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

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

**Meeting of the Bureau**

**UNESCO Headquarters, Paris, Room VIII
3 October 2017, 10 a.m. – 1 p.m.**

**Item 4:
Examination of an emergency request for
International Assistance**

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| **Summary**Chapter I.14 of the Operational Directives provides that emergency requests for International Assistance can be submitted at any time and are examined and approved by the Bureau of the Committee. The present document includes one such request from Niger, on which the Bureau is asked to take a decision. **Decision required:** paragraph 7 |

1. As provided in Article 22 of the Convention, in emergencies, requests for International Assistance shall be examined as a matter of priority. In Chapter I.14, the Operational Directives provide for such emergency assistance requests to be submitted at any time regardless of the amount (paragraph 47). The Directives further provide that such requests are examined and approved by the Bureau of the Committee and that ‘for the purpose of determining whether a request for international assistance constitutes an emergency request eligible to receive priority consideration by the Bureau, an emergency shall be considered to exist when a State Party finds itself unable to overcome on its own any circumstance due to calamity, natural disaster, armed conflict, serious epidemic or any other natural or human event that has severe consequences for the intangible cultural heritage as well as communities, groups and, if applicable, individuals who are the bearers of that heritage’ (paragraph 50).
2. **Overview of the present request**
3. As at 1 September 2017, the Secretariat had received three emergency assistance requests, including one from Ecuador, which was withdrawn by the requesting State, and two from Niger, which were subsequently combined into the following completed request:

| **Draft Decision** | **Requesting State** | **Title** | **Amount requested** | **File No.** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 12.COM 4.BUR 4 | Niger | Safeguarding the intangible cultural heritage of Niger as a matter of urgency and for the resilience of displaced populations - pilot project in Tillabéry and Diffa | US$257,829.11 | 01412 |

1. During its eighth session, by its Decision 8.COM 7.c, the Committee requested that the Secretariat ‘devise a means, on a shorter-term basis, and experimentally, to offer technical assistance, through the provision of experts, as described in Article 21 of the Convention, to States Parties wishing to elaborate requests for International Assistance.’ (See Document [ITH/15/10.COM 1.BUR/1](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/ITH-15-10.COM_1.BUR-1-EN.doc) for the criteria of such assistance).
2. Niger benefited from such technical assistance provided by an expert charged with assessing the two requests submitted. These two requests presented relatively similar objectives in two different provinces (Diffa and Tillabéry) and proposed a wide range of activities focusing on the inventorying and revitalization of intangible cultural heritage practices. As part of his contract, the expert undertook a five-day advisory mission in the country, between 5 and 9 June 2017, with the primary objectives of conducting an analysis of the two separate requests for emergency assistance presented by the requesting State and engaging in exchanges with the parties concerned on combining these two requests into one, reducing the scope of proposed activities to a feasible sequence of activities in light of the emergency situation and ensuring that the objectives and scope of the revised request were in line with the Convention. Following his on-site mission, the expert continued to advise the State Party on the formulation of the request through email and phone exchanges from June to August 2017.
3. The Bureau is therefore asked to examine and decide on the above-mentioned request. In accordance with the Operational Directives, the requesting State Party was informed about the possible examination dates of its request. The Secretariat shall communicate the decision of the Bureau concerning the granting of assistance to the requesting party within two weeks following the decision.
4. The complete request is available online for consultation by the Bureau at <https://ich.unesco.org/en/12.com-bureau>, in English and French. The draft decision below contains an outline of the request and the Secretariat’s assessment of how it responds to the criteria set out in Chapter I of the Operational Directives. The Secretariat recommends that the Bureau approve the request.
5. **Draft decision**
6. The Bureau of the Intergovernmental Committee may wish to adopt the following decision:

**DRAFT DECISION 12.COM 4. BUR 4**

The Bureau,

1. Recalling Chapter V of the Convention and Chapter I of the Operational Directives,
2. Further recalling paragraph 50 of the Operational Directives and in particular the definition of ‘emergency’ for the purposes of International Assistance,
3. Having examined document ITH/17/12.COM 4.BUR/4, as well as International Assistance request No. 01412,
4. Takes note that Niger has requested emergency assistance for the project entitled **Safeguarding the intangible cultural heritage of Niger as a matter of urgency and for the resilience of displaced populations - pilot project in Tillabéry and Diffa**:

Since 2012, Niger has seen the rise of religious fundamentalism in the region, and particularly of Boko Haram. This crisis is combined with increasing poverty and internal ethnic tensions, exacerbated by mass displacements of populations within the country, particularly in the border provinces. In this context, this project aims to raise awareness among the communities, decision-makers, persons in charge and national and local stakeholders about the importance of safeguarding living heritage, as well as to identify the elements of intangible cultural heritage affected by the crisis situation in the two pilot regions, the provinces of Diffa and Tillabéry. By mobilizing living heritage as an instrument for unity, integration, peace and cohesion among communities, the project will involve carrying out a participatory needs assessment to review the impact of the security crisis on the viability of intangible cultural heritage. A set of capacity building training workshops and an awareness-raising campaign and activities to support dialogue among the communities will also be implemented. Such activities will result in the establishment of an inventory of twelve elements with the participation of the communities. The project thereby aims to contribute to the safeguarding and revitalization of the intangible cultural heritage of the displaced populations and host communities, highlight its role as a source of resilience and contribute to dialogue and social cohesion between displaced populations and host communities. The project will be implemented by the Directorate for Cultural Heritage and the Promotion of Leisure within the Ministry of Culture, supported by a national coordination committee and two regional branches, including representatives from the communities concerned, traditional leaders, local authorities, research institutions and humanitarian actors;

