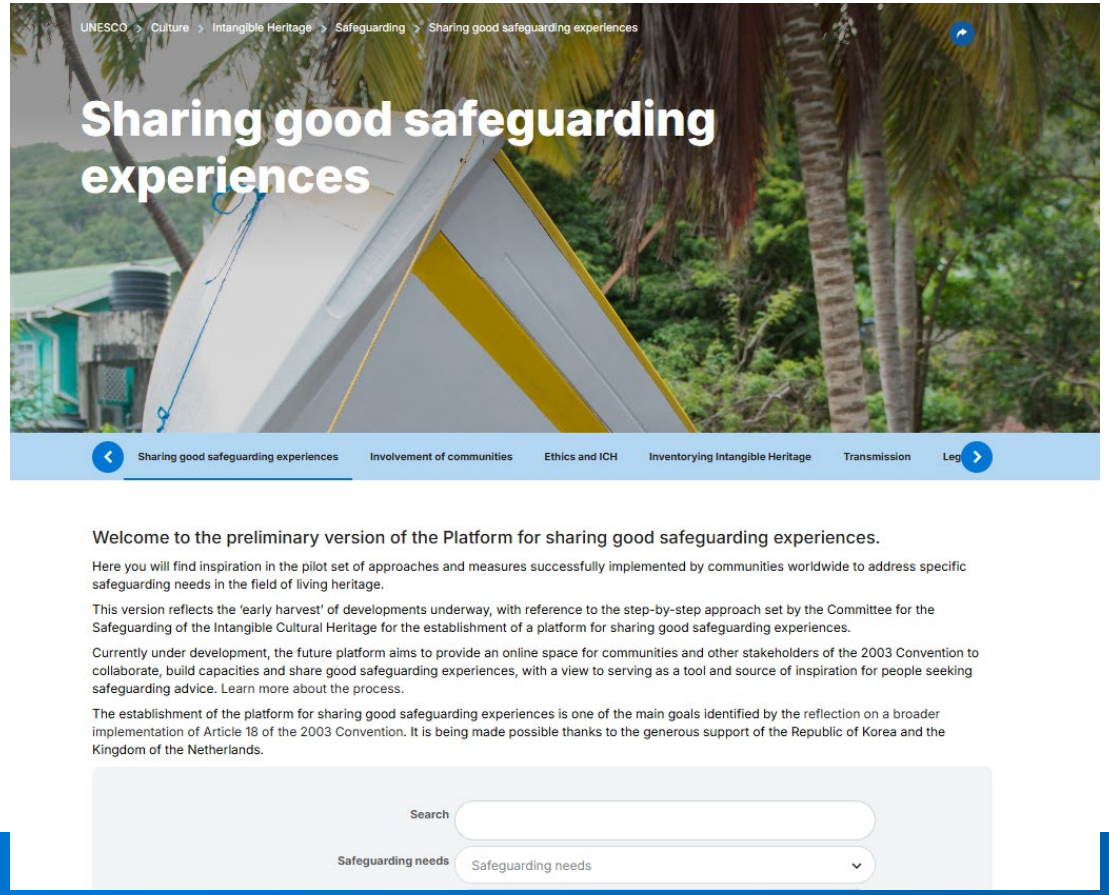
Single global submission system for periodic reporting

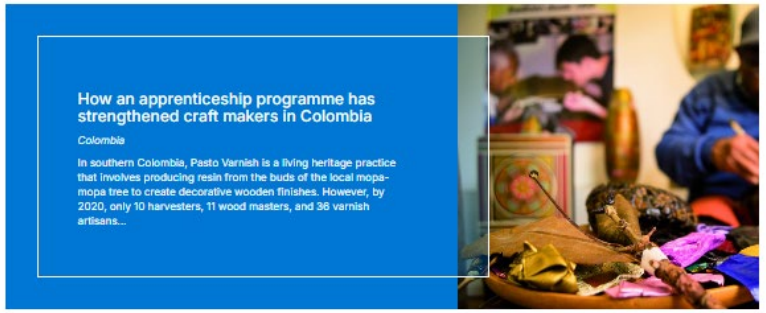
- The twentieth session of the Committee confirmed that all States Parties would be requested to submit their reports for the deadline of **30 June 2027 and every four years thereafter**, covering all reporting mechanisms of the Convention. The Committee also recommended the **General Assembly** to approve relevant **amendments to the Operational Directives** at its upcoming eleventh session (Decision 20.COM 6.c) to support the move towards a single global submission system of periodic reporting.
- Building on the results of the five regional consultations held in 2025, the **reflection year (2026)** provides an opportunity to take stock of lessons learned, address existing concerns and, through a **broad and participatory approach**, shaping the next periodic reporting cycle.

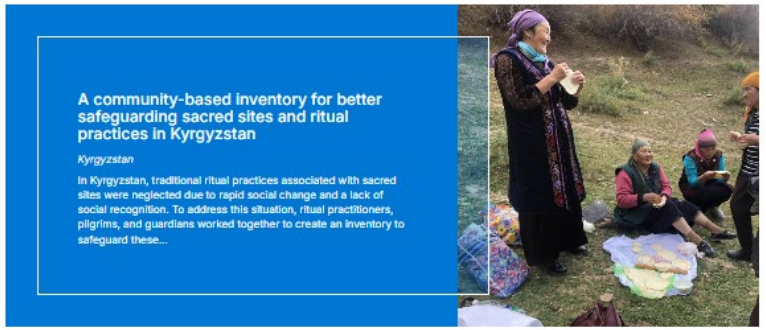


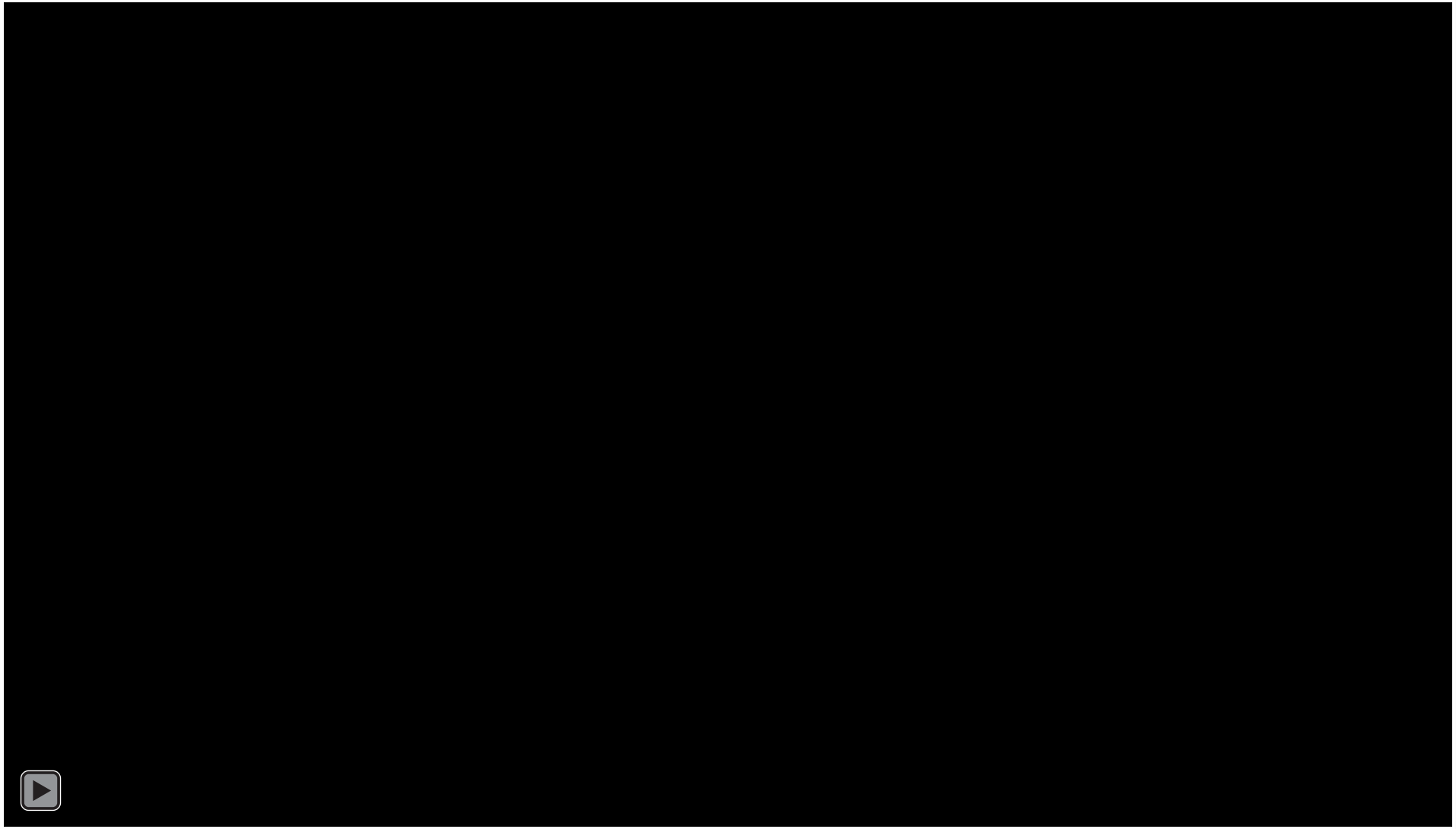
A broader implementation of Article 18 of the 2003 Convention

- A preliminary version of the oline platform for sharing good safeguarding experiences was launched in May 2025
- Thematic focus on Foodways included within the platform for sharing good safeguarding experiences