1. Further takes note that this assistance is to support a project implemented at the national level to safeguard intangible cultural heritage, 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;
2. Also takes note that Niger has requested assistance in the amount of US$257,829.11 from the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund for the implementation of this project;
3. Decides that, from the information contained in file no. 01412, the request responds as follows to the criteria for granting International Assistance set out in paragraphs 10 and 12 of the Operational Directives:

**Criterion A.1:** While the request was prepared and submitted by the organization responsible for implementing the Convention at the national level (the Directorate for Cultural Heritage and the Promotion of Leisure), the needs and points of view of the communities concerned in the provinces of Diffa and Tillabéry were taken into account during the preparation of the request and will be so throughout the project through their involvement in the project coordination committee and the implementation of a participatory needs assessment. The local and national authorities, as well as the communities concerned, will receive training on community-based inventorying methods and representatives of the communities will participate in the inventorying work on-site and the various public awareness-raising activities.

**Criterion A.2**: Though the total amount of assistance requested and the budget by activity seem appropriate for the scope of the project and its expected results, the level of detail provided for certain budget items is insufficient to determine whether all the budgeted amounts are justified.

**Criterion A.3**: Although the timetable of activities still needs to be fine-tuned, the activities proposed are described in detail and presented in a logical sequence, covering awareness raising through information missions, a participatory needs assessment in cooperation with humanitarian actors active in the targeted provinces, the preparation of a strategic inventorying plan, strengthening the capacities of the communities and authorities in relation to the participatory inventorying techniques, the establishment of a pilot inventory in the two provinces concerned and a campaign to raise public awareness about the importance of living heritage through the establishment of spaces for dialogue, the production of radio and television programmes and video and written information materials, and the revitalization of two festive cultural events.

**Criterion A.4**: With the support of a network of people trained in the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage and the equipment acquired during the project, the communities of the provinces of Diffa and Tillabéry will be able to ensure the regular updating of the inventories set up during the project, supported by the local authorities and the Directorate for Cultural Heritage and the Promotion of Leisure, whose capacities will have been strengthened. Moreover, despite the difficult context established by the situation of emergency, the State Party’s commitment to safeguarding living heritage to foster coexistence and facilitate the recovery of the communities affected offers a reasonable guarantee as to its durability and long-term impact.

**Criterion A.5**: The State will contribute no less than 14 per cent of the total budget of the project for which International Assistance is being requested.

**Criterion A.6**: Through specific training activities, the project aims to develop the communities’ capacities to identify, define and revitalize the expressions of their living heritage, as well as to strengthen the capacities of the national and local authorities responsible for safeguarding living heritage to inventory intangible cultural heritage through a participatory method. The technical capacities of the national authorities will also be strengthened, allowing for the establishment and regular updating of a database gathering the information collected during the inventorying process.

**Criterion A.7**: Niger has never benefitted from International Assistance from the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund, but did benefit from technical assistance in 2017 for the preparation of this request.

**Paragraph 10(a)**: The project is local in scope and will be implemented by local and national partners.

**Paragraph 10(b)**: The interest that the project could generate around the links between intangible heritage, social cohesion and the consolidation of peace, as well as its role in combatting violent extremism, could stimulate financial support from bilateral development agencies or multilateral institutions. Moreover, the project has the potential to be replicated in other regions of the State Party and could inspire other States affected by situations of emergency, mass displacements of populations and social tensions.

1. Approves the request for emergency assistance for the project entitled **Safeguarding the intangible cultural heritage of Niger as a matter of urgency and for the resilience of displaced populations - pilot project in Tillabéry and Diffa** and grants the amount of US$257,829.11 to the State Party to this end;
2. Also takes note of the experience concerning the technical assistance received by the State Party for the revision of this request and appreciates that it resulted in the realignment of its objectives and scope;
3. Commends the State Party for its initiative in submitting an emergency request and notes with appreciation its commitment to mobilizing intangible cultural heritage to consolidate peace and social cohesion among the communities, including displaced populations, in accordance with the objectives of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and of the Agenda 2063 for Africa;
4. Encourages the State Party to implement the project in close cooperation with UNESCO and the humanitarian actors present on site and with the widest possible participation of the communities concerned;
5. Also encourages the State Party, particularly in light of the situation of emergency in the country, to keep the Secretariat informed throughout the project of any difficulties encountered that could delay the implementation of the activities;
6. Requests that the Secretariat reach an agreement with the submitting State on the technical details of the assistance, ensuring, in particular, that the detailed work plan, the timetable and the budget of activities to be financed by the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund are sufficiently precise to justify the amounts allocated and so that the real expenses can be effectively compared to the amounts foreseen;
7. Invites the State Party to use Form ICH-04-Report when reporting on the use of the assistance provided.