Updates on the global capacity building programme

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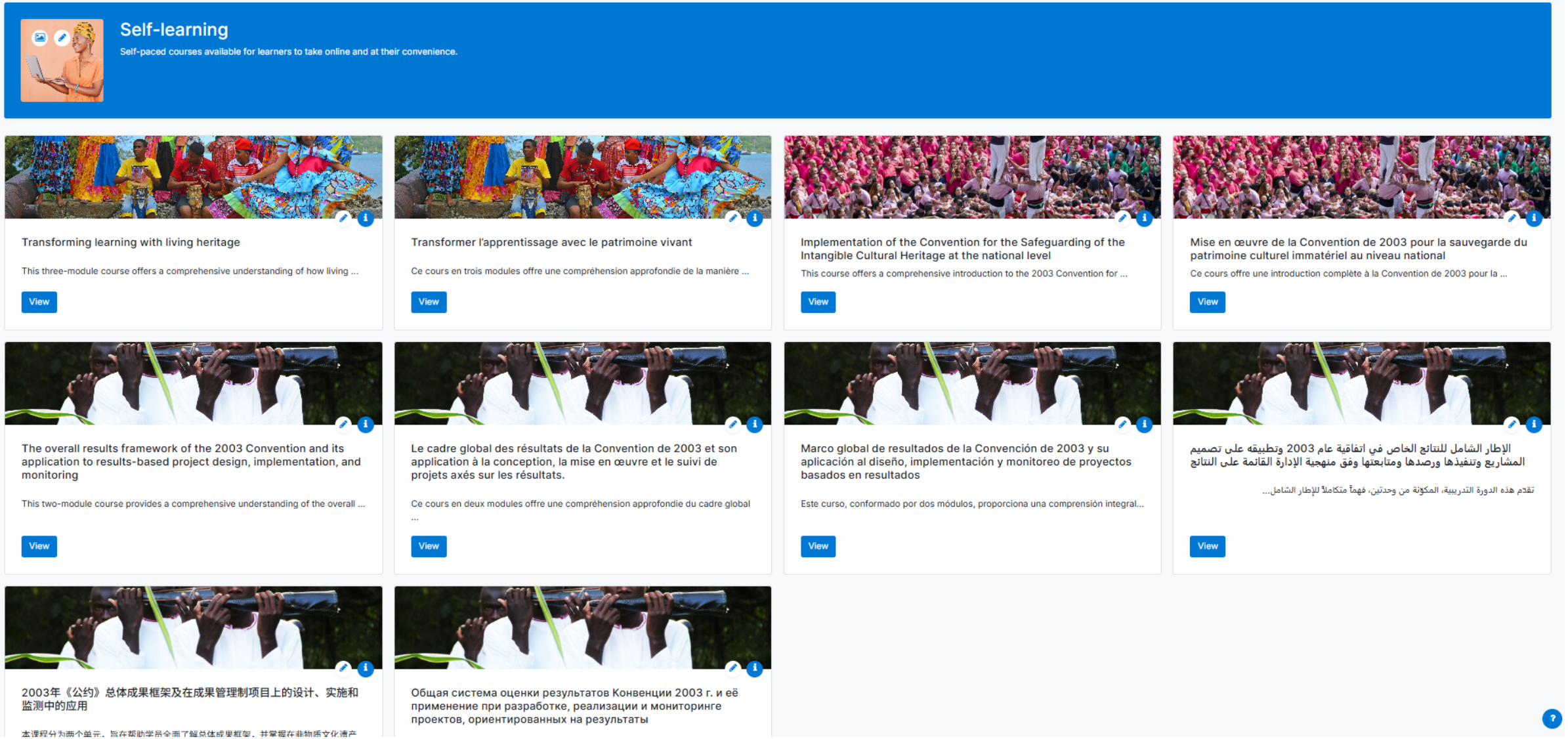
Programme review (2022-2025) presented to the 20.COM

- Strategic programme reorientation with new delivery formats – hybrid, online and in person – broaden reach to diverse audiences and actors
- Regional capacity-building on international mechanisms strengthens participation in core processes (NOM in SIDS, periodic reporting, etc.)
- The multi-year capacity-building approach continues to demonstrate its relevance in strengthening safeguarding frameworks at the national level
- Voluntary contributions enable the development of new intervention areas- upstream work (DRR, conflict/displacement, education, urban development, …)

Launch of the Learning Platform – 3 courses / multilingual



Global training series launched in 2025

4 webinars – 478 participations (cumulative number)

Introduction

Living heritage and disaster risk reduction (DRR)

Nominations – Updated training materials following the global reflection on the listing mechanisms (2018 – 2022)

Living heritage and education

Global training series 2026

Introduction	
12 March 2026	14:00-17:00 (Paris time)

Living heritage and urban contexts	
23 April 2026	14:00-17:00 (Paris time)

Living heritage in situations of conflicts and displacement	
4 June 2026	14:00-17:00 (Paris time)

Thank you

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